



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

ONRINST 3966.1
ONR 03R
30 August 2010

ONR INSTRUCTION 3966.1

From: Chief of Naval Research

Subj: ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PEER REVIEW PROGRAM
WITHIN THE OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH

Ref: (a) ONRINST 5430.16A
(b) Naval S&T Strategic Plan, February 2009
(c) SECNAV M-5210.1

Encl: (1) Planning and Conducting Peer Review
(2) Sample Letter to Peer Review Panelists
(3) Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality Statement and
Gratuitous Services Agreement

1. Purpose. To establish policy and procedures for implementing a Peer Review Program within the Office of Naval Research (ONR).

2. Scope. The policies and procedures set forth in this instruction apply to the Research Directorate and the Science and Technology (S&T) Departments at ONR Headquarters.

3. Background. Under reference (a), the Chief of Naval Research (CNR) leads execution of the Department of the Navy's (DON's) integrated S&T program via, in part, supervision of ONR's S&T Directorate in management and execution of the S&T program. This instruction is published in furtherance of these duties, by establishing a process whereby S&T research programs funded under Budget Activity 1 (basic research) are subjected to peer review. Peer review is a process conducted by scientific and technical experts who provide an independent assessment of the scientific merit of the research being reviewed. The scientific community depends upon peer review to ensure the merit, performance and relevancy of research activities. The goal of the peer review process is to ensure excellence in the research funded by ONR.

4. Policy. Beginning in fiscal year 2011, all ONR S&T Departments will initiate peer review of ongoing basic research programs, following the guidelines provided in enclosure (1), and using the documents provided in enclosures (2) and (3).

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Research grants and awards made on or before fiscal year 2009 shall be the initial candidates for peer review. After the first round of reviews, research grants and other awards made by ONR shall be subject to peer review in their 2nd to 3rd year following the award.

5. Action

a. Director of Research (ONR 03R). In accordance with reference (a), the Director of Research (DoR) is personally responsible to the CNR for the planning, programming, budgeting and oversight of the ONR Discovery & Invention (D&I) S&T portfolio. In support of this effort, the DoR shall, through the process of peer review, assess the basic research portfolio in terms of S&T quality; scientific breakthroughs & contributions; and potential DON, Department of Defense (DoD), and other impacts to determine strengths/weaknesses of the current portfolio.

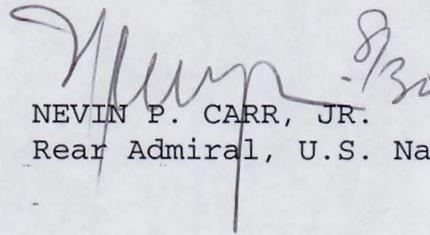
b. S&T Department Heads. The S&T Department Heads (ONR 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35) are responsible for the execution of their department's programs, including technical performance. In support of this effort, the S&T Department Heads shall conduct, through the process of peer review, technical assessments of departmental D&I efforts to ensure research breadth and quality in scientific disciplines of importance to DON and DoD.

c. S&T Division Directors/Program Officers

(1) The S&T Division Directors ensure the successful management of the D&I programs, and report to and assist their Department Heads in this function. The Division Directors work closely with their Department Heads to monitor the cost, schedule, and technical performance of the division's programs using the peer review process. The Division Directors manage their Division Program Officers (POs).

(2) POs are the first line technical execution managers in the S&T Division. They ensure the successful execution of the individual D&I projects which support the focus areas described in reference (b). The S&T POs shall use the peer review process to monitor the cost, schedule, and technical performance of the projects for which they are responsible. They shall report to and assist the Division Directors in this function.

6. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, shall be managed in accordance with reference (c).



NEVIN P. CARR, JR.
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

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PLANNING AND CONDUCTING PEER REVIEW

1. Background

a. The concept of peer review is strongly accepted by the scientific community and instills confidence in management, academic and other partners, other branches of government, and the public, that funds that are appropriated for research are expended on meritorious research ideas and projects.

b. Peer review is intended to enhance the likelihood of success for Science & Technology projects by leveraging existing standards and expertise and ensuring that key ingredients for project success are in place.

2. Peer Review Panel Members

a. Peer review panel members are selected by agreement between the Director of Research (DoR) and the Department Head.

b. Peer review panel members shall be selected based on a number of considerations, including:

(1) Expertise in the applicable scientific or technical fields.

(2) Dedication to high quality, fair and impartial reviews.

(3) Absence of any conflict of interest.

c. The peer review panel may consist of members external to Office Naval Research (ONR). Panel members may be academic, industrial or government individuals. ONR employees, including individuals serving under an Inter-governmental Personnel Act (IPA) agreement, may serve as panel members.

d. Each peer review panel is expected to have at least three members, but the actual number may depend on different factors, including the diversity of the projects reviewed.

