

BEST PRACTICES IN PEER REVIEW



Based on the [Review Quality Assurance \(RQA\) process](#)*, CIHR would like to share a list of review quality issues that were identified and should be avoided in peer review.

Comments by reviewers to avoid	Guidance
Using gendered language	<p>Use gender-neutral pronouns or gender-inclusive phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “they” or “the applicant”, instead of “she” or “he” • “Dr.” or “Professor” instead of “Mr./Mrs. /Miss.” • “Parental leave” instead of “maternity/paternity leave”
Eligibility concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flag to CIHR staff • Do not include comments in reviews • Should not influence the rating
Missing attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform CIHR staff as soon as possible so they can investigate. • This step ensures all comments on grant content are factually correct.
“Should not be funded” “Should be in different committee”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not include funding recommendations in reviews. • Committee mandate questions should be referred to CIHR staff.
Number of publications or research grants to assess productivity (in isolation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider broad range of research contributions and impacts
Journal-based metrics (e.g. impact factors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on scientific content or quality of impacts
Sharing committee panel information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee membership lists are confidential / Published on the CIHR website 60 days after the funding decision. • Do not reveal committee members on social media or to colleagues.

Please see CIHR’s [Conducting Quality Reviews](#) learning module for additional guidance related to review quality.

**Data obtained as part of the RQA process for the 2023 Spring Project Grant Competition*