

**Please review this important information regarding your role as a Peer Reviewer for the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH).**

### 1. Protect Ideas

As a reviewer of content for SSH, you have the responsibility to protect the confidentiality of the ideas represented in the content you review.

#### **Confidentiality of all content submitted to SSH meetings must be maintained.**

Certainly, authors and faculty, through their submissions intend to ultimately publish to the world, but confidentiality must be maintained during the review process, extending through to the presentation date. Some work may be in the process of consideration for patent protection and a lack of confidentiality during review would constitute public disclosure, which has significant implications for the patent process. Authors, faculty and organizations do not consider submission of content to SSH to constitute a public disclosure. Also, some of the content submitted will not be accepted for presentation. Thus, the work may be further refined, submitted to a journal or another conference or even to SSH the following year.

Protection of the ideas in the content you review means:

1. Do not show submissions to anyone else, including colleagues or students, unless you have asked them to write a review or to help with your review.
2. Do not show images, video or other media to non-reviewers.
3. Be careful to insulate the ideas you learned from your reviews from your own research and from your colleagues and students. Do not use ideas from content you review to develop new ideas or research until after the content is made “public”. Accepted content will be considered public after it is presented at the meeting to which it was accepted. Do not use ideas from content not accepted until they are made public.

### 2. Avoid Conflict of Interest

As an SSH reviewer, you have a certain power over the reviewing process. It is important for you to avoid any conflict of interest. Even though you would, of course, act impartially on any piece of content, there should be absolutely no question about the impartiality of review. Thus, if you are assigned content where your review would create a possible conflict of interest, you should decline the review. Conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to) situations in which:

- You work at the same institution (university, hospital, company) as one of the authors.
- You have been directly involved in the work and will be receiving credit in some way. For example, if you're a member of the author's thesis committee and the abstract is about his or her thesis work, then you were involved.
- You suspect that others might see a conflict of interest in your involvement. For example, even though you are not directly involved in a submitted work, you have a consulting arrangement with the company that employs one of the authors.



Society for Simulation in Healthcare

## SSH Ethics of Peer Review

- You have collaborated with one of the authors/faculty in the past three years (more or less). Collaboration is usually defined as having written a paper or grant proposal with the author or creating an educational course with the faculty.
- You were the MS/PhD advisor of one of the authors/faculty or the MS/PhD advisee of one of the authors/faculty. Funding agencies typically consider advisees to represent a lifetime conflict of interest. SSH is not this stringent but you should think carefully before reviewing content you know to be written by a former advisee.
- You have unpublished work that would get “scooped” by the current submission because it tackles the same problem using a similar approach. At a minimum, such a cross-reviewing conflict should be declared in a private comment to the Planning Committee of the meeting.

The blind reviewing process will help hide the authorship of many submissions and those assigning content to reviewers will try hard to avoid conflicts. But if you recognize the work or the authors/faculty and feel it could present a conflict of interest, notify the meeting Planning Committee as soon as possible so that someone else can be found to review it.

### **3. Remain Anonymous**

All reviewers are expected to maintain anonymity forever. In particular, it is never appropriate for a reviewer to reveal himself or herself to the authors or faculty of accepted content, as this could be perceived as an attempt to curry favor.

### **4. Be Professional and Conscientious**

Adherence to ethics makes the whole reviewing process more complicated and sometimes less efficient. But convenience, efficiency, and expediency are not good reasons to contravene ethics. It is precisely at those times when it would be easier or more efficient to bend the rules that it is most important to do the right thing. Ultimately, spending that energy and time is an investment in the long-term health and integrity of the research and educational sessions, the conference and the community of healthcare simulation researchers.

This policy has been adapted with modifications from the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) SIGGRAPH conference “Ethics of Review” which has been used with permission.