eCOI Users’ Guide  
(Peer Review/IAR)  

Version 2.13.0.0 – December 14, 2007
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Electronic Conflict of Interest (eCOI)

With this IAR release, Reviewers can *electronically* sign Conflict of Interest forms. The eCOI forms are accessed from the IAR module. eCOIs will co-exist with the paper forms. The form will be available as long as reviewers have access to the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) module for that particular meeting. There is no change in the conflict of interest policy with the electronic forms’ introduction *(see Grant Application Reviewers—Confidentiality and Non Disclosure Rules on page 22, or access the policy at [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/COI_Information.pdf](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/COI_Information.pdf)).*

**NOTE:** The eRA system maintains a meeting’s eCOI information for 10 years.
Reviewers—eCOI

Reviewers access specific eCOI forms from the **List of Meetings** screen when the “Allow eCOI Submission” meeting option is enabled (see **Enable/Disable eCOI Meeting-Wide Option** on page 12).

To access an eCOI form:

1. Click the desired form’s link on the **List of Meetings** screen (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1: List of Meetings Screen (IAR0001).](image)

**NOTE:** The **Post-Meeting COI Form** link is not available for reviewers designated as “Mail/Outside Opinion Reviewers” in the Committee Management system.

To sign the **Pre-meeting COI Form**:

1. Open the **Pre-meeting COI Form** (see **Access eCOI Forms** on page 2).
   - The **Pre Meeting Form** screen displays (see Figure 2).
Figure 2: Pre Meeting Form Screen.

2. Click the Pre-meeting COI Form – Page 2-3 (suffix) link to read COI certification rules and information.

NOTE: The Pre-meeting COI Form – Page 2-3 (suffix) links displays as follows:

The link displays with the “Fed” suffix when the user is a federal employee as specified within the Committee Management system.

The link displays with the “non-Fed” suffix when the user is not a federal employee as specified within the Committee Management system.

3. Click the desired radio button (see Pre-meeting COI Form Fields/Links/Actions on page 4 for radio button selection descriptions).

NOTE: Only one radio button can be selected and at least one radio button must be selected to certify the form.

4. Click the [Certify] button to electronically sign the form.

The system redisplay the Pre Meeting Form screen with the electronic signature (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Pre Meeting Form—Electronic Signature.

NOTE: Click the [Cancel] button to return to the List of Meetings screen.
**NOTE:** The Pre-meeting COI Form can be re-signed when necessary. To re-sign the form, follow steps 1 through 4 above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Meetings</td>
<td>When clicked, displays the List of Meetings screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Personnel Institutions</td>
<td>When clicked, displays the “Unique Institutions - Project Personnel Report”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Meeting COI Form – Page 2-3 (Fed)</td>
<td>When clicked, displays rules and information related to COI certification for federal employees. See Pre-meeting COI Form – Page 2-3 (Fed / non-Fed) on page 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewer Name</td>
<td>The last and first name of the individual certifying the form. The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>The reviewer’s address—the system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Review Group</td>
<td>Identifies the meeting related to the COI certification. The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date(s) of Review</td>
<td>The meeting’s start and end date in Month DD, YYYY – Month DD, YYYY format. The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Button 1</td>
<td>“I have read the attached “DHHS Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Rules and Information for Reviewers” and have examined the list of applications/proposals to be reviewed, and hereby certify that, based on the information provided to me, I do not have a conflict of interest in any of them.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reviewers—eCOI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio Button 2</td>
<td>“For grant application reviews only: I have read the attached &quot;DHHS Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Rules and Information for Reviewers&quot; and examined the list of applications to be reviewed and hereby certify that, based on the information provided, I have a conflict of interest in the specific applications listed below and hereby recuse myself from their review.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Button 3</td>
<td>“For contract proposal reviews only: I have read the attached &quot;DHHS Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Rules and Information for Reviewers&quot; and examined the list of proposals to be reviewed and hereby certify that based on the information provided, I have a conflict of interest in the specific proposals listed below and hereby recuse myself from their reviews (requires a waiver to participate in review meeting).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications in Conflict</td>
<td>A list of applications that the SRA has designated as in conflict. Displays the following: PI Name – last, First name of the PI Grant # - The grant Number of the proposal The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>“I certify that I have read the attached &quot;DHHS Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Rules and Information for Reviewers.&quot; Under penalty of perjury (US Code Title 18 chapter 47 section 1001), I certify that to the best of my knowledge I have disclosed all conflicts of interest that I may have with the applications or R&amp;D contract proposals and I fully understand the confidential nature of the review process and agree: (1) to destroy or return all materials related to it; (2) not to disclose or discuss the materials associated with the review, my evaluation, or the review meeting with any other individual except as authorized by the Scientific Review Administrator (SRA) or other designated DHHS official; (3) not to disclose procurement information prior to the award of a contract; and (4) to refer all inquiries concerning the review to the SRA or other designated DHHS official.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Certify</td>
<td>See Click the <a href="#">I Certify button to electronically sign the form on page 3</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel</td>
<td>When clicked before signing, returns the user to the List of Meetings screen leaving the form unsigned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/Link/Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Signature**    | Displays the following when the form is signed:  
|                  | “Electronically signed by [Reviewer Last Name, Reviewer First Name] via Internet Assisted Review on MM/DD/YYYY HH:MI AM/PM.  
|                  | The system automatically determines the displayed name value. |