4. Peer Review Panel Evaluation Criteria

a. Peer Review Panel members shall address, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(1) Significance and Originality. To what extent will the research lead to new knowledge, tools, or open new solution pathways by investigating scientific phenomena not previously considered or explored? Does the research realize its objectives by developing new concepts or using existing or emerging approaches in new or different ways? Is the science sound? Are the long-term goals appropriate? Are opportunities being missed?

(2) Scientific Merit and Accomplishment. Is the program plan for organizing and carrying out the project well-specified and appropriate? Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? What is the quality of the scientific accomplishments?

(3) Risk and Potential Impact. What is the basic research content of the program? Is the level of difficulty appropriate and does the team understand the science and technology challenges? Does the basic research have the higher risk and high payoff characteristics normally associated with basic research? What is the potential impact of the research to Department of the Navy and Department of Defense if the goals are met? Are there broader impacts (e.g., applications to other scientific disciplines, technology developments)?

(4) Principal Investigator (PI). Are the PI's qualifications and experience sufficient for the task at hand? Is the PI making good progress? Is the PI free of disqualifying conflicts of interest?

(5) Budget. Is the budget reasonable and adequate in relation to the proposed project?

(6) Resources. Would the research have made better progress had additional resources, perhaps available in other venues or laboratories, been available to the PI?

b. The reviewers shall submit individual written reports discussing the above criteria. Rankings and "scores" are not permitted. The panel members may discuss technical aspects of the project among themselves, but may not submit a collaborative report, evaluation or recommendation, or make continuation funding recommendations.

5. Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality Statement and Gratuitous Services Agreement. Non-federal employee peer review

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panel members shall execute the "Conflict-of-Interest, Confidentiality Statement and Gratuitous Services Agreement" provided as enclosure (3) to this instruction. Federal government employee peer review panel members shall execute the conflict-of-interest portion of enclosure (3).

6. Timing/Scheduling Reviews. Every ongoing ONR basic research project shall be subject to peer review during the first to third year following initial grant/award. Peer review of basic research projects will be phased in over three years. For projects in their first three-year funding cycle, later stage reviews are preferred.

7. Planning and Conducting a Peer Review

a. Step 1: Initiate Peer Review

(1) Responsibility: ONR Program Officers (PO)

(2) Description: ONR POs will schedule an on-site or off-site review of their projects. It will be the responsibility of the PO to coordinate attendance of all of his PIs and the logistics details concerning the date, time, and place of the review, and the facilities required to support the review. In setting up the review, POs must take care not to enter into any contract or other agreement that involves or may involve the exchange of funds. Instead, POs must refer any such arrangements to the manager of Conference Events and Exhibits in the Corporate Strategic Communications Office.

b. Step 2: Plan the Peer Review

(1) Responsibility: ONR PO

(2) Description:

(a) ONR POs will nominate panelists for the Peer Review Panel and present those nominations to the Division Director/Department Head. Persons nominated must be recognized scientific/technical experts. The Department Head will make recommendations as appropriate and forward the nominations to the Director of Research. When the Department Head and the Director of Research have jointly reviewed the nominations and reached agreement on the composition of the Peer Review Panel, the PO will make final arrangements with each member and empanel the Peer Review Panel. The size of the panel may depend on the

diversity of the projects reviewed, but the expected size is three reviewers.

(b) The PO will prepare an advanced notebook for each reviewer, which will include a letter of instruction to the reviewers, a detailed schedule for the review, an overview of the program being reviewed, an abstract and the initial proposal of each project being presented by the PIs, and a selected list of peer-reviewed publications authored by the PIs. A copy of the notebook will also be provided for the DoR.

(c) Each reviewer must certify that he/she has no conflicts of interest. In addition, all non-federal employee peer reviewers shall provide a confidentiality statement and gratuitous services agreement, and confirm that he or she is available for the duration of the review.

(d) There are a number of things to consider when planning a peer review. The list below is intended to help with the process, but is not all-inclusive.

1 Setting Date & Venue (recommended: to conserve costs, plan review around a technical society conference or other event in which your PIs may participate.)

2 Budget (The DoR will provide logistics support and funds for review panel expenses: invitational travel orders, travel reimbursement, per diem, lodging expense, etc.).

