

July 19, 2016

MEMORANDUM TO: Stephen D. Dingbaum  
Inspector General of Audits  
Office of the Inspector General

FROM: Frederick D. Brown **/RA/**  
Acting Chief Information Officer  
Office of the Chief Information Officer

SUBJECT: STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND STAFF RESPONSES TO  
THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S AUDIT OF THE  
U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S PROCESS FOR  
ENSURING INTEGRITY IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (OIG-15-A-08)

This memorandum provides the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's status update for Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5 from the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) audit OIG-15-A-08, "Audit of NRC's Process for Ensuring Integrity in Scientific Research," dated April 6, 2015. In a memorandum to OIG dated September 30, 2015, the staff outlined its planned actions and target dates for addressing the OIG recommendations. OIG responded with an analysis and status of recommendations dated November 3, 2015. On November 18, 2016, the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research staff notified the OIG of its completed action for Recommendation 4. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) staff believes that the updated actions for resolving Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5 are responsive to OIG's analysis. The OCIO staff has completed actions for Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5.

**Recommendation 1:**

Designate an Information Quality Program owner and clearly delineate roles and responsibilities among involved offices.

**Agency Response Dated September 30, 2015:**

The responsibilities of the Information Quality Program Owner have been delineated in the draft Management Directive (MD) 3.17, "NRC Information Quality Program," which the Office of Administration is currently reviewing before sending to the other offices for review and comment. OCIO has identified the staff member who will serve as the Information Quality Program Owner, and that staff member has begun implementing the actions that will be required in the revised MD 3.17.

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Estimated Completion Date:

Completed; Contact: F. Majeed

OIG Analysis:

The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. This recommendation will be closed after OIG reviews the revised MD 3.17 and determines the guidance identifies an Information Quality Program owner (i.e., office) and clearly articulates and delineates the roles and responsibilities among involved offices.

**Status:** Resolved.

Staff Update

Action taken:

On June 28, 2016, the Executive Director for Operations (EDO) approved and OCIO issued MD 3.17. MD 3.17 clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities among involved offices. In addition, MD 3.17 instructs OCIO to designate an Information Quality Program Owner. OCIO has identified a staff member who will serve as the Information Quality Program Owner, referred to as the Information Quality Coordinator (IQC).

Target date for completion: Completed

**Recommendation 2:**

Assign responsibility for routinely checking, responding to, and tracking the resolution of information correction requests submitted via vehicles identified on the NRC's public Web pages regarding Information Quality Guidelines.

Agency Response Dated September 30, 2015:

OCIO has identified a staff member to serve as the IQC. The responsibilities of the IQC have been delineated in the draft MD 3.17, including: managing the information correction request (ICR) review and appeal process; maintaining the official ICR files and public Web sites for ICRs, and peer reviews; preparing the annual report to OMB and other necessary reports to keep management abreast of the status and issues relating to ICR reviews, assessing the consistency of decisions to correct or not to correct information; independently assessing each decision to correct information for its impact on other agency processes and activities; coordinating the agency's efforts to comply with the OMB's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review; and identifying the number and nature of ICRs received and their resolution, including an explanation of decisions to deny or limit corrective actions.

Estimated Completion Date:

Completed; Contact: F. Majeed

OIG Analysis:

The proposed actions meet the intent of the recommendation. This recommendation will be closed when OIG (1) reviews the revised MD 3.17 and confirms that it assigns responsibility for routinely checking, responding to, and tracking the resolution of information correction requests, and (2) confirms that those steps are being regularly performed.

**Status:** Resolved.

Staff Update

Action taken:

On June 28, 2016, the EDO approved and OCIO issued MD 3.17. MD 3.17 assigns responsibility for routinely checking, responding to, and tracking the resolution of information correction requests.

Target date for completion: Completed

**Recommendation 3:**

Hold an annual meeting with involved NRC staff and management to discuss the requirements and responsibilities associated with the identification and reporting of Influential Scientific Information and Highly Influential Scientific Assessment information products.

Agency Response Dated September 30, 2015:

The MD 3.17 working group has added direction in the draft MD to ensure that prior to the initiation of each annual survey, the IQC will advise involved NRC staff (typically the offices' Peer Review Coordinator) and management about the requirements and responsibilities associated with the identification and reporting of Influential Scientific Information (ISI) and Highly Influential Scientific Assessment (HISA) information products. This meeting will first occur prior to the survey in calendar year 2016.

Estimated Completion Date:

Completed; Contact: F. Majeed

OIG Analysis:

The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. OIG will close this recommendation when the agency implements a mechanism by which involved NRC staff and management discuss, on an annual basis at minimum, the requirements and responsibilities associated with the identification and reporting of Influential Scientific Information and Highly Influential Scientific Information.

**Status:** Resolved.

Staff Update

Action taken:

On June 28, 2016, the EDO approved and OCIO issued MD 3.17. MD 3.17 directs the IQC to advise involved NRC staff and management about the requirements and responsibilities associated with the identification and reporting of ISI and HISA information products. The IQC will schedule a kickoff meeting prior to the survey in calendar year 2016, and annually thereafter, as a mechanism for NRC staff and management to discuss the requirements and responsibilities associated with the identification and reporting of ISI and HISA.

Target date for completion: Completed

**Recommendation 5:**

Direct all offices to review and revise office guidance on peer review to align with requirements established by OMB and the National Academy of Sciences.

Agency Response Dated September 30, 2015:

The draft revised MD 3.17 contains direction to the Office Directors to ensure that office guidance aligns with the MD. Office specific guidance will be updated once MD 3.17 has been finalized.

Estimated Completion Date:

Complete; Contact: F. Majeed

OIG Analysis:

The proposed actions meet the intent of the recommendation. This recommendation will be closed after OIG reviews (1) the written direction to offices to revise their office guidance so that it aligns with MD 3.17 and requirements established by OMB and the National Academy of Sciences and (2) all office specific guidance and determines that it aligns with the requirements on peer review established by OMB and the National Academy of Sciences.

**Status:** Resolved.

Staff Update

Action taken:

On June 28, 2016, the EDO approved and OCIO issued MD 3.17. MD 3.17 contains direction to Office Directors to ensure that office guidance aligns with the MD and requirements established by the Office of Management and Budget and the National Academy of Sciences.

Target date for completion: Completed

Sciences and (2) all office specific guidance and determines that it aligns with the requirements on peer review established by OMB and the National Academy of Sciences.

**Status:** Resolved.

Staff Update

Action taken:

On June 28, 2016, the EDO approved and OCIO issued MD 3.17. MD 3.17 contains direction to Office Directors to ensure that office guidance aligns with the MD and requirements established by the Office of Management and Budget and the National Academy of Sciences.

Target date for completion: Completed

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