

## Abstract Review Anti-Bias Guidelines

Cognitive bias is natural and is a mechanism our brain utilizes to be efficient and make quick decisions based on learned patterns. However, these biases and learned patterns are not always based on reality but perceptions, and when unnoticed, they can impact our critical thinking and lead to perpetuating misconceptions and misinformation. It is important to understand that biases will always be present, but we must be aware of them to combat them.

Below are a few biases that may be most evident in the review of abstracts. Please read about the following biases and how to combat them.

- **Affinity and Confirmation Bias:** You may favor the work-product of people with a similar background, gender, or job field to yourself. Or if you know the submitter personally or the company they work for. To combat this, we recommend not looking at names or biographies of the authors until after you have read the abstract and formed an initial opinion.
- **Groupthink:** There is an innate tendency to go along with what other reviewers think to promote harmony. To combat this, we recommend not discussing abstracts as a group. Do not hesitate on your opinion. We want diversity of thought, and we want to know what you think.
- **Attribution Substitution:** When reading applications, you may overestimate the importance of one accomplishment on a candidate's qualifications. Combat this by challenging yourself to carefully weigh how the author's bio impacted your scoring and why? Consider only the qualifications as pertaining to the abstract topic.
- **Availability Heuristic:** Reviewers have a tendency to rate the abstract they most recently viewed as more favorable, as they are fresher in their mind. Be aware of this and score as you go when possible, or revisit abstracts if needed.
- **Cognitive Load:** If you are tired at the end of a long workday, your brain won't be able to process information as well. To combat this, consider approaching the reviews with a relaxed state of mind.
- **Decision Fatigue:** After reviewing several applications, the quality of decision-making on each abstract will suffer. Combat this by reviewing the abstract in small groups of five and splitting up the work over multiple days.

Check the **second page** for more common biases you should be aware of. And thank you for your time. You make it possible to offer the high-quality technical programs that we have come to expect from PNCWA.

# Cognitive Biases in Hiring

## - A cheat sheet -

Unconscious bias is no longer a term used only by academics. HR practitioners are becoming increasingly aware that it creeps into the recruitment process, impacting the quality of hiring decision. At Applied we work to remove these biases – here are 20 of the most common ones. Look out, it's a minefield!

### BIASES RELATED TO OTHERS



#### Affinity bias

The tendency to like people who are similar to us



#### Confirmation bias

The tendency to search for information that confirms our preconceptions



#### Groupthink

Individuals suppressing their own objections in favour of group harmony



#### Halo effect

Judgements on one aspect of something unduly influencing other aspects



#### Attribution substitution

Using a simple attribute to make a complex judgement



#### Out-group homogeneity

The perception that everyone outside of your group is similar



#### Self-serving bias

Belief that success is linked to self, failure is linked to external factors



#### Stereotype threat

Being at risk of living up to a negative stereotype of your group



#### Social desirability bias

Giving a socially desirable response to questions rather than actual opinion

### BIASES RELATED TO CONTEXT



#### Availability heuristic

Being influenced by things that come to mind easily



#### Base rate neglect

Tendency to ignore data and statistics in favour of individual examples



#### Cognitive load

The strain put on someone's brain, leading to poorer decisions



#### Decision fatigue

Each successive decision fatigues us, leading to poorer decisions



#### Loss aversion

Tendency to feel losses a lot more keenly than gains



#### Order effect

Responding to things differently by the order they are presented in



#### Peak and end effect

Judgement of an experience is heavily influenced by the peak or end of that experience



#### Status quo bias

Avoiding making a decision entirely and just sticking with the way things are



#### Present bias

Disproportionately prioritising the present over the future