3 Audio Visual Equipment (computer, projector, microphone, power strips, etc.).

4 Invitees/Speakers

5 Abstract Book, Agenda, Table of Contents (all should be ready for printing at the same time).

6 Review Board (recommend three to six recognized technical experts from government, industry and academia).

7 Badges

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c. Step 3: Conduct Peer Review

(1) Responsibility: ONR PO

(2) Description: PIs will present their work to the Peer Review Panel. A copy of each presentation is to be provided in advance to each reviewer as part of the notebook.

d. Step 4: Report Observations and Recommendations

(1) Responsibility: Peer Review Panel

(2) Description: Peer Review Panel members review the projects and individually record their evaluations. Instructions for the reviewers' individual write-ups, evaluations, and comments will be included in the letter guidance that will be provided to the Peer Review panelists. Comments must be signed by each reviewer.

e. Step 5: Review Results

(1) Responsibility: DoR, Department Head, and Division/Director

(2) Description: The DoR, Department Head/Division Director, and PO will review comments from the panelists, and make adjustments to the project as needed. The Department Head will present results of the peer review to Chief of Naval Research, Vice Chief of Naval Research, Assistant Chief of Naval Research, and Executive Director. The DoR will compile and maintain Peer Review Panel comments and records for each project review. Panel member evaluations shall become a part of the official file.



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Date _____

Dear Review Panel:

Thank you for agreeing to review the Office of Naval Research's (ONR) _____ Project/Program. The review will be held on _____. The review will start with presentations by the program officers on their vision and plans followed by _____ days of presentations by investigators. I will provide your reviews to the Division Director, Department Head, _____ and ONR's Director of Research.

Enclosed you will find a "Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality Statement, and Gratuitous Services Agreement for Office of Naval Research Peer Reviewers." This document must be executed by you before you can participate as a peer reviewer. Please carefully review this document, execute it, and return to me. If for any reason you find that you cannot execute the document, please contact me immediately.

We seek your individual opinion of the quality of the _____ Project/Program in the following areas:

- Significance and Originality. To what extent will the research lead to new knowledge, tools, or open new solution pathways by investigating scientific phenomena not previously considered or explored? Does the research realize its objectives by developing new concepts or using existing or emerging approaches in new or different ways? Is the science sound? Are the long-term goals appropriate? Are opportunities being missed?

- Scientific Merit and Accomplishment. Is the program plan for organizing and carrying out the project well-specified and appropriate? Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? What is the quality of the scientific accomplishments?

- Risk and Potential Impact. What is the basic research content of the program? Is the level of difficulty appropriate and does the team understand the science and technology challenges? Does the basic research have the higher risk and high payoff characteristics normally associated with basic research? What is the potential impact of the research to the Department of the Navy and Department of Defense if the goals are met? Are there broader impacts (e.g., applications to other scientific disciplines, technology developments)?

Enclosure (2)

- Principal Investigator (PI). Are the PIs qualifications and experience sufficient for the task at hand? Is the PI making good progress? Is the PI free of disqualifying conflicts of interest?

- Budget. Is the budget reasonable and adequate in relation to the proposed project?

- Resources. Would the research have made better progress had additional resources, perhaps available in other venues or laboratories, been available to the PI?

In addition, we would appreciate hearing your overall views of the program and any additional thoughts or comments that you would like to share with ONR management.

At the completion of the review, we ask that you take some time to think about these issues in the context of what you heard in the programmatic portion of the review on the _____ and during the individual investigator presentations on the _____ and _____. Please put your thoughts down in writing in letter format. We would appreciate your input by _____, 2010.

I ask that each reviewer provide us with an individual review via letter. We recognize that you will discuss what you have learned together; we do, however, need to receive separate letters with your individually formed opinions rather than a consensus.

Please send your review directly to me: Dr. _____,
Office of Naval Research, 875 North Randolph St., Room _____,
Arlington, VA 22203-1995 or by email to _____@navy.mil. I
will forward them to _____.

If you have any questions about the logistics, please do not hesitate to contact either _____, or _____.

My thanks to you again and I look forward to seeing you in _____.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Conflict-of-Interest, Confidentiality Statement and
Gratuitous Services Agreement for Office of Naval Research Peer Review

**Conflicts-of-Interest, Confidentiality Statement and
Gratuitous Services Agreement for Office of Naval
Research Peer Reviewers**

1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. Your designation as an ONR peer reviewer requires that you be aware of potential conflicts of interest that may arise. Examples of situations, affiliations or relationships that may present a conflict of interest include but are not limited to:

a. Your Affiliations with an Institution. You may have a conflict of interest if you:

(1) Are currently employed by the institution whose work you are reviewing under this agreement as a professor, adjunct professor, visiting professor, or similar position;

(2) Have other employment, position, or arrangement with the institution (such as a consulting or advisory arrangement);

(3) Were previously employed by the institution within the last 12 months;

(4) Are being considered for employment at the institution;

(5) Have a formal or informal reemployment arrangement with the institution;

(6) Own securities of or have another financial interest in the institution;

(7) Are a current member of a visiting committee or similar body affiliated with the institution (any conflict of interest under this situation would extend only to proposals or applications originating with the department, school, or facility that the visiting committee or similar body advises);

