

Managing Conflict of Interest and Bias issues for Peer Review and Peer Consultation Panels

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Managing **Conflict of Interest**
and **Bias** Issues for **Peer Review**
and **Peer Consultation** Panels

Peer Review Panel

Provides approval

Panelists are independent

Peer Consultation Panel

Provides advice

Panelists may be stakeholders

Conflict of Interest

- Any interest, financial or otherwise, any business or professional activity, or any obligation which is incompatible with the proper discharge of duties in the public interest
- Items presenting the potential for self-gain, usually, but not always, of a fiscal nature

Financial Interest

- Anything of monetary value, including, but not limited to: salary or other payments for services, consulting fees or honoraria, equity interests including stocks, stock options, or ownership interests, intellectual property rights including patents, copyrights, or royalties from such rights (dictionary)

Examples of COI Items

- Cannot have received over \$2500 compensation from sponsor in preceding calendar year
- Must avoid the perception that an individual might benefit financially from certain outcomes of panel's deliberations

Bias

- Prejudice
- Any partiality that prevents objective consideration of an issue or situation

Conflict of Interest and Bias

- Actual
- Potential
- Perceived

Peer Review

Having a COI usually is not acceptable

Peer Consultation

Having a COI usually is not acceptable

Use of COI Items in PR and PC Panels

- Carefully choose the criteria for COI items and be prepared to defend them
- Clearly communicate the COI criteria to all candidates, stakeholders, and the public
- Apply the COI criteria consistently to all candidates and disclose the results

Examples of COI items that *TERA* has used

- Working directly for the organization that is sponsoring the panel meeting
- Having a personal financial investment in the sponsoring organization
- Authoring the assessment documents

Peer Review

Having a Bias may be acceptable

Peer Consultation

Having a Bias may be acceptable

Should Peer Review and Peer
Consultation Panels treat Bias
issues in the same way?

Peer Review Panels should be more
restrictive than Peer Consultation
Panels when considering the Bias
issues of panel candidates

Bias issues applied to a candidate for a PR and a PC panel

- Candidate is a recognized authority on the subject matter
- Candidate has taken a public position on the subject matter
- Candidate is a member of a stakeholder organization

Use of Bias Issues in PR and PC Panels

- *Carefully choose the criteria for Bias issues and be prepared to defend them*
- *Clearly communicate the Bias criteria to all candidates, stakeholders, and the public*
- *Apply the Bias criteria consistently to all candidates and disclose the results*
- **ALSO** – determine if each Bias issue should be a disqualifier

Maintain credibility with stakeholders and the public

- Clearly communicate the criteria for all COI and Bias items
- Apply them consistently
- Investigate the candidates thoroughly
- Document all candidate COI and Bias items, explaining them if needed
- Provide full disclosure