

# Preparing for an I&E External Peer Review



## Why Require an External Peer Review?

The *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (Blue Book) was developed to help ensure a level of quality, objectivity, and independence in inspections and evaluations (I&Es). Peer reviews are designed to assure OIGs, their parent agencies, Congress, and the public, that individual I&E units are adhering to these quality standards.

The CIGIE I&E Peer Review Guide is available at:

[www.ignet.gov/content/manuals-guides](http://www.ignet.gov/content/manuals-guides).

If you have questions or concerns, contact the CIGIE I&E Peer Review Implementation Committee at:

[CIGIE.IEPeerReview@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:CIGIE.IEPeerReview@oig.hhs.gov).

## Peer reviews:

- improve the quality of I&E work;
- increase the credibility of an I&E organization's reports;
- strengthen the professional image of I&E organizations; and
- promote learning and the exchange of best practices.

## What Can an OIG Do?

Identify internal policies and procedures and prepare a cross-walk from the OIG's policies and procedures to the Blue Book.

Compile a listing of I&E reports eligible for selection.

Designate a primary and alternate point of contact for handling arrangements and coordination.

Determine the availability and schedules for the points of contact and I&E management.

Gather other required information including:

- relevant internal policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, or manuals related to I&E processes;
- I&E organization chart, including POCs for relevant processes, such as follow-up, IT help desk, and software technical help;
- relevant internal quality assurance reports; and
- I&E organization or OIG policies and procedures for contracting out I&E work.

Post information on the I&E peer review process to a common medium, such as an intranet or SharePoint site.

Determine who will address questions regarding the specific project under review (I&E unit POC, or the project supervisor or project leader).

## What Can a Supervisor or Manager Do?

Maintain a positive attitude.

Be open to constructive feedback and opportunities for improvement.

Encourage staff to attend the CIGIE I&E Learning Forums on the I&E Peer Review topics.

## What Can You Do?

Re-familiarize yourself with the process and criteria used for an I&E peer review. Staff should:

- read the Blue Book standards.
- review the Peer Review Guide—especially Appendices D and E.
- review your OIG's or I&E Unit's internal policies and procedures to ensure that you fully understand them and are implementing them correctly.
- if available, look at your OIG's cross-walk between the Blue Book standards and internal policies and procedures.
- attend CIGIE I&E Learning Forums on I&E Peer Review topics.
- keep a positive attitude and open mind.

If your project is selected, re-familiarize yourself with the project. Staff should:

- review project documentation;
- proactively identify potential areas of concern; and
- prepare for questions regarding the location of key project documents, such as summaries and supporting documentation.

## I&E

### External Peer Review Team Roles and Responsibilities



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## Peer Review Scheduling

The CIGIE Inspections and Evaluations (I&E) Implementation Committee will:

- Request information on I&E activities and team member nominees from OIGs;
- Coordinate the peer review schedule;
- Assign team members and leaders to specific reviews; and
- Establish the timeframe for assigned peer reviews, including start dates and dates for issuance of final peer review reports.

OIGs that perform I&E work will:

- Provide information on the number of I&E reports issued, I&E staff hours expended, and any special requirements for peer review team members, such as security clearances or familiarity with certain software; and
- Nominate I&E personnel with significant current experience performing and reporting on I&Es in compliance with Blue Book standards to participate on external peer review teams.

## Team Training and Coordination

All peer review team members and Reviewed Organizations' POCs must attend the one-day CIGIE Training Academy peer review training/coordination session.

During the training/coordination session:

- Participants will discuss and draft the MOU (Appendix C).
- Review Team will complete the I&E peer review work plan (Appendix F).
- Participants will discuss logistics, and documentation format and requirements.

## Team Leader's OIG

The Team Leader's OIG has additional responsibilities including:

- Signing and issuing the final report;
- Storing and maintaining documents generated by peer review team;
- Resolving disagreements with Reviewed Organization's management rising above team leader level;
- Responding to requests for information or documents (FOIA, subpoenas); and
- Reporting required information on peer reviews conducted in its SAR.

## Team Lead

The Team Leader:

- Manages the overall peer review;
- Handles logistical, administrative, and project management activities, including team POC;
- Provides Reviewed Organization with draft and final reports, obtaining comments, and revising reports;
- Provides their OIG management sufficient information to resolve any disagreements; and
- May spend up to 3 extra days on these duties.

## Review Team

Review Team Members should:

- Become familiar with I&E Peer Review Guide and process prior to training/coordination session;
- Consider what criteria/guidelines to use when answering the checklist questions in Appendices D and E;
- Plan to spend approximately 15 days over 3-4 months on peer review; and
- Exercise professional judgment throughout the review process and amend checklists from the Peer Review Guide as needed.