Peer Review Process
CAE R

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Topics Covered

Peer Review Overview

Peer Review Process for CAE-R

Peer Review Process – Committee roles and RFIs

Peer Review Application and COI Declaration

The Peer Review Overview

Overview: Why Peer Review?

- Peer-review process is integral part of research and many academic engagements

- Quality outputs and uniformity of the criteria application

- Embedded as a quality control

- Serving as reviewer is the most important way to 'give back' to the CAE Community

- There is a great need of reviewers **NOW** due to backlog of applications

- Conduct honest, diligent, and fair review in a quality manner

- Reviewers are the *"quality assurance officers"* of the CAE Program
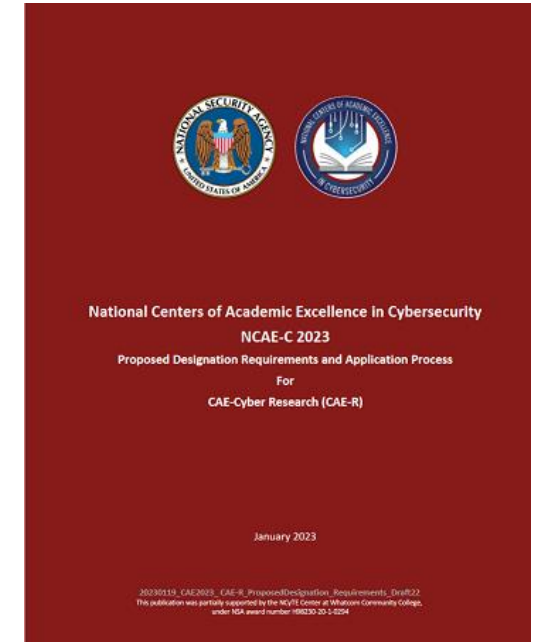
Overview: The Ideal Reviewer?

- One who is diligent and can commit the time needed
- Must be well versed with all the details of the requirements

(See *CAE Program Guidance* (CAE-CD, CAE-CO, CAE-R) via:

https://public.cyber.mil/ncae-c/documents-library/)

CAE CRITERIA

	TITLE	SIZE	UPDATED
⊕	CAE Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) Program Guidance - 2022	1.39 MB	26 Oct 2022
⊕	CAE Cyber Operations (CAE-CO) Program Guidance - 2022	1.03 MB	12 May 2022
⊕	CAE Cyber Research (CAE-R) Program Guidance - 2022	775.01 KB	26 Oct 2022

National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity
NCAE-C 2023
Proposed Designation Requirements and Application Process
For
CAE-Cyber Research (CAE-R)

January 2023

20230119_CAE2023_CAE-R_ProposedDesignation_Requirements_Draft22
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under NSA award number H98230-20-1-0254

- Must do a rigorous, in-depth review of **all** the Requirements/Criteria for their assigned application

