

MO Forum on Peer Review – aims and activities

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1st Workshop of the ESF MOForum on
Peer Review, Patricia Vogel (NWO)*

ESF Member Organisation Forum on Peer Review

Background: Peer review and grant awarding procedures: key to the quality of our performance as research organisations and of our image in the scientific community

New challenges and requirements for peer review arise because of changes to ways research is organised and funded

Aims of the Forum: an opportunity to exchange experiences and develop best practices, also from programmes dealing with inter-comparison of peer review in which MOs are involved.

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Activities

- International conference *Peer Review – Its Present and Future State*
Prague, October 2006
- Working Group meetings in 2007
- Outcomes: definition of areas of common interests; preparation of a workshop for ESF MOs

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review

Areas of common interests - topics for the workshop

- Standardisation of peer review processes across Europe
- Evaluating specific types of proposals
- International peer review and sharing of resources at the European level

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review

1st Workshop on Peer Review

Addressed to research managers, policy makers and researchers directly involved with peer review

Aims:

- Identify common challenging issues and questions regarding peer review
- Share innovative ideas and recent experiences
- Agree on joint actions
- Involve more ESF MOs in the Forum

Format

- Interactive and participative
- Concluding with specific plans for follow-up activities

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Follow-up activities

- Working out common principles (guidelines) for peer review
- Setting up a working group to investigate issues of common interests and bring together best practices
- Organising focused workshops on specific topics
- Launching a benchmarking study involving several organisations
- Other....

All participants are invited to share their ideas for new activities during discussions and in the interactive session

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Working Group membership

- Czech Research Council (GACR)
- Academy of Finland
- Health Research Board, Ireland
- INFN, Italy
- NWO, the Netherlands
- KNAW, the Netherlands
- Swedish RC
- EPSRC, UK
- MRC, UK
- ESF (coordinator)

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review

Core principles of Peer Review: a draft for discussion

Action: to discuss and agree on a set of main principles for each peer review process

Aims:

- to ensure fairness and quality of the process
- to improve efficiency through standardization
- to facilitate engaging reviewers across borders of organisations (national, disciplinary, etc.)

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Core principles of Peer Review: a draft for discussion

Why Peer Review?

- Public spending control: *ensuring high scientific quality of funded research and objectivity of decisions*
- Scientific quality control: *ensuring funded or published research to be competent, to be significant and to be original*

Topics for common principles of peer review in Europe

- Quality assurance
- Trust and reliability
- Open & flexible
- Fair
- Appropriate to the purpose
- Effective and efficient
- Impartiality
- Transparency of the process
- The Right to reply
- Separate assessment and decisions
- Guarantee the confidentiality of Peer Review where needed

Core principles of peer review: a draft for discussion (1)

- The Research Organisation is responsible for a good quality assurance of the peer review
- The Peer Review process should ensure trust and reliability
- To encourage that the best science is involved the Peer Review system is open to reviewers and applicants

Core principles of peer review: a draft for discussion (2)

- The peer review process is fair:
 - Prevent bias and guarantee the consistency of the peer review process across all schemes and disciplines
 - Ensure equal number of reviews per proposal
 - Have clear criteria for the selection of reviewers and ensure:
 - the rotation of reviewers
 - that also young reviewers are involved
 - gender balance of reviewers
 - Monitor quality of reviews and review panels

Core principles of peer review: a draft for discussion (3)

- The peer review process is appropriate to the type of proposed research and in proportion with the investment and complexity of the work.
- Appropriate selection methods are used (interviews, metrics, scores)

Core principles of peer review: a draft for discussion (4)

- Organise the Peer Review process effective and efficient:
 - Bear in mind costs (time investment) for applicants, reviewers and managers
 - Avoid carrying out multiple assessments of a proposal in national and international contexts
 - Provide appropriate information and training to reviewers

Core principles of peer review: a draft for discussion (5)

- Impartiality:
 - The Research Organisation has clear rules for the prevention of conflicts of interest and impartiality of reviewers and asks all participants to declare interests when carrying out peer review activities so that any conflicts can be identified and managed

Core principles of peer review: a draft for discussion (6)

- Give principal investigators the right to reply to the expert reviewers' assessments and (depends of the legal system) have the final right of appeal
- Separate assesment and decisions
- Guarantee the confidentiality of Peer Review where needed

Next steps

- draft version of common principles will be available for discussion
- Specific issues to work out in MO-Forum – invitation to join

Aim: common principles for peer review agreed by research organisations in Europe

Thank you for your attention