



Accessing a Password-Protected CD: Instructions for Reviewers

To enhance the security of grant application information, NIH is implementing a safeguard to password-protect data on the compact discs (CDs) provided to reviewers prior to study section meetings.

-Each grant application and related material will be bundled into one PDF and password protected on the CD [related material includes prior summary statements, appendix materials, and additional materials (eAdditions)].

-The password for the CD is obtained by accessing the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) site for the meeting.

Instructions for Reviewers

TO OBTAIN THE CD PASSWORD

Click on <https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/> and log on to eRA Commons.

- Click on the **Internet Assisted Review** tab; go to the List of Meetings, select meeting, and click on the **CD Password link** under the Action column to go to the View Password page.
- On the View Password screen that is displayed, copy the CD password listed for the meeting.
- If you cannot access the IAR, the password may be obtained from the SRO for the meeting. The eRA Help Desk will not have access to the password for a meeting; please contact the SRO if you are unable to obtain the password from IAR and s/he can provide you with the CD password either via email or by phone.

USING THE CD PASSWORD

- Insert the CD into the computer drive. On the welcome screen, you will see: 'Documents on this CD are Password Protected.' '**Click Here to Continue**' to get to the Main Menu that lists the applications.
- To access Grant Applications Sorted by GRANT NUMBER or by PI NAME, click on a file and you will be prompted for the CD password.
- Paste the password in the required field and click on OK.

This password will be required every time you access a grant application bundle (i.e. the grant application, summary statement, appendix or additional material all merged into a single PDF) You can freely navigate between these documents in a single PDF without entering a password. , You will need the password again to access a separate grant application PDF.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **If I copy the protected file from the CD and open the files on my computer or download the files to another portable medium such as a flash drive, will the files still be password protected?**
Yes. The CD password prompt will be displayed every time a reviewer requests to open a grant application PDF file regardless of where information from the CD is saved.
- **I do not have access to the web to get to Internet Assisted Review, so I cannot obtain the CD password. What should I do?**
Call your SRO and s/he can give you the password for the CD.
- **When I copy the password from IAR and then go to paste it into the CD, the password appears to paste (*all you actually see are asterisks*) but I get an error saying 'The Password is Incorrect.' What may have happened?**
When you copy the password from IAR, it is saved in the 'clipboard' on your computer. If you copy anything else in the meantime, that newly copied information overwrites the clipboard and the password is now replaced by the newly copied information; a 'clipboard' is not a good place to save information you wish to use again. To better save the password, you may wish to copy it from the IAR to a Word file, Notebook, or some other file so that you can save it and access it without having to return to the IAR again or depend on the 'clipboard'. Do not attach the password to the CD by writing it on the CD or other means that directly identifies the password with the CD. This may be considered a violation of the confidentiality agreement you have signed obligating each reviewer to protect materials associated with peer review of NIH grant applications.
- **Do I need the password to open the CD?**
You do not need the CD password to see the CD Welcome screen and the lists of applications, but you will need the CD password to open a PDF grant file.
- **Do I need the CD password to see the program announcement or other instructions contained on the CD?**
No, these files are accessible without having to use the CD password.
- **Can I share my CD password?**
No, this password is part of your agreement to keep all peer review meeting materials confidential and you should keep the password secure. Do not share the password with others.
- **Can I use this password for CDs for more than one peer review meeting?**
No, the password is created specifically for the CDs for one particular review meeting. It is a unique password for the meeting and will not work on CDs for other peer review meetings.
- **How do I know if a password is needed to use the CD?**
In general, all CDs created by Quality Associates, Inc., on or after May 15, 2008, will require use of a password. The password CDs will be labeled as needing a password and the password will be available on the IAR. If none of these conditions apply, you may be working with a CD that was created before the implementation date of May 15, 2008. The CD creation date is on the CD label, near the bottom, which will aid you in identifying the creation date and the applicability of these instructions.
- **Will these instructions apply to any peer review meeting CD?**

No, these instructions apply only to CDs created by the NIH contractor, Quality Associates, Inc. (QAI). CDs that are created by QAI are labeled as such in small print along the bottom of the CD label. It is possible that you will receive CDs for peer review meetings that are not created by QAI; these instructions are not applicable if the CDs were created by someone other than QAI and you will receive specific instructions that apply.

- **Do these instructions apply to CDs created for Advisory Council purposes?**

No, typically CDs used in Council are not created by QAI, so you will receive instructions specific for CDs used by Council. However, members of NIH Advisory Councils and Boards are reminded of their obligations as Special Government Employees to take all prudent measures to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive federal information.

- **What do I do if I need more help?**

Contact the SRO for the meeting or contact the eRA Help Desk at <http://itservicedesk.nih.gov/era/> or 301-402-7469 (toll-free 1-866-504-9552)