Overview: Application Process Steps

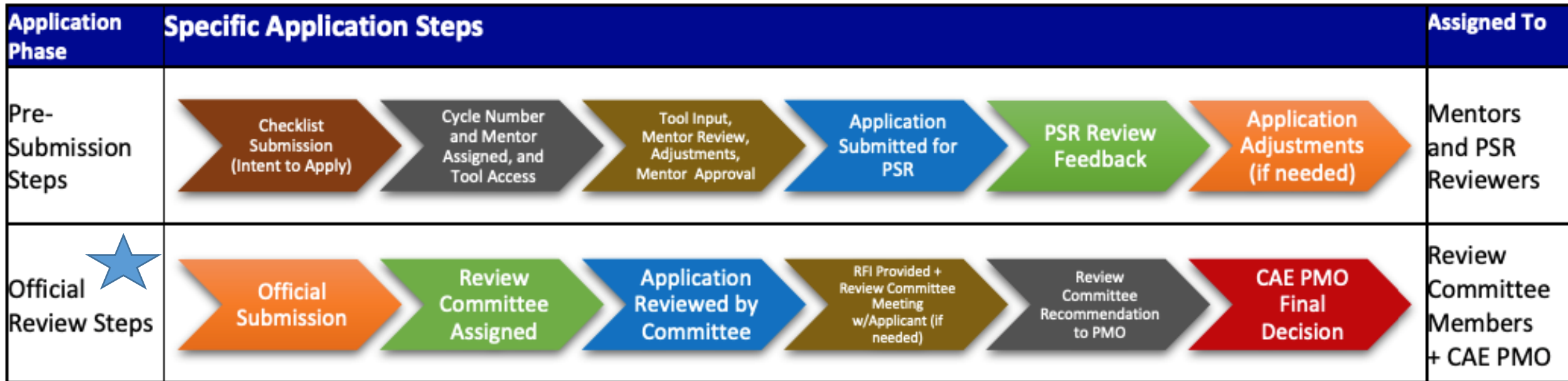| Application Phase	Specific Application Steps	Assigned To
Pre-Submission Steps	Checklist Submission (Intent to Apply) → Cycle Number and Mentor Assigned, and Tool Access → Tool Input, Mentor Review, Adjustments, Mentor Approval → Application Submitted for PSR → PSR Review Feedback → Application Adjustments (if needed)	Mentors and PSR Reviewers
Official Review Steps	Official Submission → Review Committee Assigned → Application Reviewed by Committee → RFI Provided + Review Committee Meeting w/Applicant (if needed) → Review Committee Recommendation to PMO → CAE PMO Final Decision	Review Committee Members + CAE PMO

Figure 1. CAE-R Designation Application Process Steps

Important Mentor / PSR / Peer Reviewer Process Update

✓ E-mail on April 21, 2023 from Stephen Troupe.

✓ The PMO has noticed a significant increase in the number of Request for Information (RFI) submissions, which has caused significant delays in the peer review process. In response to this issue, we are implementing the following changes:

Mentor / Pre-submission Process:

1. The Program of Study (PoS) Pre-submission Review Template and CAE Pre-submission Review Template will be changed to eliminate the yellow category. This means that mentor and PSR reviews will only flag red issues that must be resolved before the application can be submitted for Peer Review.

Green – No issues were identified for the Requirement.	
Red – Issues were identified which would most likely result in an application not being approved.	

2. When a criterion is flagged Red, the mentee institution must make the correction to the application to the satisfaction of the PSR Reviewer. If the red criterion is not corrected it will not be approved for Peer Review, and the Institution will be moved to a later cycle to resolve the issue or invited to reapply when they are able to demonstrate they meet the requirement(s).

Note: If you find that the PSR feedback is inaccurate, please inform us immediately so that we can make the necessary corrections.

Important Mentor / PSR / Peer Reviewer Process Update

Peer Review RFI process:

1. Once a Program of Study (PoS) or CAE-CD application is submitted to the Peer Reviewers, the following process will be followed by the peer reviewers:

    a. Chair and Reviewer will conduct Peer Review.

    b. If the Chair and Reviewer identify requests for information (RFI), the Chair must ensure that the RFI is pertinent to the application guidelines and not influenced by personal preferences.

    c. If the Chair agrees that a Request for Information (RFI) should be submitted to the institution, the following steps should be taken:

        i. The Chair should request the Pre-Submission Review (PSR) report from the PMO to confirm whether the RFI concern was identified in the report prior to final submission.

        ii. If the RFI concern was identified in the PSR report, the Chair should notify the Program Management Office (PMO) that the application has failed.

        iii. If the RFI concern was not identified in the PSR report, the Chair should prepare the RFIs and submit them to the institution. The Chair should also copy the PMO in the email.

    d. The institution must be given a deadline of one week to respond to the RFI.

