Recruitment Phase for Reviewers User Guide

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CONTACT US

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Troubleshooting support:
Please contact the eRA Help Desk:

Toll-free: 1-866-504-9552
Phone: 301-402-7469
TTY: 301-451-5939
Web: http://grants.nih.gov/support (Preferred method of contact)
Email: commons@od.nih.gov (for Commons Support)
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DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	System Version	Document Version	Description of Change	Author
2/25/2011	2.29.0.0	1.0	Initial release of document	eRA Documentation Team
08/2014	2.29.0.0	1.1.0	Updated *Chapter 5: Sign Confidentiality Agreement*	eRA Communications

The most current version of this document will be available on the eRA Federal Intranet site: http://inside.era.nih.gov.

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1 Introduction

The Scientific Review Officer (SRO) responsible for conducting the review meeting is required to select and assign Reviewers for each application in that meeting. These Reviewers must not have any real or apparent conflicts of interest (COI) with the application they are reviewing. A COI in scientific peer review exists when a Reviewer has an interest in or an association with a person involved with a grant, a cooperative agreement application, or an R&D contract proposal that is likely to cause a bias within the evaluation. If a Reviewer has a conflict of interest with an application s/he may not participate in its review.

The NIH Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non Disclosure Rules can be accessed online at the following location: http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/peer/COI_Information.pdf.

In the past, determining COIs between potential Reviewers and applications was one of the more time-consuming and challenging parts of the meeting preparation process.

For this reason, the Recruitment Phase was created. In Recruitment Phase, potential Reviewers are given access to view a list of involved personnel for a meeting and to self-identify any Conflicts of Interest before being selected as Reviewers in those meetings. The Involved Personnel List is a list of all persons *involved* with an application.

When an SRO invites a Reviewer to participate in the Recruitment Phase for a meeting, that Reviewer must perform two main tasks:

- Sign the Confidentiality Agreement
- Identify potential conflicts of interest for the applications

These tasks are completed using the *List of Meetings* screen in the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) module accessible through eRA Commons. For this reason, having an eRA Commons account is necessary.

When a potential Reviewer is enabled by an SRO to participate in the Recruitment Phase of a meeting, the Reviewer is notified of this invitation by email. The email sent to a Reviewer differs depending on the status of the Reviewer's eRA Commons account. For more details on the types of notifications sent to a Reviewer, please refer to *Appendix A: Potential Reviewer Email Notifications* of this document.

2 Purpose

This guide provides instruction to the Reviewer for accessing and using the Recruitment Phase system functionality.

A Recruitment Phase demonstration tutorial for Reviewers is also available as a supplement to this User Guide. To access the tutorial, visit the eRA Reviewers site at http://era.nih.gov/reviewer/index.cfm

3 Scope

This document covers the main tasks of the Recruitment Phase and the steps necessary for completing those tasks for Reviewer(s).

4 Overview

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Users of the Recruitment Phase functionality include potential Reviewers targeted to participate in the review meeting as well as reviewers already on the Meeting Roster.

Reviewers enabled for other IAR Phases may also be included in the Recruitment Phase.

NOTE: The term Reviewer in this document may imply a *potential* Reviewer.

4.2 Recruitment Phase Workflow

The following outlines the workflow and associated IAR screens for the potential Reviewer during the Recruitment Phase:

Reviewer's Email Account

Receive invitation to recruitment phase from SRO

List of Meetings

Sign Confidentiality Agreement

Check Conflicts

Check and identify potential conflicts for applications by looking at involved personnel; can indicate desire to speak to SRO

Check Conflicts

Click 'COI Check Complete' Button

All done!

Figure 1: Recruitment Phase Workflow

4.3 Accessing Internet Assisted Review (IAR)

To access the Internet Assisted Review module:

