Encyclopedia of Evaluation

Peer Review

Peer review refers generally to the evaluation of professional performance or products by other professionals and, more specifically, to a set of procedures for evaluating grant proposals and manuscripts submitted for publication. For peer-reviewed journals, content-matter specialists are asked to judge a manuscript, often using specified criteria and blinded to the author's identity. The journal editor considers reviewers' comments and decides whether the paper should be published, rejected, or revised and resubmitted. Similar procedures are used to review grant applications. Critiques of the peer review process focus on the low reliability of reviewers' recommendations, but the goal of peer review is to make good and defensible judgments rather than to have high reliability. Peer review is an example of an expertise-oriented approach to evaluation.

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