**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW, Dunedin School of Medicine**

**Templates**

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# INTRODUCTION

The following templates accompany the document, “SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW, guidelines for Dunedin School of Medicine Departments” (February 2013).

**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Instructions to the researcher**

**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Covering letter for application for review**

**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Letter to reviewer, request and instructions**

**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Letter to researcher to inform of results**

In addition, the reviewer templates listed below may be used or adapted to suit the particular Department’s circumstances. However, please keep within the NEAC informed peer review standards described in the guidelines and in the instruction to researchers and reviewers.

**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Reviewer templates**

Reviewer Template Version 1

Reviewer Template Version 2

Reviewer Template Version 3

# SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Instructions to the researcher

**Introduction**

Scientific peer review (hereafter referred to as peer review) in the context of human research refers to the scientific validity of the research project and is a vital step in research project development. Peer review is a requirement of ethical approval and can enhance research project development in a variety of ways through providing an objective perspective from an informed reader.

It is a requirement of Health Research South (the body that governs clinical research in the Dunedin School of Medicine and the Southern District Health Board) that all research projects involving humans undergo peer review. This includes research carried out in the Dunedin School of Medicine (DSM), and the Southern District Health Board (Southern DHB) regardless of location or which organisation the researcher is from. The process below will also fulfil the requirement by the Health and Disabilities Ethics Committees (HDEC) and other assessing bodies that all research submitted for approval has undergone scientific peer review.

**Process**

Please submit your proposal/application, along with any necessary supporting material, to the Chairperson of your Department’s Peer Review Committee. Obtaining peer review feedback and incorporating this into your proposal does take time so **submitting your draft proposal early is essential**. Please take this, and the time to your application deadline, into consideration when submitting for peer review.

Your proposal/application should be accompanied by a covering letter (see appendix) which includes:

1. Your name and contact details
2. Title of project
3. The purpose for which the research application/protocol is intended e.g. HRC grant application, PhD/Masters, etc.
4. Suggestions for appropriate peer reviewers to be used at discretion of chairperson (optional) or evidence of successful funding application and funding body peer review and where applicable.

The Chairperson of the Peer Review Committee will:

1. Allocate a ‘level’ of review that reflects the risk and intended purpose of your study
2. Assign reviewers as required and oversee the review process including ensuring confidentiality or confirm appropriateness of funding body peer review
3. Communicate the results of the review process to you and any recommendations for further modifications
4. Make the final decision approving the result of your peer review.

Further action

On receipt of the peer review feedback and Chairperson’s recommendation, you will need to incorporate these into your final proposal.

If you have any disagreement then you should discuss this with the chairperson. Any further recourse should be with the Head of Department.

**Standards for peer review**

Peer reviewers will consider the following points in order to determine scientific validity. Your proposal/application should ensure these are addressed.

1. ***The relative merit of the research***: consideration of whether the proposed work is important, worthwhile and justifiable. The research should address a health issue that is important for health and/or society. The aims, research questions and hypotheses should build on and address gaps in existing knowledge.
2. ***The design and methods:*** consideration of the quality of study design and the robustness of the methods used. This might include study methodology, a description of sample recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender and ethnicity where relevant) and proposed methods of data analysis. An indication of timelines for the research should be included.
3. ***The feasibility of the research:*** consideration of whether the overall strategy, methodology and analyses are well reasoned and appropriate to achieve the specific aims of the project. The review will determine whether the research has the likelihood, on balance, of improving scientific knowledge, concepts, technical capacity or methods in the research field, or of contributing to better treatments, services, health outcomes or preventive interventions. The research should be achievable within the specified timeframe and the researcher/research team must have the appropriate experience and expertise to undertake the research.
4. ***The presentation of the application:*** consideration of the overall presentation, including structure, ‘understandability’, clarity and readability of the research application. While not directly about the research, the way in which the application reads and gets the message across often reflects how well the research has been planned and conceived. Presentation is a strong determinant of whether the research will be fundable and therefore whether it will be done at all.

# SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Covering Letter

Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Re Scientific Peer Review**

Please find attached my research project application/ protocol which is being submitted for:

* Peer Scientific Review or
* Consideration of having already had appropriate Peer Review (e.g. funding body scientific review).

[Please indicate which.]

**Researcher name:**

**Researcher contact details:**

**Title of project:**

**The purpose for which the research application/protocol is intended,** e.g. research grant application, PhD/Masters, etc. [Please indicate name of funder, academic department etc. as relevant]

**List of co-investigators:**

**Suggestions for appropriate peer reviewers to be used at discretion of chairperson** (optional) or

**Evidence of successful funding application and funding body peer review** (where applicable).

**Please include with this letter**

* A copy of your protocol
* Any other material required to carry out Peer Scientific Review

# SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Letter to reviewer, request and instructions

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Re Scientific Peer Review Request**

It would be much appreciated if you would provide a peer review of the attached project and make your recommendation to me as Chair of the Peer Review Committee of the Department of …..

The purpose of the review is to ensure the project has scientific validity and to provide the researcher feedback where improvements could be made. Your comments and recommendations will be conveyed (in confidence if you wish) to the researcher.

The Chairperson will make a final decision, based on reviewer reports and the responses of the researcher where this is required

Research Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Intended level of Peer Review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please return your review before \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you are unable to do this within this time please contact me.

Your review should be

* aligned to the “Guidelines for Peer Review” provided below
* commensurate with the complexity, resource implications, strategic impact and level of approval required
* in confidence and with respect for the researcher’s intellectual property
* constructive and aimed at enhancing the project proposed

Please find attached “Guidelines for Peer Review” and a “Reviewer Template” for your convenience.