1. Navigate your internet browser (e.g., Internet Explorer) to the following URL:

    https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/

2. Log in to eRA Commons with your Commons Username and Password.
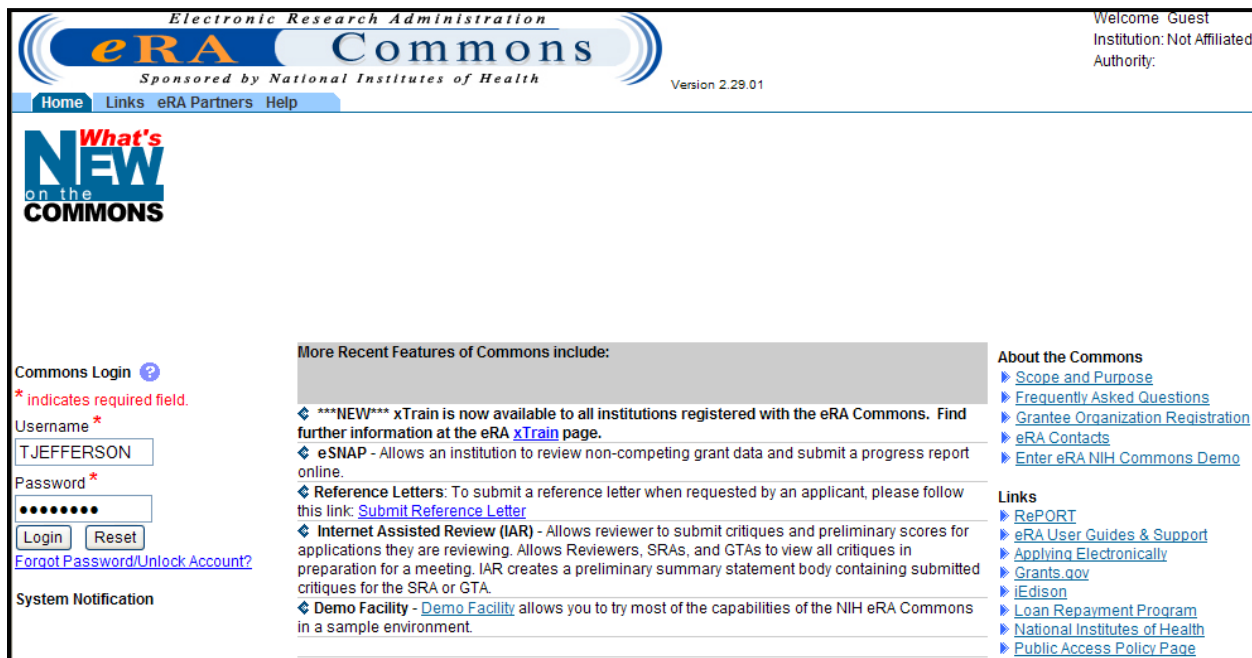
Figure 2: eRA Commons Login Page

3. Select the *Internet Assisted Review* tab from the Commons Home page.
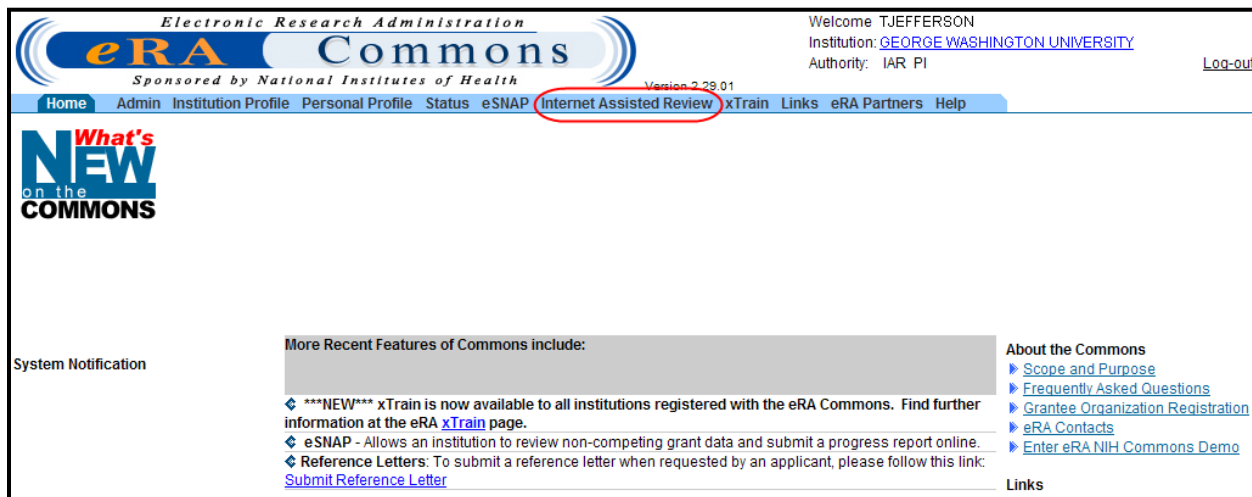
Figure 3: Internet Assisted Review Tab

5 Sign Confidentiality Agreement (updated 2014)

The first step for a Reviewer participating in a meeting is to sign the *Confidentiality Agreement* for the meeting. This is a required step for the Reviewer even if that Reviewer is eventually not selected to participate in the review meetings.

NOTE: Even if the Recruitment Phase is not used in the meeting, all Reviewers **must** sign the Confidentiality Agreement when accessing the meeting for the first time in **any** Phase!

The *Confidentiality Agreement* differs from the pre-meeting COI form. Whereas a pre-meeting COI form covers specific grant numbers in conflict with a Reviewer, *the Confidentiality Agreement* is a blanket statement promising that no information about any application data for the meeting will be disclosed by the Reviewer.

