Internet Assisted Review (IAR) Release Notes Reviewers Only Version 2.21.1.13

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Information for Reviewers

The information in this section applies to reviewers participating in NIH review meetings only. For information pertaining to SROs, see the general IAR release notes for April 2009. This information, unless otherwise noted, does not apply to meetings held by agencies other than NIH.

New Scoring Scale

The scoring scale has changed. Previously applications were scored on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0, with decimals. Now applications are scored on a scale of 1 to 9, in whole numbers, no decimal places. 1 is exceptional and 9 is poor.

When It Begins

These changes go into effect with the 2009/10 council round. The new scoring scale will be supported on April 24, 2009 for the 2009/10 council round.

Where It Applies

These changes apply only to NIH meetings. Non-NIH meetings will continue to use the current decimal scoring. However if a non-NIH application is reviewed in an NIH meeting, then the application will receive scores based on the new scoring system.

Criterion Scores

Criterion scores are 5 new categories for reviewers to consider according to scientific and technical merit. Reviewers can give a separate score for each category on the scale of 1 to 9. 1 is exceptional and 9 is poor.

Where Criterion Scores Are Entered

Criterion scores are entered on the Submit Critique and Preliminary Score screen in IAR. Reviewers should NOT include Criterion scores in their critique file. Once the scores are entered, they will appear on various screens in IAR and Peer Review, as well as in the .pdf version of the critique and in the Preliminary Summary Statement. Eventually these scores will be displayed in the Summary Statement above the text of each critique.

Criterion Score Labels

Labels for 5 core review criteria (which refers to Criterion scores) will be displayed on screens and reports where Criterion scores can be viewed or entered. For example, the default labels for R01 applications comprise the following:

- Significance
- Investigator(s)
- Innovation
- Approach
- Environment

Additional review criteria may be used in the review of various grants. These criteria will be available in the critique template. The IAR system will only support the scoring of five core criteria.

Criterion Score Labels may vary based on the funding mechanism or the RFA/PA. The system will display the correct labels for the type of application, based on the RFA/PA number.

Preliminary Overall Scores

In addition to the Criterion scores, reviewers can submit a Preliminary Overall score for an application. In IAR this is still referred to as simply the Preliminary score.

This score is also given on the new 1 to 9 scale. Now all Preliminary scores must be numeric. Non-numeric values are no longer accepted by IAR as a Preliminary score.

The Preliminary score is entered on the Submit Critique and Preliminary Score screen (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Submit Critique and Preliminary Score

Now Preliminary scores can be given by unassigned reviewers. However, the Average Preliminary score for an application will be calculated from scores submitted by assigned reviewers only (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Preliminary Score Matrix with Average

NOTE: The Preliminary score should be determined independently. The Preliminary score is a separate score, not the average of the Criterion scores.

Final Scores

At the time of Final Scoring in IAR, reviewers (except for mail reviewers) and the SRO on behalf of the reviewer can submit Final scores for each application.

Now the Final score uses the new scale of 1 to 9, but unlike Preliminary and Criterion scores, Final scores may also be set to the following:

- ND – Not Discussed (New)

- NR – Not Recommended

- DF – Deferred

- NP – Not Present

- AB – Abstain

- CF – Conflict

New Score – Not Discussed (ND)

A new score has been created: ND or Not Discussed. ND replaces the old scoring label UN, which stood for Unscored.

It is a new NIH Peer Review policy requirement that all applications must receive Criterion and Preliminary scores. However there may be some applications that upon initial review do not have the quality necessary to be discussed at the review meeting. These applications will be designated ND.

Viewing All Scores

Reviewers have the ability to view all the scores that have been submitted for any application with which they have no conflict. The View All Scores popup lists each Reviewer Name, the Reviewer Role, Voter ID, the Criterion scores, and the Preliminary score for the application (see Figure 3).

To view all scores:

In the Applications/Application Number column on the List of Applications screen, select the **View All Scores** link for a particular application.

--OR--

In the Applications/Application Number column on the Preliminary Score Matrix screen, select the **View All Scores** link for a particular application.

Figure 3: View All Scores for Reviewers

Templates

The SRO will provide reviewers and discussants with templates to assist them in writing critiques under the new review guidelines. The instruction to the templates will explain how to evaluate applications based on five core criteria.