Yours sincerely

Chairperson, Peer Review Committee,

Department of xxxxxx

**Guidelines for Peer Review**

Please consider the following points in order to determine scientific validity.

1. ***The relative merit of the research***: consideration of whether the proposed work is important, worthwhile and justifiable. The research should address a health issue that is important for health and/or society. The aims, research questions and hypotheses should build on and address gaps in existing knowledge.
2. ***The design and methods:*** consideration of the quality of study design and the robustness of the methods used. This might include study methodology, a description of sample recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender and ethnicity where relevant) and proposed methods of data analysis. An indication of timelines for the research should be included.
3. ***The feasibility of the research:*** consideration of whether the overall strategy, methodology and analyses are well reasoned and appropriate to achieve the specific aims of the project. The review will determine whether the research has the likelihood, on balance, of improving scientific knowledge, concepts, technical capacity or methods in the research field, or of contributing to better treatments, services, health outcomes or preventive interventions. The research should be achievable within the specified timeframe and the researcher/research team must have the appropriate experience and expertise to undertake the research.
4. ***The presentation of the application:*** consideration of the overall presentation, including structure, ‘understandability’, clarity and readability of the research application. While not directly about the research, the way in which the application reads and gets the message across often reflects how well the research has been planned and conceived. It is a strong determinant of whether the research will be fundable and therefore whether it will be done at all.

# SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Letter to researcher to inform of results

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Re Scientific Peer Review**

Please find attached your peer review for the following project.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your project is considered to have

* satisfactory peer review
* satisfactory peer review with minor revisions which are

1. [please detail these for the researcher]

* Needs more work, as indicated by the reviewers

1. I would be happy to discuss a strategy
2. you should discuss with your co-investigators
3. please resubmit for approval

Yours sincerely

Name xxxxxx

Chairperson, Scientific Peer Review Committee,

Department of xxxxxx

# SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW: Reviewer templates

## Reviewer Template Version 1

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Research Title\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: Approve / Revise minor / Revise major / Decline

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REVIEW GUIDELINE** | **GUIDELINE PROMPTS** | **COMMENTS** |
| Relative merit of the research | * Important, worthwhile and justifiable. * Addresses a health issue that is important for health and/or society. * Aims, research questions and hypotheses build on and address gaps in existing knowledge. |  |
| Design and methods | * Quality of study design * Robustness of the methods used. * Includes a description of sample recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender and ethnicity where relevant) proposed methods of data analysis. * Timelines for the research included |  |
| Feasibility of the research | * Overall strategy, methodology and analyses are well reasoned and appropriate to achieve the specific aims of the project. * Likely to improve scientific knowledge, concepts, technical capacity or methods in the research field, or of contributing to better treatments, services, health outcomes or preventive interventions. * Achievable within the specified timeframe * Researcher/research team has the appropriate experience and expertise |  |
| Presentation of the application | * Appropriate overall presentation, including structure, ‘understandability’, clarity and readability * In general the way in which the application reads and gets the message across reflects well planned and conceived research. |  |
| Other comments | Any reviewer observations that are not covered in the points above |  |

## Reviewer Template Version 2

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Research Title\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: Approve / Revise minor / Revise major / Decline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes/No |
| **Relative merit of the research** |  |
| Important, worthwhile and justifiable. |  |
| Addresses a health issue that is important for health and/or society. |  |
| Aims, research questions and hypotheses build on and address gaps in existing knowledge. |  |
|  |  |
| **Design and methods** |  |
| Quality of study design |  |
| Robust methods used. |  |
| Includes a description of sample recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender and ethnicity where relevant) proposed methods of data analysis. |  |
| Timelines for the research included |  |
|  |  |
| **Feasibility of the research** |  |
| Overall strategy, methodology and analyses are well reasoned and appropriate to achieve the specific aims of the project. |  |
| Likely to improve scientific knowledge, concepts, technical capacity or methods in the research field, or of contributing to better treatments, services, health outcomes or preventive interventions. |  |
| Achievable within the specified timeframe |  |
| Researcher/research team has the appropriate experience and expertise |  |
|  |  |
| **Presentation of the application** |  |
| Appropriate overall presentation, including structure, ‘understandability’, clarity and readability |  |
| In general the way in which the application reads and gets the message across reflects well planned and conceived research. |  |
| Comments/feedback for improvement | |

## Reviewer Template Version 3

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Research Title\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: Approve / Revise minor / Revise major / Decline

**Review Guideline 1: Relative merit of the research**

* Important, worthwhile and justifiable.
* Addresses a health issue that is important for health and/or society.
* Aims, research questions and hypotheses build on and address gaps in existing knowledge.

Reviewer notes:

**Review Guideline 2: Design and methods**

* Quality of study design
* Robustness of the methods used.
* Includes a description of sample recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender and ethnicity where relevant) proposed methods of data analysis.
* Timelines for the research included

Reviewer notes:

**Review Guideline 3: Feasibility of the research**

* Overall strategy, methodology and analyses are well reasoned and appropriate to achieve the specific aims of the project.
* Likely to improve scientific knowledge, concepts, technical capacity or methods in the research field, or of contributing to better treatments, services, health outcomes or preventive interventions.
* Achievable within the specified timeframe
* Researcher/research team has the appropriate experience and expertise

Reviewer notes:

**Review Guideline 4: Presentation of the application**

* Appropriate overall presentation, including structure, ‘understandability’, clarity and readability
* In general the way in which the application reads and gets the message across reflects well planned and conceived research.

Reviewer notes:

**Review Guideline 5: Other comments**

* Any reviewer observations that are not covered in the points above

Reviewer notes: