Transcript - Introduction to Virtual Meetings in IAR for Reviewers

Welcome to this video tutorial: an Introduction to Virtual Meetings in IAR. This tutorial provides reviewers with a high-level overview for participating in a virtual scientific review meeting in IAR, the Internet Assisted Review module, instead of a traditional face-to-face meeting.

Note that Virtual Meetings in IAR are distinct from review meetings held virtually through video sharing platforms such as Teams, Zoom, Webex, and others. There are specific screens in IAR – such as VM List of Applications and Discussion Dashboard — and specific phases such as Introduction and Discussion phases that are just for virtual meetings.

Preliminary steps that are the same as face-to-face meetings

To access grant applications, you log in to eRA Commons, click on the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) button, or click on the Main Menu icon in the upper left corner, and select Internet Assisted Review from the menu. These options open the List of Meetings screen.

Review the latest news about IAR and your responsibilities as a reviewer in the IAR Information section. Collapse the box by clicking the collapse arrow. If this is your first time to this meeting, you need to first sign the confidentiality statement. Click on the three-dot ellipsis icon on the List of Meetings screen to access the link. Once that is completed, you are directed to sign the Employment Certification form.

Once the certifications are complete, on the List of Meetings screen, click on the three-dot ellipsis icon for available actions and select the View List of Applications link to begin. This opens the List of My Assigned Applications screen. While not necessary during the discussion phase, you will need to sign the Pre-Meeting Conflict of Interest Certification form before you can submit critiques or scores, or read other reviewers' critiques. On the List of My Assigned Applications screen, use the links in the center of the page to change the view to see all applications, or your assigned applications.

At this stage, during the submit phase, you will enter your scores and submit your critique. Note that the one difference is that you will add initial comments when submitting critiques.

Steps to Participate in the Virtual Meeting.

From the Virtual Meeting List of My Assigned Applications screen, click on the three-dot ellipsis icon in the Application Number column, and from the menu, select 'Go to Discussion.'

This takes you to the Virtual Meeting Discussion Dashboard. This is the central hub of activity during a virtual meeting. During the Discussion phase, reviewers can participate in individual discussion threads on each application on the dashboard. Each application will have a unique screen displaying select topics for discussion, added by the scientific review officer (SRO), and a corresponding discussion thread where reviewers will interact with one another, and the SRO as needed.

The Discussion Dashboard has the following information laid out in four sections. The first section is the header. The header includes the application number, PI name, date and time the screen was last refreshed, and the application title.

It is worth noting that the application number is a hyperlink. Clicking the number will open the grant folder. This provides access to the e-application, prior summary statements if applicable and e-Additions for Review if uploaded by the SRO.

The second section is Meeting information. This includes meeting title, Meeting Identifiers, meeting phase, meeting dates, the due date for critiques, and if the meeting has clusters, the dates for discussion for each individual cluster.

The third section is Reviewers and Scores. A list of assigned reviewers participating in the meeting are listed here. Other unassigned reviewers may appear on the list if they post comments or discussion scores, but assigned reviewers will appear on top since their scores set the score range. A green circle will appear next to a reviewer's name, indicating their online presence. Reviewers enter or edit their discussion scores, to indicate the level of enthusiasm for an application.

Reviewers and Scores information can be sorted by column in ascending or descending order, using the sort arrows at the top of each column. Clicking the "Default Sort" button will return the assigned reviewers, who set the score range, to the top of the list.

The fourth section is the Announcements and Comments section. Announcements from the SRO (indicated by the megaphone icon) are displayed here, as are comments from reviewers (represented by a person icon). Topics for discussion are found in the left navigational blue box.

Reviewers enter comments on an individual application discussion thread by entering their comments in the text field and clicking on the Send button. The text supports italics, bold, underline, font size and other formatting options. To refresh, simply click on the topic being discussed in the left navigational blue box.

The SRO provides comments only when needed on the Discussion Board screen. Note that the reviewer can view the comments on the application in chronological order or conversational order. In the latter order, the replies are nested within the original comment.

The message counter badge shows how many announcements or messages that are related to a topic have not been read, out of the total number of messages that have been posted. Reviewers can still see comments during the edit phase if final scoring is enabled.

This provides a read only view of the comments for the reviewers to consider while submitting their final scores. Once the final scoring time ends, the discussion comments will no longer be available. Reviewers are still able to complete other Edit phase activities such as uploading an updated critique or changing their priorities scores until that phase ends.

VM Items of note.

There are two additional phases in a Virtual Meeting — the VM Introduction Phase, and the VM Discussion phase. There is also a sub-phase, the VM Cluster Discussion phase. This phase is configured by the SRO and is done to change the order and the timing of when the applications in different clusters will be reviewed.

VM specific screens appear only for meetings coded as virtual. Those screens include Announcements, Manage Topics for discussion, VM List of Applications, VM Discussion Dashboard, etc.

Note that the Virtual Meeting List of My Assigned Applications, and the Virtual Meeting List of All Applications screens are only visible during the Introduction and Discussion phases.

Several resources are available to you for Virtual Meetings, should you need them.

- Virtual Meeting Online Help
  https://www.era.nih.gov/erahelp/IAR_Rev/Content/IAR_ReviewersHelp/VM/Virtual%20Meeting.htm
- Overview of Virtual Meeting
  https://www.era.nih.gov/about-era/services-for-agency-staff/preaward-management/VM.htm
- Virtual Meeting Video Tutorials:
  https://www.era.nih.gov/era-training/era-videos.htm#IARvirtualmeeting
- If you have specific questions with VM, please contact the eRA Service Desk.
  https://www.era.nih.gov/need-help

This concludes this tutorial on the Introduction to Virtual Meetings in IAR. Thank you for watching.