

## PEER REVIEW

Peer review is not just a check of a colleagues witness statement or report to check grammar, punctuation and if the conclusion is roughly what you would come to if you had the case.

It is much more, it needs to be a careful review in detail of all aspects of the draft statement/report, after all your credibility is on the line just as much as that of the author!

Take care not to use the peer reviewers C/V to add weight to the value of the work, after all its not the work of the reviewer and the C/V should not be used for this purpose.

You need to look in detail at all the work from the initial contact to completion of the case, that may include:

- 1] First contact (in notes for instance telephone log, e-mail etc.)
- 2] Exhibit receipt (details, contemporaneous notes, receipt form etc.)
- 3] Circumstances (notes if verbal, or written from exhibiting officer)
- 4] Requirements (notes if verbal, or written from O.I.C. etc.)
- 5] Planning (Forensic strategy, strategy meetings)
- 6] Cognitive bias (any indication, link between requirements and strategy)
- 7] Alternative hypothesis (tests, experiments, examination methods to support consideration has been given to all possibilities)
- 8] Notes (comprehensive, clear, time, date, page numbers, signed etc.)
- 9] Continuity (clear in notes for security of exhibit/s)
- 10] Equipment (fit for purpose, calibration certificates etc.)
- 11] Examination (health and safety plan, preservation of evidence etc.)
- 12] Facts (supporting evidence from credible sources)
- 13] Opinions (supporting evidence on which they are formed, where applicable)
- 14] Exhibit return (time, date, to whom, signature, condition, quantity etc.)
- 15] Disclosure (list of notes, unused material etc. as required by Rules)
- 16] Documentation (notes, unused materials etc. fit for purpose, legible, collated etc.)
- 17] Have all the requirements of C.P.R./Crim P.R. been adhered to (summary of the above)

**THE STATEMENT/REPORT**

**1] Qualification and Experience**

**Does the scientist list qualifications and experience that will demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge in the subject matter/s contained in the witness statement/report.**

(For instance if the exhibit is an air pistol, BA Hons, 15 years in the army, Police armourer etc, is not sufficient, there needs to be a clear indication the expert has knowledge of air guns and airgun testing)

**2] Items Received**

**Where exhibits are received for examination does the scientist list from who/where, when, and exhibit reference details.**

(A brief description of what, when and from who, the comprehensive notes will contain any other required information such as packing type, condition, exhibiting officers contact details, etc.)

**3] Information Received**

**Where information is received is it listed, also from whom.**

(When information was received, copies of fax's, e-mails etc. will be available in the notes if required)

**4] Examination Procedures**

**Do the examination procedures demonstrate the examination was carried out competently, using methods and equipment in accordance with establishment scientific principles.**

(Correct equipment used, calibrated, consideration given for tests that can prove for and against the accused, notes contain calculations etc.)

**5] Examination Results**

**Are the results clearly stated with adequate explanations so they can be understood by lay persons.**

(Where complicated mechanisms are explained are there good drawings? Use of simple words for mechanisms or components, where complicated tests are undertaken are they clearly explained)

**6] Conclusion**

**Are conclusions clearly explained, are facts and opinions clearly stated.**

(Where opinions are given is it explained on what those opinions are based, i.e. from tests previously carried out, or other work and information obtained from manufacturers etc. The same applies to stated facts, we can agree when you say the gun in black it is black, but if stated it was made in the 1930's what is the source for this information?)

**7] Peer Review Form "B"**

**Where notes and comments by the peer reviewer do not conflict with conclusions in the statement/report.**

(Extra notes and comments can be made in this section, including general comments that may assist the scientist in improving the statement/report in relation to layout, use of technical terms etc..)

**8] Peer Review Form “C”**

**Where notes and comments by the peer reviewer conflict with the conclusions in the statement/report.**

This form is split in two sections, the top section where the peer reviewer can lay out where there is clear disagreement with the conclusions of the scientist, giving reasons.

The bottom section is where the scientist can make notes to explain where he/she takes steps to review the statement/report in light of the comments highlighting disagreement, and if in light of that review the conclusion remain the same or are modified.)

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**9] The peer review process forms part of the disclosure material and must be declared as such.**

**10] A draft statement/report can be modified, improved, changed in light of the peer review, all modifications, improvements or changes must be clearly identified in this process and are disclosable in exactly the same way contemporaneous notes taken at the time of an examination are (CrPR33).**

**11] Peer Review or Qualifications**

**The peer reviewer must be an expert in the field he/she is reviewing. The peer review process is designed to subject the statement/report to independent scrutiny and an opportunity to comment on any disagreement they may have with the content of the statement/report.**

**PEER REVIEW FORM "A"**

Name of reviewer .....

Case Reference Number.....

Review of Statement/Report of.....

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Give details of evidence used to assess competence</b>
<b>1. First contact, exhibit receipt, circumstances (if applicable).</b>	
<b>2. Planning, do notes demonstrate attention to planning or forensic strategy.</b>	
<b>3. Confirming that the correct type of examination has been carried out competently.</b>	
<b>4. Has consideration been given to an alternative hypothesis?</b>	
<b>5. Are notes comprehensive, clear, dates, times, etc.?</b>	
<b>6. Has the examination been carried out correctly, consideration to preservation of evidence etc.?</b>	
<b>7. Is equipment used fit for purpose, valid calibration certificates etc.?</b>	
<b>8. Do facts have supporting evidence from credible sources where applicable?</b>	
<b>9. Are opinions clearly stated, and on what information they are formed?</b>	
<b>10. Is all documentation fit for purpose?</b>	

**Reviewer:**

Signed:.....Name:.....Date:.....

**Notes**

- 1] Not all boxes may apply, this check list is to allow the peer reviewer to record his/her attention to all relevant elements of the review.

**PEER REVIEW FORM “B”**

**Extra notes, comments:**  
**(use for minor edits/corrections)**

**Reviewer:**  
**Signed:.....Name:.....Date:.....**

**PEER REVIEW FORM "C"**

**Area's of disagreement/s with the content or conclusion:  
(and include suggestions for further examination, or how the statement/report is written or structured for instance).**

**Reviewer:**

**Signed:.....Name:.....Date:.....**

**Scientists comments on any disagreement/s:  
(agree/disagree, steps to review/modify the draft statement/report)**

**Note: If strong disagreement remains a further independent reviewer should be engaged to arbitrate.**

**Reviewer:**

**Signed:.....Name:.....Date:.....**