**Sign the Post-meeting COI Form**

A system generated email *(see Email Reminder Text on page 8)* is forwarded to reviewers as a reminder to sign the Post-meeting COI Form when the following conditions exist:

- The “Allow eCOI Submission” option is enabled.
- The reviewer is not designated as “Mail/Outside Opinion Reviewers” in the Committee Management system.
- The reviewer did not sign the form.
- The meeting end date has past.
- The meeting “Edit” phase (if exists) has not yet past.
- The meeting “Read” phase (if “Edit” phase does not exist) has not yet past.

To sign the **Post-meeting COI Form**:

1. Open the **Post-meeting COI Form** *(see Access eCOI Forms on page 2).*

**NOTE:** The Post-meeting COI Form is **not** available to reviewers designated as “Mail/Outside Opinion Reviewers” in the Committee Management system.

- The **Post Meeting Form** screen displays *(see Figure 4).*
The following information was removed from Figure 4 to maintain data privacy:

Scientific Review Group
Printed Name (Reviewer Name)
Electronic Signature (Reviewer Name)

Figure 4: Post Meeting Form Screen.

2. Click the [ ] button to electronically sign the form.
   - The system redisplay the Post Meeting Form screen with the reviewer’s printed name and electronic signature (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Post Meeting Form—Electronic Signature.

NOTE: Click the [ ] button to return to the List of Meetings screen.

NOTE: The Post-meeting COI Form can be re-signed when necessary.
To re-sign the form, follow steps 1 and 2 above.

Post-meeting COI Form Fields, Links, Actions

The following list describes Post Meeting Form screen fields, links, and actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Meetings</td>
<td>When clicked, displays the List of Meetings screen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scientific Review Group
Identifies the meeting related to the COI certification. The system automatically determines the displayed value.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date(s) of Review</td>
<td>The meeting’s start and end date in Month DD, YYYY – Month DD, YYYY format. The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Certify (Action Button)</td>
<td>See Click the button to electronically sign the form on page 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel (Action Button)</td>
<td>When clicked before signing, returns the user to the List of Meetings screen leaving the form unsigned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Displays the following when the form is signed: “Electronically signed by [Reviewer Last Name, Reviewer First Name] via Internet Assisted Review on MM/DD/YYYY HH:MI AM/PM” The system automatically determines the displayed name value.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Email Reminder Text**

“Our records indicate that you still need to certify the Post-Meeting Conflict of Interest form for the [Meeting Identifier] meeting that took place on [Meeting Start Date]. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requires us to file these documents in order to close out the meeting, and timely completion of this task is an essential part of my duties as the Designated Federal Official who was appointed to this meeting. Please log into your Commons account at http://commons.era.nih.gov, navigate to Internet Assisted Review, and click the Post-Meeting COI Form link next to the meeting. Click [I Certify] button on the bottom of the page after you read the form.

Thank you for your cooperation with this request. As always, we are grateful for your participation in the peer review process.”

**Sign the SRG Minutes/Budget Form**

The SRG Minutes/Budget Form is accessed from the List of Meetings screen. SRAs sign the form; reviewers sign the form only when the “Allow eCOI Submission” option is enabled (see Enable/Disable eCOI Meeting-Wide Option on page 12), and the reviewer is designated as a signee by the SRA (see Designate SRG Minutes/Budget Signee on page 17).

To sign the SRG Minutes/Budget Form:

1. Open the SRG Minutes/Budget Form (see Access eCOI Forms on page 2).
   - The SRG Minutes/Budget Form screen displays (see Figure 6).
2. Enter the Meeting Adjourned Time and Meeting Adjourned Date (see Figure 7).