Reviewers are required to indicate whether they are federally registered lobbyists before being granted access to a meeting. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy requires a ban on the appointment of federally registered lobbyists to federal advisory committees and other boards and commissions. The steps for signing the agreement vary depending on this designation. The *Confidentiality Agreement* explains this process and prompts Reviewers to provide a status before electronically signing the agreement and gaining access to the meeting.

The *Confidentiality Agreement* must be signed one time for each meeting, regardless of meeting phase. If the Reviewer has not signed the agreement for a particular meeting, the **Confidentiality Statement** link displays in the **Action** column on the *List of Meetings* for that meeting. This link opens the *Confidentiality Agreement*. To sign the agreement, follow the steps in the appropriate sections below – *Reviewer is Not a Federally Registered Lobbyist* or *Reviewer is a Federally Registered Lobbyist*.

Figure 4: Confidentiality Statement Link

5.1 Reviewer is Not a Federally Registered Lobbyist

To access and sign the *Confidentiality Agreement* and indicate that you are NOT a federally registered lobbyist:

1. Select the **Confidentiality Statement** link from the **Action** column on the *List of Meetings*.

The *Confidentiality Agreement* displays. This screen contains the *NIH Confidentiality and Non Disclosure Rules*. Please read the agreement carefully.

2. Select the radio button indicating **I am NOT a federally registered lobbyist**.

3. Click the **I agree** button at the bottom of the screen.

Figure 5: Confidentiality Agreement – Not a Lobbyist

The *List of Meetings* screen displays with the **Confidentiality Statement** link replaced by a **Check Conflicts** link in the **Action** column if the Reviewer is enabled to the Recruitment Phase.

Figure 6: Check Conflicts Link for Recruitment Phase

NOTE: If enabled for another IAR Phase, the appropriate link(s) for that Phase display(s) in the **Action** column.

5.2 Reviewer is a Federally Registered Lobbyist

A federally registered lobbyist whose term falls within the dates of a review meeting cannot be granted access to the review meeting. A Reviewer's status as a federally registered lobbyist must be indicated on the *Confidentiality Agreement* screen.

To access and sign the *Confidentiality Agreement* and indicate that you ARE a federally registered lobbyist:

1. Select the **Confidentiality Statement** link from the **Action** column on the *List of Meetings*.

The *Confidentiality Agreement* displays. This screen contains the *NIH Confidentiality and Non Disclosure Rules*. Please read the agreement carefully.

2. Select the radio button indicating **I am a federally registered lobbyist, the meeting date falls within my term.**

3. Click the **I agree** button at the bottom of the screen.

Figure 7: Confidentiality Agreement – Lobbyist

The *Registered Lobbyist Verification* screen displays. This screen shows that you have indicated that you are a federally registered lobbyist and explains the purpose for requesting the lobbyist status of Reviewers. The screen provides a link for accessing additional information on this topic.

The *Registered Lobbyist Verification* screen also provides a chance to confirm or cancel this designation.

NOTE: Once you have indicated your status as a federally registered lobbyist, you will be denied access to the meeting. You will not have the ability to reverse the status yourself. If you

mistakenly designate yourself as a federally registered lobbyist, you must contact the eRA Help Desk for assistance.

4. *Only if you have accessed this screen and are NOT a federally registered lobbyist:* Select the **Cancel/Return** button to return to the *List of Meetings* screen. Refer to the section of this document titled *Reviewer is Not a Federally Registered Lobbyist* to continue.

5. *Only if you want to continue to confirm your status as a federally registered lobbyist:* Select the Confirm/Continue button.
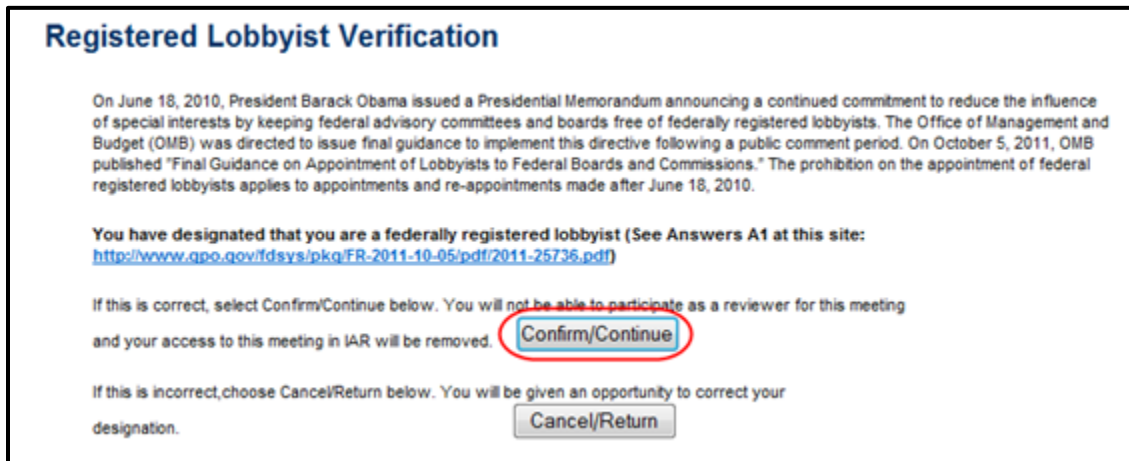
Figure 8: Registered Lobbyist Verification Screen