(8) Hold any office, governing board membership, or relevant committee chairpersonship with the institution (ordinary membership in a professional society or association is not considered an office);

(9) Are currently enrolled as a student in the institution (any conflict of interest under this situation would arise only for proposals or applications that originate from the department or school in which you are a student); or

(10) Received and retained an honorarium or award from the institution within the last 12 months.

b. Your Relationship with an Investigator, Project Director, or Other Person who has a Personal Interest in the Project. You may have a conflict of interest if you and an investigator, project director, or other person who has a personal interest in the project:

(1) have a known family relationship, such as spouse, child, sibling, or parent;

(2) have now or had within the last ten years a business or professional partnership;

(3) had an association as thesis advisor or thesis student within the last ten years;

(4) collaborated on a project or on a book, article, report, or paper within the last five years; or

(5) co-edited a journal, compendium, or conference proceedings within the last 24 months;

c. Your Other Affiliations or Relationships. You may also have a conflict of interest if you:

(1) have a relationship, other than those described above, such as a close personal friendship or a long-standing scientific or personal conflict, that you think might tend to affect your judgment or be seen as doing so by a reasonable person familiar with the relationship; or

(2) hold any position, other than those described above, that would allow you to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the review.

(3) For the purpose of paragraphs b and c above, interests of the following persons are to be treated as if they were yours: your spouse, minor child, a relative living in your immediate household or anyone who is legally your domestic partner.

As an ONR reviewer, should any conflict arise during your term, you must bring the matter to the attention of the ONR Program Officer (PO). This official will determine how the

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matter should be handled and will tell you what further steps, if any, to take.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

a. No Use of "Insider" Information. If your designation gives you access to information not generally available to the public, you must not use that information for your personal benefit or make it available for the personal benefit of any other individual or organization.

b. Your Obligation to Maintain the Confidentiality of Information. You must not copy, quote, or otherwise use or disclose to anyone, including your graduate students or post-doctoral or research associates, any information from any project you are asked to review. During a review, you may be asked to execute a specific non-disclosure agreement pursuant to the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) covering the terms of use for particular information, material, technical data or computer software which may be business confidential, proprietary, sensitive or otherwise privileged. If you believe a colleague can make a substantial contribution to the review, please obtain permission from the ONR PO before disclosing either the contents of the project or the name of any applicant or principal investigator.

c. Your Obligation to Maintain the Confidentiality of the Review Process and Review. ONR keeps reviews and your identity as a reviewer of specific projects confidential to the maximum extent possible, except that we may send to PIs reviews of their own projects without your name, affiliation, or other identifying information. Please respect the confidentiality of all PIs and other reviewers. Do not disclose their identities, the relative assessments or rankings of projects by peer reviewers, or other details about the peer review.

d. Your Identity as a Reviewer will be Kept Confidential. I understand my identity as a reviewer of specific projects will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. Copies of written reviews that I submit may be sent to the PIs without my name and affiliation.

e. Your Agreement Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality. I have read the list of affiliations and relationships that could prevent my participation in matters involving such individuals or institutions. To the best of my knowledge, I have no affiliation or relationship that would prevent me from performing my panel duties. I understand that I

must contact the ONR PO if a conflict exists or arises during my service. I further understand that I must sign and return this Conflict-of-Interest and Confidentiality Statement to ONR before I may participate on a peer review panel. By signing below, I agree not to divulge or use any business confidential, proprietary, sensitive or otherwise privileged information during my service. I acknowledge that the owner of any proprietary information is a third-party beneficiary of this agreement. That third-party beneficiary, in addition to any other rights he may have, shall have the right of direct action against me to seek damages from any alleged breach of the confidentiality provisions of this Agreement or to otherwise enforce those provisions. This right of action extends as well against any person to whom the business confidential, proprietary, sensitive or otherwise privileged information was allegedly disclosed. I further acknowledge that violation of this Agreement as regards safeguarding non-public information could subject me to criminal and/or civil penalties.

3. GRATUITOUS SERVICES AGREEMENT. By signing this Agreement, I understand that the voluntary services I am rendering to ONR are completely "gratuitous," i.e., without compensation. I agree not to seek compensation from the Federal Government for any services I provide under this Agreement. I further understand that as a gratuitous service volunteer, I will not be considered a Federal employee for any purpose to include the Tort Claims provisions of Chapter 171 of Title 28, U.S. Code, or for the purpose of relating to compensation for work-related injuries provided under Section 8173 of Title 5, U.S. Code (33 U.S. Code 902-Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act) or Chapter 81 of Title 5, U.S. Code. I also understand that my provision of services does not entitle me to employment with a Federal agency or organization.

Reviewer's Name (Please Print): _____

Reviewer's Signature: _____

Date: _____