

2021

Equitable Peer Review Panel Templates

University of Massachusetts Amherst ADVANCE Program

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/advance-it-tools>

Recommend Citation

Modified from UMass ADVANCE template for peer review

This Shared Decision-Making is brought to you for free and open access by the ADVANCE-Institutional Transformation at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tools by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

UMass ADVANCE Framing statement for peer review panels: template (2021)

Suggested citation: Modified from UMass ADVANCE template for peer review

Thank you for taking the time to review the nominations for this award. Your work in evaluating the submissions and selecting colleagues for recognition is important and familiar work for faculty. You may be less familiar with the research on peer reviewing, which has shown there are some common pitfalls in the process that lead to unintentional bias in the outcomes. Briefly, those pitfalls have to do with taking procedural shortcuts in peer review that lead reviewers to rely on intellectual shortcuts (e.g., biases) in our thinking. This document summarizes what the research tells us about how you, as a reviewer, can avoid those pitfalls that can lead to biased outcomes in peer review.

Here are some tips to keep in mind about effective peer review processes:

1. **Set up an initial conversation among the review panel about what each review criterion means**, before doing your individual reviews. What criteria does the call for proposals name? What does each criterion mean to your review panel? Research shows that bias is most likely to emerge when criteria are ambiguous, so clarifying the criteria is central to equitable evaluation. Make sure you agree on the weighting of the criteria and discuss any additional criteria that the panel may have in mind (such as timeliness) that may not be specified in the call for proposals. Set up a common rubric to use for scoring each submission.
2. **Before reviewing applications, also discuss common biases that may appear in materials** that you are asked to review as part of the nomination package. Letter writers of all genders are more likely to use superlative adjectives (e.g., outstanding) for men nominees and “grind” adjectives for women nominees (e.g., hard-working), even when describing the same kinds of productivity. Even citation scores have biases built into them (on average 75% of citations are made to other authors personally known and men are more likely to benefit from this cumulative advantage; men are also more likely to self-cite). See UMass ADVANCE [materials and references on our website](#).
3. **Evaluate each nominee on the same set of criteria**. In your written reviews, it may be helpful to work from the criteria checklist that you have all agreed upon in step 1 and type those headings in each of your reviews. Consider how each candidate does on each criterion.
4. **Give yourself enough time to review**. Evaluating applicants fairly takes time. Research consistently shows that biases are most likely to occur when we are rushed. When you receive the materials, block out time in your schedule to read the nominations and write up your reviews, and then to go back over all the reviews and reflect on the group as a whole. The review panel discussion meeting should also last long enough and be moderated to make sure all reviewers’ voices are heard.
5. **Repeated and intentional efforts lead to change**. Equity is not a one-time achievement but requires vigilance to sustain; and it is collective work that we do together. Give everyone a voice. Speak for equity in your written reviews and remind each other of effective practices for mitigating bias in the review panel discussion.