Health Research Alliance

KEY IDEAS

Bias Mitigation Training for Program Staff

Strategies to Mitigate Bias in Peer Review
### Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training

This handout is a companion to the asynchronous Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training for program staff developed by the Health Research Alliance. This handout summarizes the strategies discussed in the training for easy reference.

Learn more about the Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training

Reviewer Guidelines

- Establish clear evaluative criteria, quality definitions, and scoring guidelines
- Request explicit justification for assigned scores
- Prompt reviewers to periodically self assess bias
  - Implicit Association Tests from Project Implicit
  - Self-evaluation questions like "Am I spending equal time and attention on each application?" or "Are my comments similarly constructive / critical for all applicants?"
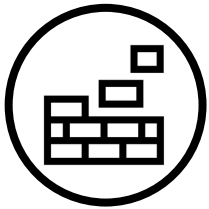
Meeting Structure

- Instead of following rank order, randomize the order in which applications are discussed to minimize anchoring or confirmation bias
- Rotate the order in which reviewers speak
- Spend the same amount of time discussing applications of similar quality
- Schedule frequent breaks to minimize decision fatigue

Question Bias in Discussion

- Use accessible options to raise concerns with program staff / chairs
- Model bias- questioning behavior to establish group norms
- Speak up when bias may be present. Example phrases:

Re: Info not in the application	Re: Info not related to review criteria	Re: Possibly biased comments
Is that new information? That wasn't noted by other reviewers; can you point out where that information is included in the application?	Can you discuss how that factor relates to the review criteria?	Can you elaborate on what you mean when you said [XYZ]?
	The review criteria do not include [ABC factor], so this should not be part of the discussion and should not impact the applicant's score.	When you said [XYZ], that could be interpreted as [describe bias]. Can you clarify what you meant?