Important Mentor / PSR / Peer Reviewer Process Update

To ensure continuous improvement of the PSR and peer review process, the PMO and National Centers will continue to monitor PSR feedback and RFIs. This will allow us to identify areas where improvements can be made and provide feedback to mentors, PSR reviewers, and peer reviewers. Our goal is to create a more effective and efficient process that benefits everyone involved.

The Peer Review Process for CAE- R

The Peer Review Committee

The Peer Review Committee:

At least two reviewers are assigned to each application
- Review Committee Chair
- Reviewer
- Stephen Miller will e-mail assignments

Peer Reviewing Expectations:
- Complete your assigned review in <mark>two weeks</mark>
- Consult the NSA PMO if there are questions about criteria
- Reviewer may be assigned multiple reviews

The Peer Review Assignment

I have assigned you all the Peer Review for the following institution below. The turn-around on peer reviewers is 2 weeks per institution contingent on RFI responses in a timely manner. The institution assignment is as follows:

Institution	Chair - Reviewer	Reviewer
Institution Name CAE-R Cycle: ##	Chair Name Chair e-mail	**Reviewer name** Reviewer e-mail

Attached is the Peer Reviewer Invoice, upon completion of Peer Review process please submit invoice to Tosha Amos at amos@whatcom.edu and copy me. If you are unavailable for this assignment let me know and I will reassign to another reviewer.

Thank You,

Stephen

Review Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Chair conducts a rigorous, in-depth review of **all** submitted application content for their assigned application in <mark>two weeks</mark>

- <mark>Note: If an issue is identified for potential RFI, chair checks the PSR report if the issue is stated in PSR report, if the issue is in report, STOP review, contact PMO, and Fail application. If issue is not in PSR report then and RFI is valid and continue review.</mark>

- Chair captures the Request For Information (RFIs) from the committee (himself/herself + other reviewer(s)), ***Chair request PSR report to check if RFI concern was identified in PSR report if so, stop review, notify PMO that this is the case and Fail the application, if RFI was not identified in PSR report submit RFIs to the institution and notify PMO.***

- <mark>Chair reviews RFIs to ensure they are related to application guideline criteria and **not identified in PSR report requirements**, and not "best practices"</mark>
    - <mark>Institution must be given a RFI response deadline *(1 week max)*</mark>

- The Chair will email notification to NSA PMO for their final review and communication to the institution. The PMO are streamlining the Peer Reviewer process and no longer requiring a committee meeting.

Peer Reviewer Responsibilities

- Conducts a rigorous, in-depth review of **all** submitted application content for their assigned application in ==two weeks==

- If Peer Reviewer identifies areas of the requirement that they're unsure about, should communicate with the Committee Chair for clarifications

- If Peer Reviewer identifies parts of the application that are unclear or not following the requirements, they should discuss it with the Chair and then, if applicable, submit RFIs to Committee Chair

Review Committee Chair vs. Reviewer

Applications assigned as Review Committee Chair ← Chair

Program Name	Program Type	Status	Action	
BS in Computer Science and Technology (Networks concentration) with Undergraduate Information Security Certificate	Technical CD-Bachelor	Submitted on 03/13/2021	View Application	Reviewer Feedback

Applications assigned as Reviewer ← Reviewer

Program Name	Program Type	Status	Action
B.S. Information Assurance/Cyber Defense	Technical CD-Bachelor	Submitted on	View Application
B.S. Information Assurance/Cyber Defense	Technical CD-Bachelor	Submitted on	View Application

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Requests For Information (RFI) Process:

If there is an issue chair request PSR report to check if RFI concern was identified in PSR report if so notify PMO that this is the case, stop review, and Fail the application, if RFI was not identified in PSR report submit RFIs to the institution and notify PMO.

If information in application is unclear or missing, submit an RFI in the section that contains the error.

Institutions will receive the RFIs and must respond to each RFI in the tool by the assigned deadline.

