



**OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**



LABORATORY SCIENCE REVIEWS

OAR No. 001-07

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SECTION 1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes the authorities and responsibilities for managing periodic science reviews of research laboratories in the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR).

SECTION 2. BACKGROUND

As the primary research and development organization within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), OAR conducts research in three major areas: weather and air quality; climate; and ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. OAR research laboratories conduct an integrated program of research, technology development, and services to improve understanding of the Earth system and improve NOAA predictive capabilities.

OAR can most effectively achieve consistent standards of excellence for its scientific activities through periodic reviews of its research laboratories. The purpose of these reviews is to provide external assessments of the effectiveness of laboratories in meeting OAR goals and objectives as specified in NOAA strategic and operating plans. Such reviews can enhance performance of programs, encourage innovative and collaborative approaches to address scientific and technical issues related to the physical environment, articulate research contributions toward achieving the NOAA mission, and deliver evidence to stakeholders of the benefits of NOAA research.

SECTION 3. SCOPE

This policy is limited to discussion about evaluations and assessments of science and its application in research laboratories within the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.

SECTION 4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to OAR Headquarters components, and OAR research laboratories that include Air Resources Laboratory (ARL), Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML), Earth System Research Laboratory (ESRL), Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (GFDL), Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL), and the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL).

SECTION 5. RESPONSIBILITIES (See Enclosure A)

SECTION 6. POLICY

Science Reviews evaluate quality, relevance and value of research and development to both internal

and external interests, and help to strategically position the laboratory for science planning in the future. Review and evaluation of science is a continuum that begins with the NOAA Strategic Plan and culminates with external reviews of the research organization. The OAR Assistant Administrator (AA) charges and appoints an expert panel for science reviews. The Office of Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes (LCI) facilitates and establishes a schedule of periodic science reviews of the laboratories that ensures OAR laboratory research is linked to the NOAA Strategic Plan, relevant to NOAA Research mission and priorities, and consistent with NOAA planning, programming, and budgeting.

Each research laboratory will undergo a science review once every four years¹¹ (*herein referred to as a Quadrennial Science Review (QSR)*), at the discretion of the OAR AA, or until superseded by NOAA policy. Laboratories will be evaluated according to research criteria that are detailed in the Laboratory Science Review Implementation Plan (SRIP).

SECTION 7. PROCEDURES

The Deputy Assistant Administrator for Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes will coordinate procedures for Quadrennial Science Reviews by developing a Science Review Implementation Plan (SRIP). The reviews will be conducted in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

SECTION 8. EXCLUSIONS

The internal management and administrative review of research laboratories is not addressed in this document. The OAR Chief Financial Officer (CFO) maintains primary responsibility in establishing policy and procedures for an Annual Internal Review (AIR) which assesses the financial health and business practices of OAR research laboratories.

SECTION 9. REVISIONS

The Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation (PPE) is responsible for developing and revising this policy for the OAR Assistant Administrator (AA). Submit recommended changes to this policy to OAR Headquarters, The Director of Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation, SSMC3 11th Floor, Silver Spring Maryland 20910.

SECTION 10. DISTRIBUTION. OAR-wide and OAR internet accessible.

SECTION 11. REFERENCES. National Academy of Sciences, Committee on Science, Engineering, and Policy, National Academy Press (1999): Evaluating Federal Research Programs



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¹¹ Science Reviews for the Earth System Research Laboratory will be conducted separately for chemical and physical sciences.

**ENCLOSURE A
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Assistant Administrator (AA). The AA authorizes and approves all policies associated with review and evaluation of OAR research laboratories. The AA charges and appoints a review panel of experts, receives the final summary report, and makes final decisions on actions to be taken as a result of the review. The AA delegates responsibility for the conduct of the review to the DAA for Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO coordinates with OAR components to ensure sufficient resources are available for laboratory science reviews.

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Labs and Cooperative Institutes (DAA LCI). The DAA LCI, in collaboration with the Laboratory Directors, is the lead management official for conducting laboratory science reviews. The DAA LCI reviews and approves the laboratory science implementation plan, suggests potential review panel members, and meets with the review panel to plan the science review. The DAA reviews the summary report and makes recommendations to the AA on actions to be taken in response to the report. In instances where the DAA LCI is also the Director of the Laboratory being reviewed, the responsibilities as the lead management official for the review will be transferred to the DAA for Programs and Administration (DAA P&A).

Director of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation (DPPE). The Director PPE develops policy for science review of OAR research laboratories, provides OAR-level corporate oversight for reviews to ensure conformance with policy, and advises DAA LCI on science review issues. DPPE reviews the draft summary report for clarification and accuracy of content, and consistency of findings with policy prior to DAA review.

Executive Director, Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes (Exec Dir, LCI). The Executive Director LCI develops a Laboratory Science Review Implementation Plan (SRIP) and implements the review process in accordance with the SRIP. In collaboration with CFO, the Executive Director LCI ensures resource requirements are available to support the review. In collaboration with the laboratory directors, the Exec Dir, LCI analyzes final review panel recommendations; reviews draft summary report for technical corrections and comments; and tracks and monitors implementation of recommendations. The Executive Director appoints a Headquarters liaison to work with a laboratory review coordinator, appointed by each Laboratory Director, on actions identified in the laboratory science implementation plan.

Laboratory Directors. Laboratory Directors collaborate with DAA LCI (or DAA P&A) to define the scope, emphasis, and issues of the review and provide input on potential reviewers. In accordance with the implementation plan the laboratory directors prepare briefing materials, responses to specific questions, and other pertinent information for the Review Panel. Laboratory Directors identify a laboratory review coordinator to work with the Headquarters liaison to complete actions identified in the implementation plan and ensure on-site logistical support for science reviews. Laboratory Directors review the draft report for technical corrections and comments; and prepare the initial draft OAR response to review findings and recommendations for DAA LCI.