The *List of Meeting* screen returns, displaying *Access Denied: Federally Registered Lobbyist* in the **Action** column. The SRO receives an email whenever a potential Reviewer designates himself as a federal lobbyist; however, it is a good idea to contact the SRO directly in this situation.
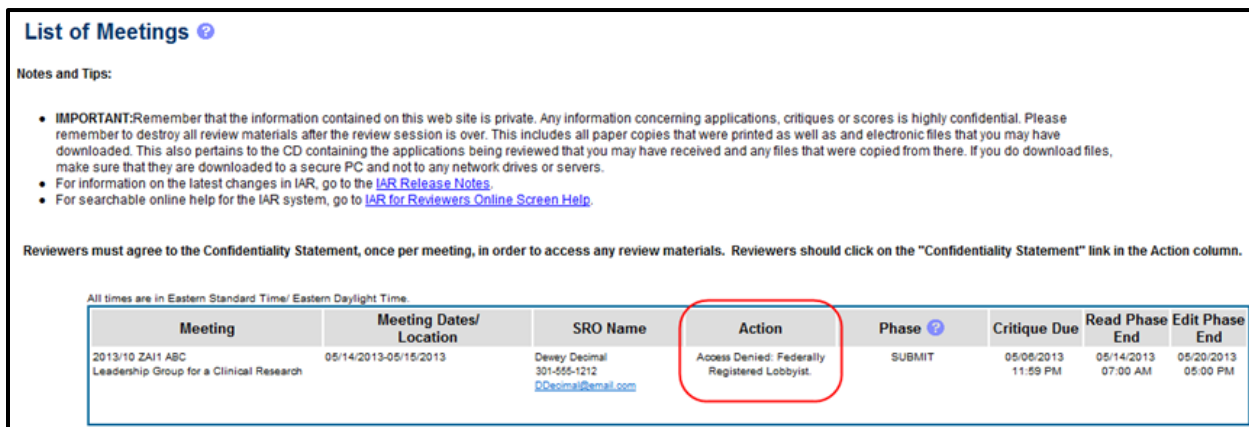
Figure 9: Access Denied Due to Lobbyist Status

6 Self-Identify Conflicts of Interest

Once a Confidentiality Agreement has been signed, the potential Reviewer is able to check and identify potential conflicts of interest for the applications in the meeting. This check is performed on the *Check Conflicts* screen, accessed by selecting the **Check Conflicts** link in the **Action** column on the *List of Meetings* screen. This link is only available for potential Reviewers who have been invited to participate in the Recruitment Phase of the meeting.

NOTE: If the Confidentiality Agreement has not been signed by the potential Reviewer, a **Confidentiality Statement** link is displayed in place of the **Check Conflicts** link.

To check and identify potential conflicts of interest for an application:

1. Select the **Check Conflicts** link in the **Action** column of the *List of Meetings* screen.

Figure 10: List of Meetings - Check Conflicts Link

The *Check Conflicts* screen displays for the meeting.

Figure 11: Check Conflicts Screen

The **Meeting Title**, **Meeting Identifier**, **Meeting Phase** (Recruitment), and **Meeting Dates** are displayed at the top of the screen.

An explanation of Conflict of Interest is also displayed. This includes a link to the *NIH Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non Disclosure Rules* concerning conflict of interest in Peer Review. Select the link to access and read these rules (http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/peer/COI_Information.pdf).

