

# Internet Assisted Review (IAR) Version 4.2.7 Release Notes

## New Feature

### ***Updated Text on Confidentiality Agreement***

The text on the *Confidentiality Agreement* – required by every Reviewer to electronically sign before access to a meeting is granted – has been modified according to an NIH Review Policy request. The new, stronger wording emphasizes Reviewers’ responsibilities for maintaining confidentiality during the peer review process and the penalties for ignoring these rules.

**NIH Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Rules:  
Information for Reviewers of NIH Grant Applications and R&D Contract Proposals**

Rules related to the confidentiality of information disclosed to advisory committee members in the course of NIH peer review *prohibit* a peer reviewer serving on an NIH peer review committee from, among other actions:

- Sharing applications, proposals, or meeting materials with anyone who has not been officially designated to participate in the peer review meeting, including but not limited to colleagues, lab members, fellows, students, applicants, offerors or employees of an offeror.
- Granting anyone who has not been officially designated to participate in the peer review process access to any NIH secure computer system or advisory committee meeting using his or her password or credentials, or through shared communication.
- Disclosing, in any manner, information about the committee deliberations, discussions, evaluations, or documents to anyone who has not been officially designated to participate in the peer review meeting, including but not limited to a colleague, lab member, fellow, student, applicant, offeror or employee of an offeror.
- Disclosing, in any manner, information about the committee deliberations, discussions, or evaluations related to an application or proposal to another member who has declared a real or apparent conflict of interest (consistent with the NIH peer review regulations at [42 CFR 52h](#)) with that application or proposal.
- Using information contained in an application or proposal for his/her personal benefit or making such information available for the personal benefit of any other individual or organization.
- Disclosing procurement information prior to the award of a contract.
- Participating in NIH peer review without signing a confidentiality certification, below.

The NIH may take steps in response to a violation of the above rules, in order to preserve the integrity of the NIH review process. Depending on the specific circumstances, such steps may include but not be limited to:

- Notifying or requesting information from a reviewer’s institution.
- Terminating a reviewer’s service.
- Notifying the NIH Office of Management Assessment (OMA) with possible referral to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (OIG).
- Pursuing a referral for government-wide suspension or debarment.

**Certification**

I certify that I have read, and understand, the “NIH Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Rules: Information for Reviewers” above. With the understanding that any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties (18 USC 1001), I certify that I fully understand the confidential nature of the NIH peer review process, including reviewer recruitment, and agree:

- (1) to destroy, delete, and/or return all materials related to applications or proposals, associated materials made available to reviewers, information and materials related to the recruitment process and reviews, reviewers’ evaluations, and discussions during review meetings;
- (2) not to grant anyone who has not been officially designated to participate in the peer review meeting access to any NIH secure computer system or peer review meeting;
- (3) not to disclose or discuss the applications or proposals, associated materials made available to reviewers, information and materials related to the recruitment process and reviews, reviewers’ evaluations, and discussions during review meetings with any other individual except as authorized by the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) or other designated NIH official;
- (4) not to disclose information about the committee deliberations, discussions, or evaluations related to an application or proposal to another member who has declared a real or apparent conflict of interest (consistent with the NIH peer review regulations at [42 CFR 52h](#) ) with that application or proposal;
- (5) not to use information contained in an application or proposal for my personal benefit or make such information available for the personal benefit of any other individual or organization;
- (6) not to disclose procurement information prior to the award of a contract; and
- (7) to refer all inquiries concerning the recruitment or review, including inquiries related to these Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Rules and/or Certification, to the SRO or other designated NIH official.

Figure 1: Updated Confidentiality Agreement