

### Ad Hoc Peer Reviews

Ad hoc peer reviews are peer reviews for technical and scientific quality conducted by one or more expert and independent scientists outside a regularly scheduled panel.

Ad hoc reviews for new or significantly modified projects have a similar process as a panel review process, however:

- the reviewers are not convened
- there is no panel chair
- the reviewers are not paid a stipend to perform the review
- the set of projects in the review do not include all the projects making up the National Program
- the SQR Officer compiles the recommendations for project plans rated as needing major revision or not feasible and directs the research team to respond to each recommendation. Research units receiving a no revision, minor revision, or moderate revision rating on their project plans read and consider all of the individual ad hoc peer reviews turned in.

Ad hoc reviewers receive project plans, perform in-depth reviews and mail the peer review form with an action class assignment back to the OSQR. The SQR Officer writes the recommendations for each project plan, based on the input from individual reviews. Finally, OSQR distributes the action classes and recommendations to Area Directors. Ad hoc reviewers are subject to the same confidentiality and conflict of interest policies as panel reviewers. Ad hoc reviewers fall into one of two categories:

#### *1. Ad Hoc Reviews Outside the National Program Peer Review Panels*

ARS recognizes that research projects are not static within even the best developed National Program Action Plans; they may be modified or created for reasons such as changes in mission or programmatic direction, Congressional mandates, redirection or new objectives, new initiatives or funding, and organizational and staffing changes. A new research project plan, or one that has been dramatically changed, may require an ad hoc peer review if the panel review session for its National Program begins more than two years later. Existing research projects that have been combined into a single project need not be peer reviewed again if the goals and approaches of the research have not been substantially altered in the process. (See section on “Determination of Project Plans to be Reviewed.”)

Each research project plan being reviewed for quality through the ad hoc review process is required to receive at least three independent ad hoc reviews. The SQR Officer selects ad hoc reviewers from a pool of nominated reviewers. Ad hoc review recommendations are compiled by the OSQR and distributed to the appropriate Area Director. However, the SQR Officer writes the final recommendations and action class based on the ad hoc reviewers’ comments and recommendations when the cumulative action class is “major revision required” or “not feasible.” Lead scientists are required to formally submit their response to an ad hoc review to their Area Director.

*2. Ad Hoc Reviews to Supplement Expertise on a Panel Peer Review.* Panel chairs may determine it is necessary or desirable for a particular research project plan to be critically reviewed by a scientific expert not available on their panel. In this case, the OSQR can send the research project plan to one or more ad hoc reviewers to supplement the reviews

of the panel. Panel chairs select panel reviewers. An ad hoc reviewer used in conjunction with a panel may not be designated as the primary reviewer. The completed ad hoc review is given to the primary reviewer prior to the panel review session. The primary reviewer must discuss the findings and recommendations of the ad hoc review during panel discussions of the project plan for the panel's consideration.

**Comments  
for Section 7  
Ad Hoc Reviews**