For further help on understanding *Check Conflicts* screen, select the **Instructions** link located on the screen.
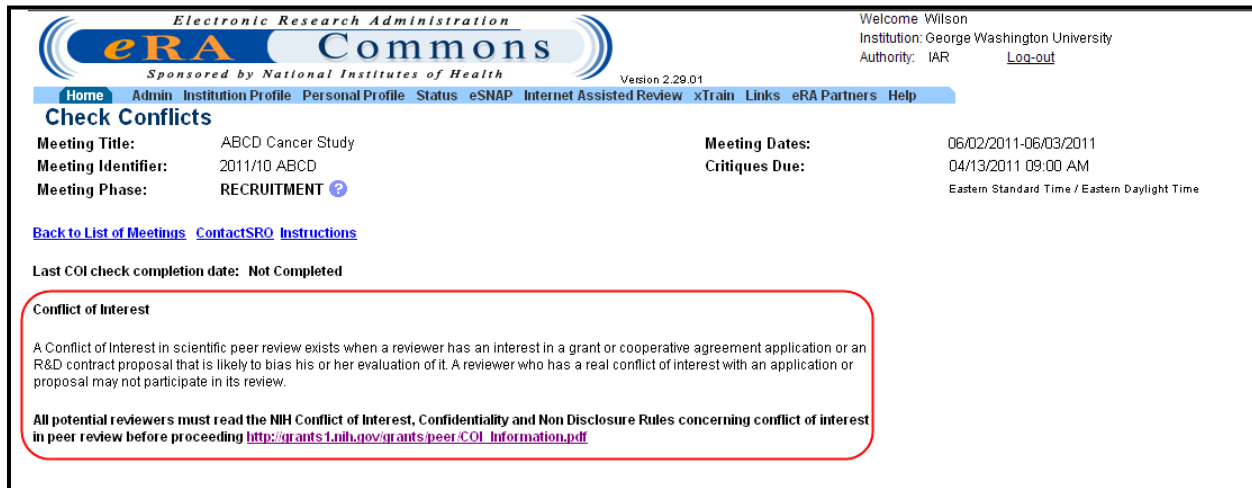
Figure 12: Conflict of Interest Instructions

The potential Reviewer can opt to display all applications in the meeting or only those applications for which a potential COI has already been identified (by either the Reviewer himself or by the SRO) and/or a discussion with the SRO is desired. This display is changed by selecting either the **ALL** or **COI** radio buttons under **Display Applications**. By default, all applications in the meeting are displayed.
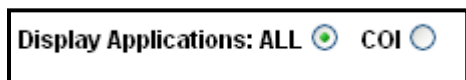
Figure 13: Display Applications Options

The application information listed on the *Check Conflicts* screen includes:

- **All Involved Personnel**: This field lists the information for personnel involved with an application, including names, institutions, and roles.

- **Project Title/Abstract**: The project title is displayed in this field. If the SRO has allowed project abstracts to be viewed, an **Abstract** link is displayed in this field.

- **Conflict**: This dual purpose field is to indicate that a potential conflict exists. If the Reviewer feels that a potential conflict exists, s/he can select the checkbox for the specific application.

If a potential conflict already exists in Peer Review for the Reviewer and application, a read-only **Y** is displayed to indicate this. This conflict may be one that the SRO entered or a previously self-identified conflict which the SRO has since reviewed and recorded in Peer Review.

NOTE: The system allows for check conflict on the application level only.

- **Need to discuss with SRO**: This field is used to indicate that the potential Reviewer wishes to speak with the SRO about the application. This checkbox can be selected or unselected as appropriate at any time throughout the Recruitment Phase. When selected, the application is flagged and is included in any filtered list of applications with a potential conflict, for both the Reviewer and the SRO.

NOTE: Although the information displayed in the *Check Conflicts* screen should be reviewed in its entirety, a tip for more easily finding specific information (e.g., the name of an institution) is to use the **Ctrl-F** find feature and entering the information being searched.

2. Review the involved personnel names and institutions for an application.

   Optional: At the discretion of the SRO, the **Abstract** link might display under the Project Title. This link, if available, opens an abstract for the application. Not all meetings will have an **Abstract** link. If available, select the **Abstract** link to view an abstract of the application.

Figure 14: Project Abstract Link

3. To indicate to the SRO that a potential conflict exists, place a check in the **Conflict** box for the application. This checkbox will not be available — and the column will display the letter **Y** — if the SRO has already recorded a conflict with this application in Peer Review.

Figure 15: Conflict Checkbox

4. If the Reviewer is not sure about a conflict, and wishes to discuss the matter with the SRO, he can select the checkbox in the **Need to discuss with SRO** column. Selecting this option informs the SRO that a discussion is needed. In addition, any filtering of information by the SRO will include these applications needing discussion as applications with potential conflicts. To indicate a desire to speak with the SRO about the conflict, place a check in the **Need to discuss with SRO** box for the application.

Figure 16: Need to Discuss with SRO Checkbox

NOTE: It is important to review all information for a meeting. Depending on the number of applications in the meeting, it may be necessary to use the page navigation buttons or scroll bar to access all information.

