



The Role of Federal Advisory Committees in Science Policy

Established in 1972, the **Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)** is the legal foundation defining how federal advisory committees operate, with special emphasis on open meetings, public involvement, and reporting.

Several science and health-related FACA committees significantly influence biomedical research rules and processes. Because FACA mandates balanced membership to promote diversity in ethnicity, gender, occupation, and geographic location, scientists play a crucial role in policy development.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Advisory groups at NIH are formed by independent members who have the required expertise to advise NIH leadership on decisions of plans and policies.



There are approximately **147 NIH advisory committees** that are categorized into four types:

National Advisory Councils or Boards

Program Advisory Committees

Board of Scientific Counselors

Scientific Review Groups



Many advisory committees have a **strong focus on graduate students and academic research:**

Advisory Committee to the Director

Center for Scientific Review Advisory Council

National Institute of General Medical Sciences Advisory Committee



FACA committees advertise private and public meetings in the Federal Register.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

Each directorate at NSF has separate external advisory committees to advise on policy issues, program management, and areas of opportunity.

The Directorate for STEM Education (EDU) focuses on improving science education through funding research, developing curriculums, and improving knowledge accessibility.



The EDU Advisory Committee comprises 20-25 experts in science and technology, providing guidance and recommendations for the development of a diverse and prepared workforce.



There are **four divisions** of the EDU

Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings

Equity for Excellence in STEM

Graduate Education

Undergraduate Education