- Institution must upload any required artifacts prior to Peer Reviewer Chair submitting e-mail recommendation to NSA PMO.
- Failing to respond to the RFI by deadline may result in a **Fail**.

Note:

- ***The RFI process is being developed.*** *Currently, the tool does not notify the institution of pending RFIs (or Chair if RFIs have been updated).*
  - *The automated process is being developed now.*

- *For now, please email the institutions POC when RFIs are available.*

Application Example:

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Requests For Information (RFI) Process:

- The Peer Reviewer can select the **Pass** button for any Requirements where a RFI was not required.

- Any Requirement for which an RFI was submitted will display a line showing the number of RFIs submitted as well as the number answered.

- Once the RFI have been answered to the satisfaction of the committee members the requirement can be marked as **Pass**.

- *The Requirement should only be marked **Fail** after consultation with the NSA PMO.*

Application Example:

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Requests For Information (RFI) Process:

- If the Reviewer has added any comments in the Reviewer Notes the Chair can review them by clicking the dropdown list that appears above the Reviewer Notes in Requirements in the Chair Reviewer's application.

- If the Reviewer has added any RFIs the Chair will see a dropdown list in the Request for Information section. RFIs requested by the Chair will also appear here.

- *Normally only the Chair will enter RFIs after consolidating the comments of Committee members.*

Application Example:

There are no reviewer notes available yet. **Reviewer Comments Here**

Reviewer Notes

Reviewer Comments:
- File: PDF2 -StudentSample2_Firewalls_ITEC455.pdf

  o *Student work product not provided. Provide student work for this assignment.*

- File: PDF4 -StudentSample4_ITEC220.pdf

Save Review Notes

Request for Information

Request for Information # 1 - requested on 10/28/2021- requested by Al Heitkamper   **Reviewer/Chair RFIs Here**

Enter text here...

Upload document   Choose File   No file chosen

Send Request for Information to Institution

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Requests For Information (RFI) Process:

- Once the institution responds to the RFI, the response will appear below the RFI to which it is related.

- The RFI request text block will be cleared once an RFI is sent to allow for additional RFIs if discovered after a previous RFI.

- Note that a file can be attached to the RFI if needed.

- *Be aware that RFIs cannot be deleted once sent to the Institution.*

Application Example:

Request for Information

Request for Information # 1 - requested on 10/28/2021- requested by Al Heitkamper

- File: PDF2 -StudentSample2_Firewalls_ITEC455.pdf

  o Student work product not provided. Provide student work for this assignment.

- File: PDF4 -StudentSample4_ITEC220.pdf

  o Guidelines for student work product not provided. Provide guidelines for the student work for this assignment.

Response from school
School has not responded yet.   **← Institution Response**

Enter text here...

Upload document   Choose File   No file chosen   **← Add file here**

Send Request for Information to Institution

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Request for Information:

- RFIs will show the name of the requester, the date of the request and the date of the school response.

- When responding the school can attach a document to their response.

- Follow-up RFIs can be submitted by the Chair for further clarification if needed.

Application Example:

Request for Information ⬅ RFI

Request for Information # 1 - requested on 12/27/2021- requested by Al Heitkamper - responded on 01/04/2022 - responded on 01/04/2022

Committee Comments:

- ITSY 2343 syllabus does not specify which week a lab is taught or due.
  - Please provide this information.

Response from school ⬅ School Response

In this particular class (ITSY 2343), labs are completed and turned in weekly to prepare for the next week. The example lab is for week 1 of the setup and configur for week 2.

Computer System Forensics ITSY 2343 Wintermester Spring 2021 (clarified for turn in on lab).pdf

Enter text here... ⬅ Follow-up RFI

Upload document   [Choose File] No file chosen

[Send Request for Information to Institution]

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Reviewer Comments:

Application Example:

- Chair can see the Committee members comments by first clicking on Reviewer Feedback (see slide 11) and clicking on the dropdown list containing the Reviewer's name and clicking on 'View'.