5. When a Reviewer has completed the checks on some applications, but has additional applications to check later, the Reviewer can save the work already performed as a work in progress. Select the **Save Work in progress** link.
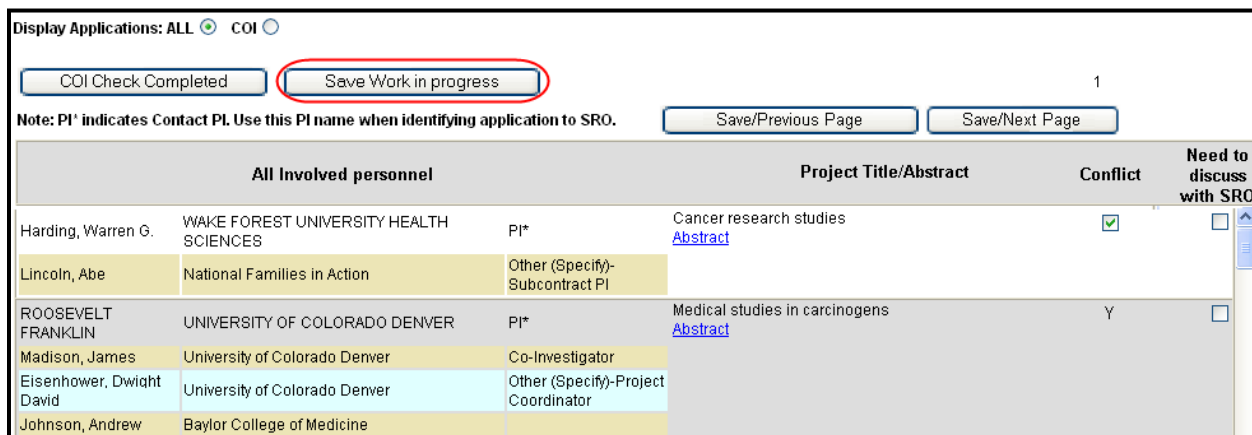
Figure 17: Save Work in Progress Link

The information on the *Check Conflict* screen is a saved, and it is safe for the Reviewer to navigate away from the screen. Saving is necessary when navigating back to the *List of Meetings* or even from page to page within the *Check Conflicts* screen. If the **Save Work in Progress** button is not selected, system checks are in place that will help to prevent the data from being lost.

When the **Save/Previous Page** or **Save/Next Page** navigate buttons are selected, the system saves the data on the screen before navigating to the new page.

If a specific page number link or the **Back to List of Meetings** link is selected without first saving the information as a work in progress, the following warning message is displayed:

You have made some changes. These changes will be lost unless you save them. Are you sure you want to navigate away from the screen?

The options display for canceling or continuing. The **Cancel** button is used to return to the *Check Conflicts* screen on which the Reviewer can perform a **Save Work in Progress** of the information before navigating away again. The **OK** button is used to continue navigating to the desired page without saving the data.

NOTE: Selecting the **OK** button means any changed data will be LOST!
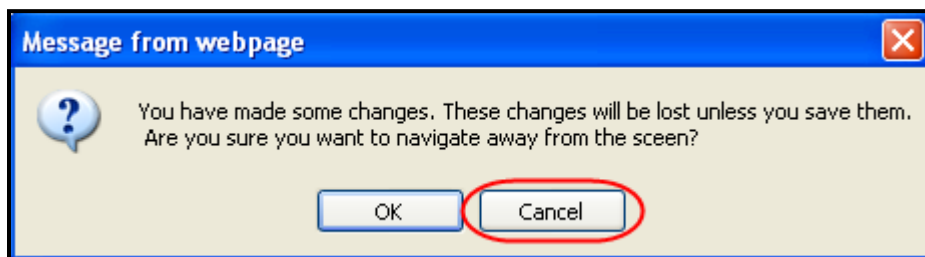
Figure 18: Unsaved Data Warning Message

6. When all applications have been reviewed and all potential conflicts of interest have been applied, select the **COI Check Completed** button to indicate to the SRO that the COI check for each application in the meeting is complete.
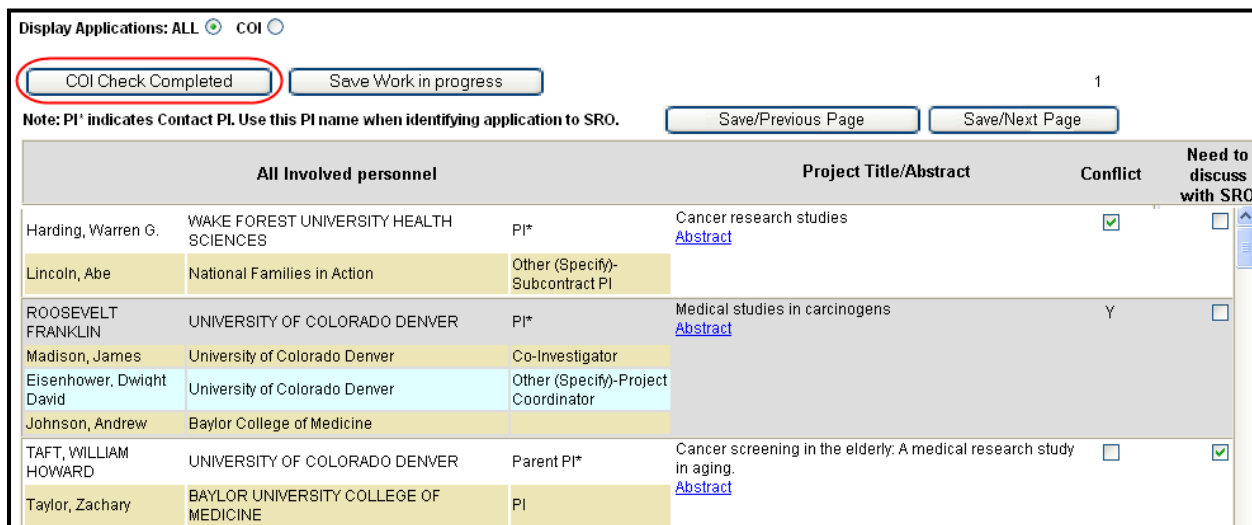
Figure 19: COI Check Completed Button