To make the templates available in IAR, the SRO must save the templates in the meeting materials.

Critique File

Reviewers should not enter Criterion or Preliminary scores in their critiques. The scores must be entered directly on the Submit Critique and Preliminary Score screen.

The system will automatically pull the Criterion scores and place them at the beginning of the .pdf version of the critique. If the reviewer changes the Criterion scores after entering them, the .pdf critique file will automatically be regenerated to reflect this change.

Post-Meeting

After the meeting, reviewers can resubmit their 5 Criterion scores and critique during the optional Edit phase. Only one version of Criterion scores per reviewer per application will be retained. Any Criterion scores that are modified after the meeting will automatically overwrite the original Criterion scores.

Assigned Reviewers

To submit Criterion and/or Preliminary scores, an assigned reviewer must upload a critique file prior to or at the time of submission.

Unassigned Reviewers

If the SRO/ESA allows it, unassigned reviewers have the ability to submit Criterion scores and critiques during the Submit and Edit Phases of the meeting. The submission of preliminary scores by unassigned reviewers was not previously allowed.

If the SRO/ESA allows it, unassigned reviewers may submit scores without submitting a critique file.

Criterion scores and critiques submitted by unassigned reviewers will be displayed at the end of the Preliminary Summary Statement.

Discussants

If the SRO/ESA allows it, discussants may submit scores without submitting a critique file.

Criterion scores and critiques submitted by discussants will be displayed at the end of the Preliminary Summary Statement.

Submitting the Criterion Scores and Preliminary Score

1. In the Action column on the List of Applications screen, select the **Submit** hyperlink that corresponds to the application (see Figure 4). The Submit Critique and Preliminary Score screen is displayed (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: List of Applications

Figure 5: Submit Critique and Preliminary Score

2. Select a number in the drop-down list for each Criterion Score and for the Preliminary Score.

NOTE: You can use the **Tab** key to navigate through the fields and the number keys to enter a numeric value.

3. To submit a critique at the same time as the scores, **Browse** for the critique file.

4. Select the **Submit** button.

5. Select the **Confirm** button on the Confirmation screen.

Entering the Final Scores

If reviewers entered Criterion scores during the Submit phase, the scores can be viewed on the Voter Sheet. If the scores are entered or updated, the modifications are reflected in the .pdf version of the critique.

If reviewers are in conflict with the application, they cannot enter scores.

Assigned reviewers cannot enter Criterion scores if the critique has not been submitted.

If unassigned reviewers and discussants are allowed to submit scores without a critique, they can submit scores at the time of final scoring.

1. In the Action column on the List of Meetings screen, select the **View List of Applications** link (see Figure 6). The List of Applications screen is displayed (see Figure 7).

Figure 6: List of Meetings

Figure 7: List of Applications

2. Select the **Reviewer Voter Sheet** link for the application. The Voter Sheet screen is displayed (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Voter Sheet

NOTE: The reviewer Voter Sheet link will become available at the time of final scoring.

3. In the Final Score column, enter the **Final Score** for each application.

4. Select either the **Save All** or **Save All and Return** button.

Deleting Critiques and Scores

To delete critiques and scores:

1. In the Action column on the List of Applications screen, select the **Delete** hyperlink that corresponds to the application (see Figure 9). The Delete Critique/Score screen is displayed (see Figure 10).

Figure 9: List of Applications

Figure 10: Delete Critique/Score

2. Verify that you have selected the correct Application, Title, PI Name, and Reviewer Type.

3. Select the Delete Option radio button for either **Score Only** or **Both Critique and Score**.

NOTE: The **Critique Only** option has been removed because scores must be included with a critique in most cases.

4. Select the **Submit** button.

5. Select the **Continue** button.

Deleting Final Scores

To delete Final Scores:

1. In the Action column on the List of Meetings screen, select the **View List of Applications** link (see Figure 11). The List of Applications screen is displayed (see Figure 12).

Figure 11: List of Meetings

Figure 12: List of Applications

2. Select the **Reviewer Voter Sheet** hyperlink. The Voter Sheet screen is displayed (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Voter Sheet

3. In the Final Score column, clear each box.

4. Select the **Save All and Return** button.