Al Heitkamper

Reviewer's Application

POS:AAS Information Systems Cybersecurity

1. PoS Curriculum

Section	Action
1a. The cybersecurity PoS offered by the institution	View / Marked as Pass
1b. NICE Framework crosswalk alignment	View / Marked as Pass
1c. Courses Syllabi and Courses Requiring Applied Lab Exercises (For KU Aligned Courses Only)	View / Not Graded Yet
1d. Curriculum Map and Plan with Assessment Documentation	View / Not Graded Yet
1e. KU alignment	View / Marked as Pass
1f. Graduate Thesis/Dissertation/Equivalent Guidelines/ Process (Masters & Doctoral only)	View / Not Graded Yet

Marked Pass/Fail

Not Graded

Request For Information (RFI) Process

Reviewer Comments:

Application Example:

- Reviewer Comments can also be viewed by the Chair within the Chair's application by clicking on the drop-down list with the Reviewer's name located above the Reviewer's Notes from the Chair.

Completing the Review:

- Once the committee is satisfied that the institution has addressed the Criteria, the Chair will **Pass** each element and 'Submit to NSA Final Review' or if the Committee believes there will be a **fail**, the Committee needs to contact CAE PMO before failing!!!
  - This sends reviewed application to the NSA
  - A failure on any element will mean a failure for the entire application

Application Example:

Review Committee Final Submission to NSA

Review Committee Submission Process To NSA PMO:

- If an issue is identified in the PSR report stop review, Fail application, and notify PMO.

- The Committee Chair will coordinate RFI issues with the PMO to determine **Pass**/**Fail** on unresolved RFI responses.

- The Committee Chair will mark up the application with **Pass**/**Fail** and submit their recommendation to NSA.

- The Chair will email notification to NSA PMO for their final review and communication to the institution.

Submit to NSA Final Review

If the Committee believes there will be a **fail**, the Committee needs to contact CAE PMO before failing!!!

CAE-R Designation - Peer Review Process

CAE applications **Do Not require** a meeting

- The Chair will email notification to NSA PMO for their final review and communication to the institution.

- Emails: Annie, Dee Dee, and Jason via email addresses below, copy Stephen Miller:
  - stephen.miller@enmu.edu
  - ambeck3@uwe.nsa.gov
  - ddpatte@uwe.nsa.gov
  - jasmi36@uwe.nsa.gov

Are YOU Ready to serve as a Peer Reviewer?

Send e-mail to Stephen Miller – stephen.miller@enmu.edu

Peer Review Application

On assignment as a Peer Reviewer, a contract will be emailed that must be completed and have a hand-written signature on it and emailed back.

After completing reviews, Chair and Reviewer needs to e-mail invoice to Tosha Amos tamos@whatcom.edu (The invoice will be sent to reviewers at the time peer reviews are assigned by CAE Peer Review National Center POC, Stephen Miller).

Peer Reviewer must complete self-declaration document (coming soon).
- Identify conflict of interest
  - e.g., Mentored institution, served on board, previous employer, relatives working at institutions, significantly collaborated with institution on grants or projects, etc.
- Soon the tool will block you from being assigned to institutions that you've identified as a conflict.

CAE IN CYBERSECURITY COMMUNITY

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PEER REVIEW   National Centers / Peer Review

Leading Institution: Eastern New Mexico University - Ruidoso

CAE Peer Review National Center (CNC)

The CAE Peer Review National Center works with the NCAE-C Program Management Office to train reviewers and execute peer reviews of applications for Academic Endorsement and/or NCAE-C Designation. Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso Banch Community College and Whatcom College collaborate to manage peer review panels based on readiness of Candidates to submit applications or Designated institutions to apply for re-designation.

Resource Links

No Resource Links Found.

Files

CAE CD & CO Peer Review Process
CAE/R Peer Review Process

Questions?

E-mail Stephen Miller
stephen.miller@enmu.edu