

A proposer's guide to assessment-flagging

Flagging is a stage in the process that mystifies many proposers - and many Proposal Assessors (PAs)!

But it's simple, really - it's just another layer of quality control. When the PAs have finished assessing, you'll be emailed a spreadsheet containing all the assessments. You can point out ("flag") any assessments on your own proposals that do not conform to the [PA guidelines](#), and give a rationale for what is wrong. Then the Veteran Proposal Assessors (VPAs) will determine whether or not to uphold your flag and filter the assessment out (it's not automatic). If the assessment is filtered out, it won't contribute to your proposal's final score. Note that flagging is completely optional - it's your choice whether you do it or not.

Flagging is NOT about trying to remove low scores - it's about helping to filter out inadequate assessments. Of course proposers have limited time and energy (and, unlike the VPAs, you're doing this work unpaid!) so you will naturally focus on assessments that are inadequate **and** low scoring - but if you do see an assessment that gives you a high score but breaks the rules, you can flag it.

How to do it

The process can seem a little confusing, but don't be put off - it's not actually that hard. In this video ([link](#)), we walk you through it step by step. You can use the community-made Proposer Review Tool <https://cardanocataly.st/proposal-review-tool/#/> - or you can follow the instructions below.

- Open the spreadsheet and make a copy.
- Title the copy with the name of your proposal.
- Filter so that you can see only the assessments on that proposal.
- Tick the box to mark an assessment you want to flag.
- Write a clear rationale for why you are flagging. Keep it short, and be civil.
- Change the permissions on your copy of the spreadsheet to "anyone can view".
- Fill in the form that IOG has emailed you, and include the link to your copy of the spreadsheet.
- Repeat for each proposal you have. Don't try to put flags for two different proposals on the same copy of the spreadsheet.

Valid reasons to flag

This is adapted from the official Proposal Assessor Guide ([PA Guide](#)), which includes an explanation of what an inadequate assessment is. A "rationale" is the reasoning the PA gives for their assessment.

Inadequate rationales

- The rationale given by the PA is **too short** (all 3 sections total fewer than 150 characters).
- The rationale isn't a rationale - it includes **no explanation** (e.g. just "I think this proposal is feasible.")
- The rationale is **generic**, and could apply to any proposal; or it consists solely of "fillers" (generic phrases that do not relate to your proposal, but are only there to make the assessment long enough).
- The rationale is garbled or **nonsensical** (this sometimes happens if it has been auto-translated).
- The rationale has been **copied and pasted**. If a rationale seems out of context or doesn't make sense, try searching the whole spreadsheet for that exact wording, to see if it has been copied from elsewhere.

Inaccurate rationales

- The PA **has not used the scoring criteria and guidelines** in the official [PA Guide](#). Check the guide if you're unsure.
- The PA explicitly states that they have **"docked" one point for each problem** they have noted in a section. (For example, they identify 2 problems in "Feasibility", and explain that they have therefore removed 2 points, leading to a score of 3.) This approach is not uncommon, but it is not how the scoring system is intended to work; it should be flagged for not applying the scoring criteria. To understand how scoring is supposed to be used, see the [PA Guide](#).

- The PA **has not read your proposal** properly; they raise problems that are clearly contradicted by your text (e.g. “*The proposal does not include a budget*” when it does.)
- The PA has not understood something in your proposal, and they are making a **judgement based on a misunderstanding** (e.g. “*This team needs someone with video editing skills*” when you are not planning to make or edit any videos).
- The PA **has not read / understood the challenge** that your proposal is in; they argue that your proposal does not fit the challenge, but the challenge description shows that they are mistaken.
- The rationale doesn’t assess your specific proposal - instead, it **only assesses a wider or “umbrella” project**. (For example, if you are part of a team, the PA has **only** assessed the merits of your team and its past work, not this actual proposal).
- The rationale **only addresses the idea behind your proposal**, not how you are practically going to implement it.
- The **rationale doesn’t relate to the category** the PA has put it in. For example, the rationale given under “Auditability” is about “Feasibility”. Check the [PA guide](#) for what PAs should cover in each category.

Inconsistent or biased rationales

- The PA has **scored different proposals differently, despite a similar rationale**. To spot this, you will need to look at other assessments by the same PA - but if you see that they have given a very similar rationale for two proposals, but scored one of them (for example) 3 and the other 5, you should flag.
- The **rationale doesn’t match the score**. For example, the PA has called the proposal “excellent” or “outstanding” or similar, but has scored it only 4, with no reason given for the loss of a point; or they have been critical and yet scored it 5.
- The rationale **does not assess your proposal on its own merits**, but instead compares it with the PA’s idea for a completely different proposal that they think would be better (e.g. on a proposal that aims to mint NFTs: “This proposal should aim to hold public meetings instead.”)
- The assessment is given from a **biased perspective**. This can be hard to define, of course - and note that it does **not** mean a PA can never say “I think” or “I believe” - but if the rationale rests heavily on the PA’s own unsupported personal opinion, belief or bias, then it should be flagged.
- The PA has been **hostile** towards your proposal, or you personally; and/ or has adopted an antagonistic, belligerent or sarcastic tone. Note that flagging may not be the best or only way to raise this issue - you can instead, or also, raise it as a moderation issue.
- The rationale contains material that is **discriminatory or abusive** to a person, group or community; or it reflects bigoted or prejudiced ideas about a person, group or community. Again, this could be a moderation issue.

To sum up

Flagging is an important part of the process, and helps the community by contributing to overall quality-control of assessments. Your flag may or may not be upheld; but if you see a problem, you should flag it.

In previous rounds, some proposers have felt wary of flagging inadequate assessments, or have worried that doing so might somehow damage their proposal’s chances. This is not the case.

Remember that you can only flag assessments on your own proposals (i.e. that you are a proposer or co-proposer on). You should coordinate with your team, and only submit one set of flags for each proposal.

Further help

Flagging for Fund 9 is set to open on Fri 15th July. If you have assessments that should be flagged but you need support to do so, the Funded Proposers Sub-Circle is offering one-to-one support sessions on Mon 18th and Tues 19th July - details will be posted in the Proposers Telegram channel soon

<https://t.me/catalystproposers>

We will also be holding an After Town Hall on Weds 13th July about flagging. This is recorded, so you can access it afterwards - you will find it on [Swarm’s Youtube channel](#) and on the [Funded Proposers Hub](#) GitBook.