All updated conflict information for the application(s) is saved. The *Check Conflict* screen is refreshed to show the current date in the **Last COI check completion date** field.

Additionally, the following message displays:

Thank you for completing your conflict of interest check.

Please contact the Scientific Review Officer listed below if you would like to discuss any specific conflicts further.

To view application(s) where you identified conflict of interest please select Display COI Applications option.

[SRO Name]

Scientific Review Officer

[SRO Address]

Phone: [SRO Phone Number]

Email: [SRO Email]

NOTE: The **Contact SRO** link on the *Check Conflicts* screen is available to view the SRO's contact information at any time.

Figure 20: SRO Contact Information and Contact SRO Link

7 Appendix A: Potential Reviewer Email Notifications

When an SRO invites a potential Reviewer to participate in the Recruitment Phase of a meeting, the potential Reviewer is notified by email. The status of the potential Reviewer's eRA Commons account determines which email notification is sent.

7.1 Invitation to Create a Commons Account

If no Commons account exists for the Reviewer, an email is sent inviting the Reviewer to create a Commons account. An example of the email is included below:

Subject: eRA Commons: IAR Conflict of Interest Check
Dear Potential Reviewer:

Thank you very much for your consideration to participate as a reviewer on Special Emphasis Panel/Scientific Review Group **MEETING IDENTIFIER**.

<u>Purpose of Email</u>
This system-generated invitation to the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) web site grants you access to the Recruitment Phase of IAR for the purpose of:

- Viewing the list of applications, participating institutions and involved personnel.
- Indicating which applications, if any, you have or think you may have a conflict of interest (COI). The various types of COI you should consider are provided on the IAR website.
- Viewing application abstracts (if applicable)

After indicating potential COI in IAR, please contact the SRO if you have any questions or would like to discuss particular issues in more depth.

<u>Identifying Potential Conflicts</u>
To indicate any COI in IAR (and to access the full meeting at a later date):
You will need to log on to the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) web site with a user name and password. To establish that user name and password, we have set up a special URL address that is unique to you.

Please visit this web site to create your account as soon as possible so that you can identify any conflicts of interest. Open your Web browser and go to the URL [Commons URL].

Follow the instructions on the screen to enter information about yourself. You will also be asked to verify the public information that NIH has on file to ensure your information is both accurate and complete.

After submitting your registration request, you should receive a notification about your account activation within 2 - 5 business days; it will contain the URL for the eRA Commons web site. At that time you will be able to access Internet Assisted Review with a temporary password which will be sent to you in a separate email. Please note that you cannot use Internet Assisted Review until your account is active.

If you have questions or encounter problems accessing Internet Assisted Review, please call or email the NIH eRA Helpdesk at 301-402-7469 or 866-504-9552 or email commons@od.nih.gov.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,
SRO Name
Scientific Review Officer
SRO ADDRESS
Phone: **PHONE NUMBER**
Email: **EMAIL**

7.2 Reminder of Commons Account

If the Reviewer already has a Commons account, an email is sent reminding the Reviewer of the Commons User Name with a link to login screen. An example of this email is included below:

Subject: eRA Commons: IAR Conflict of Interest Check

Dear Potential Reviewer:

Thank you very much for your consideration to participate as a reviewer on Special Emphasis Panel/Scientific Review Group **MEETING IDENTIFIER.**

Purpose of Email
This system-generated invitation to the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) web site grants you access to the Recruitment Phase of IAR for the purpose of:

- Viewing the list of applications, participating institutions and involved personnel.
- Indicating which applications, if any, you have or think you may have a conflict of interest (COI). The various types of COI you should consider are provided on the IAR website.
- Viewing application abstracts (if applicable)

After indicating potential COI in IAR, please contact the SRO if you have any questions or would like to discuss particular issues in more depth.

