

Transcript from video prepared by NASA's Flight Opportunities program

Dual Anonymous Peer Review (DAPR) ***Achieving Equitable Proposal Reviews*** **Information for Proposers**

Many NASA solicitations and requests for technical proposals are using a dual anonymous, peer review or DAPR process to conduct equitable evaluations. In this video, you'll learn what DAPR is and how the process works. You'll also hear suggestions for how to prepare the anonymous portion of a proposal.

Let's begin with what dual anonymous peer review is. A dual anonymous review means not only that the reviewer's identity is hidden from the proposer, but also that the reviewer does not have explicit knowledge of the proposer's identity until after evaluating a proposal's technical merit.

At NASA, DAPR is used to focus on the technical merit of the work being proposed, not the individuals who will be performing it. The goal is to ensure equitable reviews, reduce the influence of unconscious biases, and level the playing field for everyone. Research shows that using DAPR to evaluate proposals improves the overall quality of the review process and expands the demographics of awardees.

Proposers prepare and submit their proposal in two parts. The anonymous portion discusses the work and how it will be managed, and a non-anonymized document presents the team's expertise and resources. The merit of your proposal's methodology, management plan, and costs are assessed anonymously and separately from the team's capabilities, including your team's qualifications, track record, and access to unique facilities. In other words, your team's expertise and experience are considered **after** the technical merit has been determined.

The DAPR review process takes place in three stages. Let's review each step individually.

1. The first step is a compliance check. NASA's procurement personnel will confirm that each proposal has complied with the solicitation requirements before it advances to the next step.
2. The technical review looks at the anonymized portion of the proposal. Reviewers are subject matter experts in the relevant field. They will assess each proposal against the evaluation criteria specified in the solicitation. Again, reviewers will not know the identity of the proposers until after their technical review is complete.
3. Then the expertise and resources are reviewed in the non-anonymized part of the proposal. Subject matter experts verify that the team has the capabilities and access to appropriate facilities to execute the proposed plan.

Now that you understand how the evaluation process works, let's talk about what DAPR means for your work on the proposal.

You might be feeling like your team's qualifications aren't being considered, but there are ways to present the context and motivation of your research, as well as your unique methodologies and capabilities, without attribution to a particular investigator or group. Here's how.

Avoid using the names, logos, and other identifiers of the people and organizations involved in the text, diagrams, figures, page headers and footers, and so on. Don't associate personnel with named teams or collaborations.

Do use numbers, not names, to cite your references. The reference list with full citations will be in the non-anonymous part of the submission. Don't claim ownership of past work. So rather than say, as we have demonstrated in our previous work, say as previously demonstrated.

Focus on describing the work you propose to do without naming the individuals or organizations who will provide the facilities or equipment used to perform the work.

Here are some examples of how to anonymize proposal text.

Instead of saying:	Say this:
As we have demonstrated in Smith et al (2014)...	As previously demonstrated...
If our model is correct, then...	If the model from (2) is correct, then...
In a previous NASA project, we found that...	In private consultation, the team found that...
This data has resulted from our ongoing collaboration with the Smith lab.	The data was obtained via private communication.
We will use our Co.NameTech system to test...	The team will use a CoNameTech system provided by the manufacturer to test...
Our university's Gap Fund Program will provide funding to...	The team has been promised funding from Mars University to...
Being on the faculty at the University of the Moon, Prof. Jones has a key to the regolith testing facility on campus to...	The team will have access to the regolith testing facility at the University of the Moon, which will enable...

As you can see, it *is* possible to describe the proposed work and demonstrate that you have the necessary skills and capabilities to achieve success without explicitly revealing your identity.

Remember:

- DAPR aims to ensure equitable reviews by removing unconscious bias.
- DAPR focuses reviews on the proposed activities, not who has submitted the proposal.
- You should always review each solicitation carefully to understand the specific DAPR rules.

- The goal of DAPR is not to make it completely impossible for reviewers to guess the identities of the investigators.

This video was prepared by NASA's Flight Opportunities program, which uses DAPR for its proposal reviews. For more information, visit [the Flight Opportunities website](#).