Reviewer in Training Program
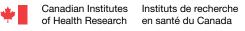
Mentee Guide

Objective

This guide has been designed as a resource to help Mentees navigate their Mentorship and their experience participating in the RiT Program. In addition to this guide, Mentees should ensure they are familiar with the specific roles and responsibilities of Mentees and Mentors throughout the Project Grant competition. For questions and feedback about this guide and the RiT Program, contact college@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

Introduction

As a Mentee in the RiT Program, your Mentor will guide and support you in becoming a peer reviewer who is proficient in providing high-quality reviews. Your Mentor should strive to provide you with a comprehensive perspective of what the peer review process entails at CIHR. In turn, you must have clear goals and be willing to accept guidance and advice throughout the program in order for the mentorship to be successful.

There are five parts to this guide:

1. **Preparing for mentorship**
2. **Communicating with your Mentor**
3. **Reviewing feedback**
4. **Preparing for the committee meeting**
5. **Post-meeting debrief**

1. Preparing for mentorship

A prepared Mentee has a general understanding of the peer review process and has taken time to set objectives for their mentorship. In the email confirming your participation as a RiT participant, you will have received a list of learning materials to help you prepare for the peer review process. To best prepare for your mentorship, ensure that you have reviewed all learning materials listed in your acceptance email.

✓ The Reviewer in Training Program webpage
✓ Mandatory learning for Project Grant reviewers
✓ Mandatory learning for Project Grant reviewers in the Indigenous Health Research (IHR) committee
✓ Recommended learning modules:
    o CIHR 101 eLearning Series:
        ✓ Part 1 of 2: Introduction to CIHR (20 min.)
        ✓ Part 2 of 2: Peer Review at CIHR (20 min.)
✓ Quality Assurance practices in CIHR Peer Review
✓ Review Quality Checklist
✓ Best Practices in Peer Review
✓ The RiT Program webinar
✓ The peer review manual for the Project Grant competition

In addition to the above learning materials, you may find it useful to outline your goals for this program. The Mentoring Plan at the end of this document can help you structure your thoughts and prepare you for your mentorship.

2. Communicating with your Mentor

Communication is essential for the mentorship process to be successful. Once a Mentor has been assigned to you, they will reach out to establish contact and discuss how you would both like to approach the mentorship. If you do not hear from your Mentor in a timely manner, you can reach out to CIHR staff to help introduce you to the Mentor.

Once connected with your Mentor, you can set up an initial meeting using the MS Teams private channel, or you may choose to communicate in another way (you can use the Communication Plan at the end of this document to help organize this).

During your initial discussion, you can review the following:

✓ Your career goals and why you are interested in the peer review process.
✓ Your understanding of the peer review process.
✓ Any questions about the mandatory or recommended resources for the RiT Program and Project Grant competition.
✓ Deadlines for submitting practice reviews and discussing feedback.

Tips for building your mentorship

Set realistic expectations with your Mentor

The Mentor's role is to guide you and provide feedback to help you improve as a peer reviewer. They will not be able to provide assistance during the committee meeting so do your best to organize your discussions in an efficient manner. This could mean anticipating questions that might come up at the meeting, seeking guidance on how to present your reviews, asking for advice on how to respect opposing opinions and reach consensus ratings, etc.

Be respectful of your Mentor's time

Mentors are experienced volunteers that work to develop new reviewers on top of their other responsibilities in the peer review committee. They must also adhere to deadlines and their own personal and professional commitments throughout the Project Grant competition. Please ensure you respect their time by establishing and meeting deadlines for submitting your practice reviews and discussing feedback. Successful communication with your Mentor culminates in your writing of 3 practice reviews on the applications assigned to you by CIHR staff.

3. Reviewing feedback

After your Mentor has evaluated your practice reviews, you may set up a meeting to discuss their feedback and ask questions about the process. The feedback provided should focus on review quality as outlined in the Review Quality web page. Scientific opinions and/or merit of an application should not be the focus in any of the mentorship discussions. When discussing feedback on your written practice reviews, you can consider the following with your Mentor:

✓ Are all sections of the review complete?
✓ Do the reviews address the adjudication criteria and interpretation guidelines appropriately?
✓ Have you written the reviews using gender-neutral and gender-inclusive language?
✓ Do they meet the review quality expectations as outlined in the Review Quality Checklist?
✓ Are there other considerations specific to your committee that should be included in your reviews (such as Indigenous Health Research or Global Health Research)?

4. Preparing for the committee meeting

During the meeting your Mentor will be occupied with other tasks and will be unable to answer any questions. You should ensure that you ask any questions about presenting your review or participating in the meeting before the committee meeting. When discussing the committee meeting, you can review the following:

Your synopsis and presentation of the proposal, ensuring you appropriately address adjudication criteria and sex and/or gender considerations.

✓ Advice for engaging in discussions about applications you did not review.
✓ How to participate in the meeting if your review(s) were streamlined?
✓ Any committee-specific considerations, if applicable.

During the meeting

CIHR Staff will be available at all times during the committee meeting to answer questions or help troubleshoot any issues.

5. Post-meeting debrief

After the meeting and if your workloads and schedules allow, you are encouraged to meet with your Mentor to debrief your experience in the committee meeting. When discussing your participation, you can review the following:

✓ Your presentation of the review(s), if applicable, and if it met the required discussion points for an appropriate assessment of the application.
✓ Your overall engagement and participation in the committee discussions focusing on professionalism and meaningful and constructive contribution.
✓ Any other questions or comments you had regarding the committee meeting.
✓ Do they meet the review quality expectations as outlined in the Review QualityChecklist?

Mentoring Plan

This plan is a tool used to help structure your mentorship. By writing down your goals and thoughts, you will be able to focus your time on skills you want to develop.

Briefly list your career goals (1 – 2 sentences with a maximum of 3 goals)

1.

2.

3.

Briefly list your research experience and expertise (1 – 2 paragraphs)

Why are you interested in the peer review process? (1 – 2 paragraphs)

Communication Plan

This plan is a tool used to help organize your mentorship. By agreeing on specific dates and goals, you will be better equipped to listen, learn, and engage.

Mentor:

Contact Information:

Mentee:

Contact Information:

Committee:

Committee Meeting Date:

Task	Description	Mentee-Mentor Agreed response
Plan communication	What methods of communication will you use to communicate with each other? (Email, MS Teams, etc.)	
Create a schedule	What dates and times do you want to meet? (Review feedback, post-meeting debrief, etc.)	
Plan activities	What do you want to discuss during your mentorship meetings? (Full feedback on your practice reviews, run through the committee meeting process, practice your presentation, etc)	