![Figure 7: View of Meeting Adjourned Time and Date.](image)

**NOTE:** The time and date fields must be entered before signing the form.

3. Click the [I Certify] button to electronically sign the form:

   a. Designees (reviewers/chairpersons) — click the [I Certify] button adjacent to their name on the lower left of the screen.

   b. SRAs — click the [I Certify] button adjacent to their name on the lower right of the screen.

   - The system redisplays the SRG Minutes/Budget Form screen with the electronic signature (see Figure 8).

![Figure 8: SRG Minutes/Budget Form—Electronic Signatures.](image)

**NOTE:** Click the [Cancel] button to return to the List of Meetings screen.
NOTE: The SRG Minutes/Budget Form can be re-signed and the Meeting Adjourned Time and Meeting Adjourned Date can be re-entered. To re-sign the form, follow steps 1 through 3 above.

Multiple Reviewers (designees)

The SRG Minutes/Budget Form screen displays all reviewers with signee designation and displays the button only for the specific designee accessing the form (see Figure 9). SRAs and reviewers cannot sign the form for other designees.

Multiple designees (reviewers/chairpersons)

Figure 9: Partial View SRG Minutes/Budget Form Screen (IAR0904).

SRG Minutes/Budget Form Fields, Links, Actions

The following list describes SRG Minutes/Budget Form screen fields, links, and actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjourned Meeting Date</td>
<td>The date the meeting was adjourned. The Adjourned Meeting Date must be entered before signing the form. The valid format is mm/dd/yyyy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourned Meeting Time</td>
<td>The time the meeting was adjourned. The Adjourned Meeting Time must be entered before signing the form. The valid format is HH:MI AM/PM, for example—1:15 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRA</td>
<td>The meeting’s SRA first and last name. The SRA field displays on the screen’s lower right. The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/Link/Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>The reviewer’s (designated as signee) first and last name. The Chairperson field displays on the screen’s lower left. More than one can display. The system automatically determines the displayed value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Certify (Action Button)</td>
<td>See Click the I Certify button to electronically sign the form on page 9. This button displays for reviewers designated as signees and SRAs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Displays the following when the form is signed: “Electronically signed by [last, first name] via Internet Assisted Review on MM/DD/YYYY HH:MI AM/PM. The system automatically determines the displayed name value. The SRA’s electronic signature displays on the SRG Minutes/Budget Form screen’s lower right. The reviewer’s (with signee designation) electronic signature displays on the SRG Minutes/Budget Form screen’s lower left for each designee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel (Action Button)</td>
<td>When clicked before signing, returns the user to the List of Meetings screen leaving the form unsigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enable/Disable eCOI Meeting-Wide Option

The IAR Control Center now incorporates a new feature—Allow eCOI Submission. This new feature allows SRAs/GTAs to control reviewer access to eCOI forms.

To enable or disable eCOI access:

1. Access the Control Center screen in IAR.
2. Click the Edit link in the IAR Phases and Options section (see Figure 10).

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**Figure 10:** Control Center Screen Partial View (IAR0002).

- The Control Center – Edit IAR Phases and Options screen displays (see Figure 11).
3. Select the Yes (enable) or No (disable) radio button option on the Control Center – Edit IAR Phases and Options screen.

   NOTE: The Allow eCOI Submission default value is No.

Track eCOI Forms

IAR eCOI features include a new Track Conflict of Interest screen that allows SRAs/GTAs to monitor eCOI reviewer signatures.

To access the Track Conflict of Interest screen from the List of Meetings screen:

1. Click the Track COI Forms link in a listed meeting’s Action column (see Figure 12).

   Figure 12: List of Meetings Screen (IAR0001).
   - The Track Conflict of Interest Forms screen displays (see Figure 14).

To access the Track Conflict of Interest screen from the Control Center screen:

1. Click the Track COI Forms link (see Figure 13).
**Track COI Forms Link**

The following information was removed from Figure 14 to maintain data privacy:

- Meeting Title
- Meeting Identifier
- Meeting Phase
- Reviewer Name
- User ID

**No Reviewers Message**

There are no reviewers on the Meeting Roster for this meeting.

