§ 314.102 Communications between FDA and applicants.

(a) General principles. During the course of reviewing an application or an abbreviated application, FDA shall communicate with applicants about scientific, medical, and procedural issues that arise during the review process. Such communication may take the form of telephone conversations, letters, or meetings, whichever is most appropriate to discuss the particular issue at hand. Communications shall be appropriately documented in the application in accordance with §10.65 of this chapter. Further details on the procedures for communication between FDA and applicants are contained in a staff manual guide that is publicly available.

(b) Notification of easily correctable deficiencies. FDA reviewers shall make every reasonable effort to communicate promptly to applicants easily correctable deficiencies found in an application or an abbreviated application when those deficiencies are discovered, particularly deficiencies concerning chemistry, manufacturing, and controls issues. The agency will also inform applicants promptly of its need for more data or information or for technical changes in the application or the abbreviated application needed to facilitate the agency's review. This early communication is intended to permit applicants to correct such readily identified deficiencies relatively early in the review process and to submit an amendment before the review period has elapsed. Such early communication would not ordinarily apply to major scientific issues, which require consideration of the entire pending application or abbreviated application by agency managers as well as reviewing staff. Instead, major scientific issues will ordinarily be addressed in a complete response letter.

(c) Ninety-day conference. Approximately 90 days after the agency receives the application, FDA will provide applicants with an opportunity to meet with agency reviewing officials. The purpose of the meeting will be to inform applicants of the general progress and status of their applications, and to advise applicants of deficiencies that have been identified by that time and that have not already been communicated. This meeting will be available on applications for all new chemical entities and major new indications of marketed drugs. Such meetings will be held at the applicant’s option, and may be held by telephone if mutually agreed upon. Such meetings
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§ 314.103 Dispute resolution.

(a) General. FDA is committed to resolving differences between applicants and FDA reviewing divisions with respect to technical requirements for applications or abbreviated applications as quickly and amicably as possible through the cooperative exchange of information and views.

(b) Administrative and procedural issues. When administrative or procedural disputes arise, the applicant should first attempt to resolve the matter with the division responsible for reviewing the application or abbreviated application, beginning with the consumer safety officer assigned to the application or abbreviated application. If resolution is not achieved, the applicant may raise the matter with the person designated as ombudsman, whose function shall be to investigate what has happened and to facilitate a timely and equitable resolution.

(c) Scientific and medical disputes. (1) Because major scientific issues are ordinarily communicated to applicants in a complete response letter pursuant to §314.110, the “end-of-review conference” described in §314.102(d) will provide a timely forum for discussing and resolving, if possible, scientific and medical issues on which the applicant disagrees with the agency. In addition, the “ninety-day conference” described in §314.102(c) will provide a timely forum for discussing and resolving, if possible, issues identified by that date.

(2) When scientific or medical disputes arise at other times during the review process, applicants should discuss the matter directly with the responsible reviewing officials. If necessary, applicants may request a meeting with the appropriate reviewing officials and management representatives in order to seek a resolution. Ordinarily, such meetings would be held first with the Division Director, then with the Office Director, and finally with the Center Director if the matter is still unresolved. Requests for such meetings shall be directed to the director of the division responsible for reviewing the application or abbreviated application. FDA will make every attempt to grant requests for meetings that involve important issues and that can be scheduled at mutually convenient times.

(3) In requesting a meeting designed to resolve a scientific or medical dispute, applicants may suggest that FDA seek the advice of outside experts, in which case FDA may, in its discretion, invite to the meeting one or more of its advisory committee members or other consultants, as designated by the agency. Applicants may also bring their own consultants. For major scientific