

The Role of Peer Review in Talent Selection

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The role of peer review in procedures of quality assessment is changing. Scientific manuscripts were mainly the first object of peer review, extended to e.g. research proposals, programs, and grant applications. In a recent study on the process of grant allocation, we found that the allocation decisions made by the grant committees often are not in line with the external peer reviews. Funding decisions, increasingly important for the careers of academic researchers, are made by the committee members, who review a large set of applications without being an expert on most of the topics. This leads to questioning of the role of (expert) peer review in this procedure of quality assessment. In a follow-up study grant committee members were interviewed to get a better understanding of the selection process. Important aspects to be discussed are the use of the external reviews, the level of expertise (or “peerness”) of the decision-makers, and the effectiveness of peer review.