

NAM Peer Reviewer Q & A

What is the purpose of my review of the NAM applications?

- to provide a specific overall recommendation that is supported by documentation drawn directly from the application.
- remember that your review will form the basis of recommendations made at higher levels of review.

What are some important reminders for the review process?

- be available for the entire review process and adhere to review timelines.
- if you discover a potential conflict while reviewing an application, tell your Panel Monitor immediately.

Who are the Panel Monitors?

- members of the NAM program professional staff whose role is to monitor the progress of individual reviewers and the progress of the panel as a whole.

Why don't Panel Monitors review the applications?

- they are facilitators of the process and are not allowed to comment on applications or divulge their personal opinion or analysis.
- their role is to mediate the panel review to ensure that each application is thoroughly and fairly assessed.
- they check all Technical Review Forms to ensure that the comments are objective and appropriate.

What are some basic guidelines for writing comments?

Remember that your written review is made available to applicants and posted on the Department of Education NAM website at the close of the review process.

- focus on constructive criticism that could benefit denied applicants.
- evaluate the application; do not simply restate what the applicant has written.
- write clear, evaluative statements about the substance of the application.
- match the score you assign with your evaluative statements.
- point to specific information in the application that helped you reach the score.
- if information is missing from the application, indicate this in your comments.
- write in complete sentences and avoid disparaging language.

Why must I discuss my review of the application with my partner?

- a panel discussion supplements your individual review and allows for a thorough discussion.
- once you have discussed the application, you have the opportunity to reconsider your original comments and scores.

What if my panel member and I do not agree in scoring the application?

- If there is a significant variation in points for any selection criterion or contradictions in comments between readers, your panel monitor will ask panel members to review the application again and panel again to determine if information was overlooked in the first review.
- Reviewers are not required to come to a consensus in reviewing any application.

What are some important considerations for panel discussions?

- Each reviewer thoroughly discusses his/her comments on each criterion
- Listen carefully to your partner's comments to determine how they may vary from yours.

Would you suggest that I skim less relevant material in reviewing the application?

- You will be reviewing only the up to 35-page narrative response to the criteria, not appendices and other supplemental material.
- It is important that you review carefully the entire narrative.
- One of the most typical comments we receive from applicants is regarding reviews comments about information missing in the application.

Can a NAM reviewer be replaced after the review process begins?

- On rare occasions, the competition manager may find it necessary to replace a reviewer after the start of the review process.
- Other than the replacement of reviewers for conflict of interest issues, there are two conditions that may require the competition manager to replace a reviewer: a) the reviewer is not performing to expectations, or b) the reviewer has an emergency that prohibits him/her from participating in the review process.