**Figure 15: Partial View Track Conflict of Interest Screen (IAR0900).**

**Track Conflict of Interest Forms Screen—Fields, Links, Actions**

The following list describes Track Conflict of Interest Forms screen fields, links, and actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Title</td>
<td>The title of the meeting or panel name if meeting is SEP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Identifier</td>
<td>Displays a value used to distinguish the meeting, for example: “2008/01 GCMB”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Phase</td>
<td>The meeting’s current IAR phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Dates</td>
<td>The meeting’s actual start and finish dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiques Due</td>
<td>The date and time application critiques are due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/Link/Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Meetings (Hypertext Link)</td>
<td>When clicked, displays the List of Meetings screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Center (Hypertext Link)</td>
<td>When clicked, displays the Control Center screen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1 (Hypertext Link) | When clicked, displays a report consisting of the Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1 for each meeting reviewer. The reviewer’s signature displays for each reviewer that signed the form.  
  See Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1 on page 19. |
| Post-meeting COI Form (Hypertext Link) | When clicked, displays the Post-meeting COI Form listing all meeting reviewers. The reviewer’s signature displays for each reviewer that signed the form.  
  See Post-meeting COI on page 20. |
| Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 2-3 (Fed) (Hypertext Link) | When clicked, displays rules and information related to COI certification for federal employees. |
| Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 2-3 (non-Fed) (Hypertext Link) | When clicked, displays rules and information related to COI certification for non-federal employees. |
| Conflict Report (Hypertext Link) | When clicked, displays a list of meeting reviewers and COI information.  
| Reviewer Name (Hypertext Link) | The reviewer’s last and first name.  
  When the listed reviewer is designated as “Mail/Outside Opinion Reviewer” in the Committee Management system, a “(Mail)” label displays adjacent to the reviewer’s name.  
  The Reviewer Name links can be sorted. The default sort is by last and first name in ascending order.  
  Clicking a specific reviewer name displays the IAR List of Applications for Reviewer screen for that individual (see View Specific Reviewer's List of Applications on page 17). |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field/Link/Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>User ID</td>
<td>The reviewer’s Commons User ID.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Meeting COI Form (Signed Date)</td>
<td>The date and time that the reviewer signed the Pre-Meeting COI form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A blank value indicates no form signature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Pre-Meeting COI Form Signed Date field can be sorted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Meeting COI Form (Signed Date)</td>
<td>The date and time that the reviewer signed the Post-Meeting COI form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A blank value indicates no form signature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Post-Meeting COI Form Signed Date field can be sorted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRG Minutes/Budget Signee (Date Signed)</td>
<td>Clicking “Designate” triggers the system to designate the adjacent reviewer as the SRG Minutes/Budget form signee and changes the field’s display value to “Clear”:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hypertext Link)</td>
<td>Clicking “Clear” triggers the system to remove the adjacent reviewer’s SRG Minutes/Budget form signee designation and changes the field’s display value to “Designate”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Designate” (default)</td>
<td>NOTE: This field is not applicable to reviewers designated as “Mail/Outside Opinion Reviewer” in the Committee Management system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Or —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Clear”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>When clicked, displays the Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1 for the adjacent reviewer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: See Designate SRG Minutes/Budget Signee on page 17,  
— Also —  
see Sign the SRG Minutes/Budget Form on page 8.
The existing IAR List of Applications for Reviewer screen displays when the Reviewer Name is clicked on the Track Conflict of Interest Forms screen (see Figure 16, also see Reviewer Name on page 15).

**Figure 16: List of Applications for Reviewer – (Reviewer Name) Screen (IAR0007).**

One or more reviewers listed on the Track Conflict of Interest Forms screen can be designated as a SRG Minutes/Budget Signee.

To designate a reviewer:

1. Click the **Designate** link adjacent to a listed reviewer (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Track Conflict of Interest Screen Partial View (IAR0900).**

NOTE: The Meeting Title, Meeting Identifier, Meeting Phase, Reviewer Name, and User ID values were removed from Figure 17 to maintain data privacy.

The system performs the following:

- Designates the selected reviewer as the SRG Minutes/Budget signee.
- Changes the SRG Minutes/Budget Signee column value to **Clear** for the selected reviewer (see Figure 18).
Click **Clear** to remove a designation.

**Figure 18: Track Conflict of Interest Screen Partial View (IAR0900).**

**Remove Designation**

To remove a SRG Minutes/Budget Signee designation:

1. Click the **Clear** link adjacent to a listed reviewer (see Figure 18).

   The system performs the following:
   - Removes the reviewer’s SRG Minutes/Budget designation.
   - Changes the SRG Minutes/Budget Signee column value to **Designate** for the selected reviewer.

**Sign the SRG Minutes/Budget Form**

*See Sign the SRG Minutes/Budget Form on page 8.*
Figure 19: Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1.

NOTE: Clicking the Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1 link on the Track Conflict of Interest Forms screen displays the form for all meeting reviewers.