Identifying Potential Conflicts
To indicate COI in IAR: Log on to the eRA Commons IAR web site with your user name and password. Our records indicate that you have previously established an IAR user account.

Your user name is **USERNAME**

Please open your Web browser and go to the eRA Commons URL [Commons URL]

Follow the instructions on the screen to log in to Commons. After successfully logging on, click on "Internet Assisted Review" on the Commons main screen to view your list of meetings. Read and certify the "Confidentiality Statement" for the meeting listed above to gain access to the IAR Recruitment Phase for indentifying COI.

If you have questions or encounter problems accessing Internet Assisted Review, please call or email the NIH eRA Helpdesk at 301-402-7469 or 866-504-9552 or email commons@od.nih.gov.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

SRO Name
Scientific Review Officer
SRO ADDRESS
Phone: **PHONE NUMBER**
Email: **EMAIL**

7.3 Potential Reviewer Verification Required

If the Reviewer has a provisional Commons account that requires additional verification by the potential Reviewer, an email is sent indicating this. An example of the email is included below:

Dear Potential Reviewer:

Thank you very much for your consideration to participate as a reviewer on Special Emphasis Panel/Scientific Review Group **MEETING IDENTIFIER**.

Purpose of Email
This system-generated invitation to the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) web site grants you access to the Recruitment Phase of IAR for the purpose of:

- Viewing the list of applications, participating institutions and involved personnel.

- Indicating which applications, if any, you have or think you may have a conflict of interest (COI). The various types of COI you should consider are provided on the IAR website.
- Viewing application abstracts (if applicable)

After indicating potential COI in IAR, please contact the SRO if you have any questions or would like to discuss particular issues in more depth.

Identifying Potential Conflicts

To indicate any COI in IAR (and to access the full meeting at a later date): You will need to log on to the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) web site with a user name and password.

Your action is required. Our records show that you have started but have not completed the process to create your eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) account. Please visit this web site to complete your account request as soon as possible. Open your Web browser and go to the URL [Commons URL]
 (You can copy and paste this address into the "Location" window of your browser, and press Enter.) Follow the instructions on the screen. To ensure your information is both accurate and complete you will also be asked to verify the public information relating to your grant and committee service history that NIH has on file for you.

After submitting your registration request, you should receive an email within 1 week indicating that your account is active. This email will contain the URL for the eRA Commons web site. Please note, you cannot use Internet Assisted Review until your account is active.

If you have questions or encounter problems accessing Internet Assisted Review, please call or email the NIH eRA Helpdesk at 301-402-7469 or 866-504-9552 or email commons@od.nih.gov.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,
SRO Name
Scientific Review Officer
SRO ADDRESS
Phone: **PHONE NUMBER**
Email: **EMAIL**

7.4 NIH Verification Required

If the Reviewer has a provisional account that requires NIH verification, an email is sent to inform the Reviewer. An example of this email is included below:

Dear Potential Reviewer:

Thank you very much for your consideration to participate as a reviewer on Special Emphasis Panel/Scientific Review Group **MEETING IDENTIFIER.**

Purpose of Email
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- Viewing the list of applications, participating institutions and involved personnel.

- Indicating which applications, if any, you have or think you may have a conflict of interest (COI). The various types of COI you should consider are provided on the IAR website.
- Viewing application abstracts (if applicable)

After indicating potential COI in IAR, please contact the SRO if you have any questions or would like to discuss particular issues in more depth.

Identifying Potential Conflicts
To indicate any COI in IAR (and to access the full meeting at a later date): You will need to log on to the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) web site with a user name and password.

Thank you for completing the eRA Commons Internet Assisted Review (IAR) account creation process. NIH Data Quality staff is currently evaluating your account request. You should receive an email within 1 week indicating that your account is active. This email will contain the URL for the eRA Commons web site. Please note that you cannot use Internet Assisted Review until your account is active.

If you have questions or problems setting up your account, please call or email the NIH eRA Helpdesk at 301-402-7469 or 866-504-9552 or email commons@od.nih.gov.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,
SRO Name
Scientific Review Officer
SRO ADDRESS
Phone: **PHONE NUMBER**
Email: **EMAIL**

8 Appendix B: Acronym List

C
COI   Conflict of Interest

CSV   Comma-separated Values File Type

E
eRA   Electronic Research Administration

ESA   Extramural Support Assistant

I
IAR   Internet Assisted Review

IRG   Initial Review Group

M
MLG   Mailing email address

O
OER   Office of Extramural Research

P
PDF   Portable Document Format File Type

PI   Principal Investigator

PPID   Profile Person Identification

R
REV   Peer Review System

R&R   Receipt and Referral

S
SRG   Scientific Review Group

SRO   Scientific Review Officer

U
USB   User Support Branch

N
NIH   National Institute of Health