



**National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration**

**Office of  
Oceanic and Atmospheric Research**

**Guidelines for ARL Review Team Members**

**March, 2011**

## **1. Introduction**

Laboratory scientific reviews are conducted every four years to evaluate the **quality, relevance, and performance** of research conducted in Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) laboratories to both internal and external interests, and to help strategically position the laboratory in its planning of its future science. These reviews are intended to ensure that OAR laboratory research is linked to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Strategic Plan, relevant to NOAA Research mission and priorities, and consistent with NOAA planning, programming, and budgeting.

These guidelines have been prepared using experience gained from previous laboratory reviews. The goal of the guidelines is to clarify your role and assist in the organization of the work of the review team. The guidelines cover the process from when you receive the invitation letter to participate on the review team to submission of the summary report of the review team.

## **2. Science Areas in Review and Charge to the Review Team**

Each member of the review team should have received the “charge to the reviewers” document. The charge covers the following topics: purpose of the review, scope of the review, focus areas for the review including questions to be addressed by the review team, proposed schedule including the dates of the review and time frame for delivery of the review report as well as the time commitment for reviewers and review team resources. Each member is asked to complete an individual review report on two or more review areas and provide the reviews to the Chair. The Chair, as a federal review team member, will summarize the individual reports of the review team, but will not attempt to seek a consensus of the review team on any findings or recommendations. Each member of the review team received a conflict of interest disclosure form; thanks for returning the completed form.

A description of the science areas is included on page 10.

## **3. Resources for the Review Team**

Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Assistant Administrator of OAR for Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes, will provide the resources necessary for you and the review team to complete its work. All laboratory review materials and presentations for the review will be posted to a website in advance of the review. The web site will contain background documents from NOAA (e.g., NOAA Strategic Plan, NOAA Research 5-

Year Plan) and background data on the lab, including several “indicators of preeminence” (e.g., publications, awards, scientific leadership, patents). The presentation files will be provided to review team members on the first day of the review. Please let us know if you would like to receive a binder with printed copies of presentations in advance of the review. You will also be provided a template (form) on which to complete your review observations, findings, and recommendations.

#### **4. Logistics and Agenda for the Review**

Laboratory staff will contact you to arrange travel to the review and all travel arrangements will be paid for by OAR. Please provide the laboratory with your intended dates of travel and other particulars by the requested due dates to ensure all arrangements can be made satisfactorily. The laboratory will reserve a block of hotel rooms for the reviewers, but you will be asked to cover all your travel expenses (except air fare) upfront and will be reimbursed, usually through direct deposit to your bank, after laboratory staff complete the travel reimbursement forms with your help. Some receipts may be needed for reimbursement. If you have not been the recipient of federal travel reimbursement before, you will need to register as a U.S. government vendor to receive your travel reimbursement. The laboratory travel staff will do that for you, but you will have to provide them with some personal identifying information, including the routing and account numbers for your bank account for direct deposit of the reimbursement. For non-U.S. reviewers, you will be sent a check for travel cost reimbursement. Travel schedules should be chosen to allow you to attend all scheduled review sessions. The review agenda will include presentations and discussions that will provide information on the science areas to be reviewed and the questions to be addressed by the review team.

Laboratory staff may also ask for information for building security in advance of the review, particularly for reviewers who are not U.S. citizens. In any case, bring photo identification.

#### **5. Teleconferences Prior to the Review**

Two teleconferences will be scheduled to discuss the review process and answer any questions you may have approximately two months and two weeks prior to the review. In addition to the review team members, attendees will include the OAR Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA), the OAR Headquarters coordinator and management from the laboratory. On the first call, the charge to the review team and the draft agenda for the review will be discussed as well as any other questions reviewers may have on the process or on the preliminary materials on the website. The focus for the second call will include information provided on the website, presentation materials, the final review agenda, and the review reports.

#### **6. During the Review**

Reviews are held over a three day period. On the morning of the first day, you will meet at breakfast with the OAR Assistant Administrator (AA) and DAA to discuss any final issues before the review. Generally the first morning will include an overview presented by the laboratory director and other senior management staff. Material is then presented for each of the primary science areas of the laboratory. These presentations may include PowerPoint presentations, poster sessions, demonstrations, and/or facility tours. Time will be built into the review schedules for questions and discussion following presentations. Interactive dialogue and discussion during all of the sessions is strongly encouraged.

As time permits, reviewers will meet in closed sessions with laboratory management, as well as with laboratory scientists, visiting scientists, and/or Post Docs, without management present. The laboratory will facilitate separate sessions with bench scientists and the laboratory management team that are designed for you to address the research **quality, relevance, and performance**. A separate session has been arranged with the laboratory's key stakeholders. While you will receive answers to questions provided in advance, this is an opportunity to get input about the laboratory's science, products and services from key customers. Please use these closed sessions to probe more deeply into the operations of the laboratory.

Time will also be set aside for reviewers-only closed sessions. The goal of the reviewers-only sessions is to provide time for the review team to discuss any presentations or information provided and to identify additional information needed or issues that need to be clarified. The closed sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss the process/timeline for preparing reports and feedback for the preliminary report to laboratory management at the end of the third day. At any time during the review, you should feel free to request additional information or clarifications from laboratory staff.

## **7. Preparation and Submission of the Review Report**

We ask that you complete your individual report on one science area covered in the review. A reporting form is attached that provides the questions to be assessed for each science area in the review and expandable text boxes for you to enter your observations/findings as well as specific, actionable recommendations based on your findings for the laboratory to review and consider incorporating in its research and operations. The Chair will compile a summary report from the individual reports. The summary report is requested within 45 days of the review and should be submitted by the Chair to the Deputy Assistant Administrator and the Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes (LCI) coordinator. OAR will have 30 days from the submission of the draft report to review it for technical/factual corrections. Any technical/factual corrections will be sent back by OAR to the review team members to make adjustments, as appropriate, to the final individual and summary reports. An example of a recent review report will be provided to the review team for their information.

## **8. Uses for and Distribution of the Review Report**

As outlined in the “purpose of the review” section of the “charge to reviewers”, laboratory scientific reviews are conducted to help strategically position the laboratory in planning its future science and to ensure that laboratory research is linked to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Strategic Plan, relevant to NOAA Research mission and priorities, and consistent with NOAA planning, programming, and budgeting. After submission of the final report by the review team, the laboratory will be asked to review the report and prepare a plan, to be discussed with OAR management, to incorporate recommendations into laboratory research and operations.

The summary report will be a public document and may be distributed to internal NOAA and external audiences. Your individual reports will not be made public, and will only be used by OAR as background for the summary report. Internal distribution of the individual reports will be limited.

Attachments:

Evaluation Forms

Contact Information