Clicking the Pre-meeting COI Form-Page 1 link in the Action column for a specific reviewer, displays the form for that reviewer.
Post-meeting COI

Figure 20: Post-meeting COI.

Name information was removed from Figure 20 to maintain data privacy.
Conflict Report

The following information was removed from Figure 21 to maintain data privacy:

Council (identifier)
SRA (name)
Application (identifiers)
PI Name
Conflicts

Figure 21: Conflict Report.
Grant Application Reviewers—Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Rules

Figure 22: Conflict of Interest Rules Page 1.

NIH eRA System
December 14, 2007

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components of a large or multi-component organization are sufficiently independent to constitute, in effect, separate organizations, provided that the reviewer has no responsibilities that would significantly affect the other component. Membership on a scientific review group does not make an individual an employee or officer of the Federal Government.

Financial Benefits: See definition of Real Conflict of Interest above.

Personal Relationships (Relative): A close relative means a parent, spouse, sibling, son or daughter of domestic partner. A conflict of interest exists if a close relative of a reviewer submits an application or proposal, or receives or could receive financial benefits from, or provides financial benefits to the reviewer or another individual.

Professional Associates: Professional associate means any colleague, scientific mentor, or student with whom the peer reviewer is currently conducting research or other significant professional activities or with whom the reviewer has conducted such activities within three years of the date of the review.

Standing Review Group Membership: When a scientific review group meets regularly, a relationship among the individual members exists; therefore, the group as a whole may not be objective about evaluating the work of one of its members. In such a case, a member's application or proposal will be reviewed by another qualified review group to ensure that a competent and objective review is obtained.

Longstanding Disagreements: A conflict of interest may exist where a potential reviewer has had longstanding scientific or personal differences with an applicant.

Multi-Site Or Multi-Component Project: An individual serving as either the principal investigator or key personnel on one component of a multi-site or multi-component project has a conflict of interest with all of the applications or proposals from all investigators or key personnel associated with the project. The individual should be considered a professional associate when evaluating applications or proposals submitted by the other participants in the project.

Request For Applications (RFA) Or Request For Proposals (RFP): Persons serving as the principal investigator or key personnel on a contract submitted in response to an RFA or on a proposal in response to an RFP are generally considered to have a conflict of interest with all of the applications or proposals submitted in response to the RFA or RFP. However, if no other reviewer is available with the expertise necessary to ensure a competent and fair review, a waiver may be granted by the Director of NIH or higher NIDIR official that will permit an individual to review only those applications or proposals with which he/she has no conflict of interest that is likely to affect the integrity of the advice to be provided by the reviewer.

Appearance Of A Conflict Of Interest means that a reviewer or close relative or professional associate of the reviewer has a financial or other interest in an application or proposal that is known to the reviewer or the SRA managing the review and would cause a reasonable person to question the reviewer's impartiality if he or she were to participate in the review. The SRA will evaluate the appearance of a conflict of interest and determine whether or not the reviewer would likely bias the reviewer's evaluation of the application or proposal. When there is an appearance of a conflict of interest, but not sufficient grounds for disqualifying the reviewer, the SRA, in charge of the review will document: (1) that there is no real conflict of interest; and (2) that, at the time of the review, no practical alternative exists for obtaining the necessary scientific advice from the reviewer with the apparent conflict.

Warrants If an individual is available with the expertise necessary to ensure a competent review, a waiver may be granted by the Director of NIH or higher NIH official to allow participation in the review.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE OF MATERIALS AND PROCEEDINGS

The applications and proposals and associated materials made available to reviewers, as well as the discussions that take place during review meetings, are strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to or discussed with any one who has not been officially designated to participate in the review process. In addition, disclosure of procurement information prior to the award of a contract is prohibited by the Procurement Integrity Act.

CERTIFICATION

All reviewers must certify that they have read these instructions on "Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Rules and Information for Reviewers." Under penalty of perjury (18 U.S.C. Title 18 Chapter 47 Section 1061), the reviewer must certify that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has disclosed all conflicts of interest that normally may have with the applications or RFP contract proposals and that he/she has fully understands the confidential nature of the review process and agrees: (1) to destroy or return all materials related to (c) not to disclose or discuss the materials associated with the review, their evaluation, or the review meeting with any other individual except as authorized by the SRA or other designated NIH official, (3) not to disclose procurement information prior to the award of a contract, and (4) to refer all issues concerning the review to the SRA or other designated NIH official.

Figure 23: Conflict of Interest Rules Continued.