

## NIH Information Quality FAQs

### 1. How long will NIH take to respond?

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NIH will respond to all requests for correction within 60 calendar days of receipt. If more than 60 days are needed, NIH will inform the requestor that more time is required and will state the reason why and an estimated decision date.

### 2. How will NIH respond to requests for correction?

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Based on a review of the information provided, NIH will determine whether a correction is warranted and if so, what action to take. The agency will respond to the requestor by letter or e-mail. The agency's response will explain the findings of the review and the actions that the agency will take, if any. The response will consider the nature and timeliness of the information involved and such factors as the significance of the correction on the use of the information and the magnitude of the correction. The response will describe how the complainant may request reconsideration. The agency will strive to respond to all requests for correction within 60 calendar days of receipt. If the request requires more than 60 calendar days to resolve, the agency will inform the complainant that more time is required and indicate the reason why and an estimated decision date.

### 3. What are the procedures for seeking corrections to information provided by NIH?

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To seek a correction of information disseminated by NIH or its components, an individual should email the request to [InfoQuality@mail.nih.gov](mailto:InfoQuality@mail.nih.gov) or mail the complaint to:

Director, Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Reporting  
Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives  
Office of the Director  
National Institutes of Health  
Building 1, Room 260  
1 Center Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20892

The request should state that an information quality request for correction is being submitted, and should provide the following information:

- A detailed description of the specific material that is proposed for correction, including where the material is located, i.e., the publication title, date, and publication number, if any, or the website and web page address (URL), or the presentation, presenter, date, and mode of delivery.
- The specific reasons for believing that the information does not comply with OMB, HHS, or NIH Guidelines and is in error, and supporting documentation, if any.
- Suggested recommendations for what corrective action(s) should be taken.
- A description of how the person requesting the correction is affected by the information error.
- Complete contact information for the requestor, including name, mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address, and organizational affiliation, if any.

Complainants should be aware that they bear the "burden of proof" with respect to the necessity for correction as well as with respect to the type of correction they seek.

#### 4. Who is responsible for the information quality guidelines at NIH?

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The NIH official with overall responsibility for receiving and resolving complaints regarding information that does not comply with agency guidelines for information quality is the Director of the Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Reporting (OEPR) in the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Director, NIH. The Director of OEPR has overall responsibility for implementing NIH Information Quality Guidelines and works collaboratively with other NIH units.

#### 5. What information is covered by OMB Guidelines?

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Although information that is not covered by the OMB Guidelines is not subject to the administrative complaint procedures, the information is still subject to the usual NIH internal review procedures for accuracy and quality.

##### **NIH Information Covered by the OMB Guidelines**

- Scientific research papers, books, journal articles, and similar authoritative materials produced by NIH employees and contractors, unless they have disclaimers alerting the audience that they do not represent official views of NIH. (This does not apply to materials produced by extramural researchers supported by NIH awards.)
- Other official reports, brochures, documents, newsletters, fact sheets, and audiovisual productions (i.e., a unified presentation, developed according to a plan or script, containing visual imagery, sound, or both, and used to convey information).
- Editorials, commentaries, letters-to-the-editor, only if written by NIH staff representing official NIH viewpoints.
- Oral information, including speeches, interviews, expert opinions, only if representing NIH's views, official positions, or policies.
- Open meetings' proceedings and minutes.

#### 6. What information is not covered by the OMB Guidelines?

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##### **NIH Information Not Covered by the OMB Guidelines**

- National Library of Medicine (NLM) databases or other archival records, grant information contained on the Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT), and similar databases.
- Documents not authored by the agency and not representing the agency's views, including information authored and distributed by NIH grantees.
- Information that is limited in dissemination to government employees or agency contractors or grantees.
- Information pertaining to basic agency operations.

- Responses to requests for agency records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, or other similar laws.
- Information relating solely to correspondence with individuals or persons.
- Press releases that support the announcement or give public notice of information that NIH has disseminated elsewhere.
- Information intended for public filings, subpoenas, or adjudicative processes.
- Opinions where the agency's presentation makes it clear that what is being offered is personal opinion rather than fact or the agency's views.

#### 7. When did the information quality guidelines go into effect?

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The OMB guidelines apply to official information (with the NIH imprimatur) released on or after October 1, 2002. The administrative mechanism for correction applies to information that the agency disseminates on or after October 1, 2002, regardless of when the agency first disseminated the information.

#### 8. What is the process for an appeal?

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If NIH denies a request for correction, the complainant may send a written request for reconsideration within 30 days of receipt of the agency's decision. The request should state the reasons for the appeal and requestors should reference the NIH tracking number provided in the NIH response to the original request. Requests may be sent as an e-mail to [InfoQuality@mail.nih.gov](mailto:InfoQuality@mail.nih.gov) or as hard copy to the following address:

Director, Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Reporting  
Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives  
Office of the Director  
National Institutes of Health  
Building 1, Room 260  
1 Center Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20892

If sent by hard copy, requestors should clearly mark the outside envelope, "Information Quality Appeal."

NIH will strive to respond to all requests for appeals within 60 calendar days of receipt. If the request requires more than 60 calendar days to resolve, the agency will inform the complainant that more time is required and indicate the reason for the delay and an estimated decision date.