

## Panel Review Instructions - Museums Empowered

### What to Expect

- You will access the applications assigned to you by using the link provided in an email message from your IMLS program officer.
- You will enter one whole-number score and one set of comments for each application using the IMLS Online Reviewer System.
- You will use a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).
- You must write a constructive and substantive comment of between 30 and 2000 characters in length for each review criteria—Goals, Implementation, and Results—and for summary remarks in Application Overview.
- You should address your comments to the applicant, not to IMLS.
- Your comments and the numeric score you provide for the application should align with each other.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

#### 1. Verify Access to Applications

Use the link provided to you in an email message from your IMLS program officer to access the entire group of applications that your panel will review. **The same email message included a list of applications assigned specifically to you.**

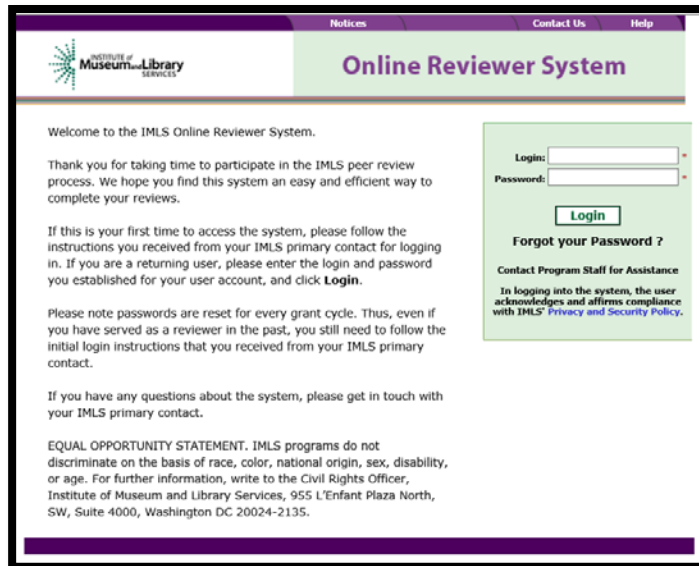
Save the applications assigned to you (and more if you wish) to your computer in a secure place that is not accessible to others. Call or email your IMLS program officer immediately if any applications are missing or if you cannot open them.

**Confidentiality in IMLS Peer Review:** The information contained in grant applications is strictly confidential. Do not discuss or reveal names, institutions' project activities, or any other information contained in the applications.

#### 2. Verify Access to the IMLS Online Reviewer System

Use the link on the [reviewer resources page](#) of the IMLS website to verify that you have access to the IMLS Online Reviewer System.

Scroll to the bottom of the web page to the heading “Review Online,” and click on the link to [Access the Online Reviewer System Login.](#)



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**Online Reviewer System**

Welcome to the IMLS Online Reviewer System.

Thank you for taking time to participate in the IMLS peer review process. We hope you find this system an easy and efficient way to complete your reviews.

If this is your first time to access the system, please follow the instructions you received from your IMLS primary contact for logging in. If you are a returning user, please enter the login and password you established for your user account, and click **Login**.

Please note passwords are reset for every grant cycle. Thus, even if you have served as a reviewer in the past, you still need to follow the initial login instructions that you received from your IMLS primary contact.

If you have any questions about the system, please get in touch with your IMLS primary contact.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT. IMLS programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For further information, write to the Civil Rights Officer, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW, Suite 4000, Washington DC 20024-2135.

Login:   
 Password:

**Forgot your Password ?**

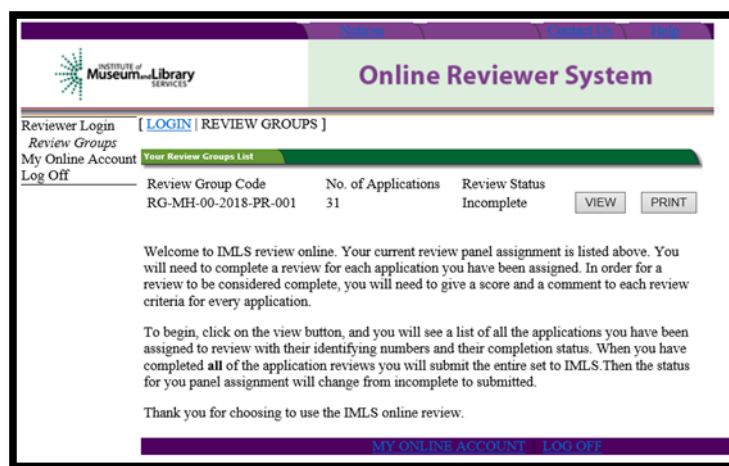
Contact Program Staff for Assistance  
 In logging into the system, the user acknowledges and affirms compliance with IMLS' Privacy and Security Policy.

To log in, enter the email address you have on file with IMLS, and use the default password: **password**. An **E-Review Security Screen** will appear. Read this page and click **OK**. Next, create a user account and establish your own password.

**Passwords:** There is no need to remember a password you may have created in prior years. All passwords for the IMLS Online Reviewer System are automatically reset to the default at the end of each review cycle, and so all reviewers must use the default to establish new accounts. If at any time during the review process you forget the password you created, call or email your IMLS primary contact to reset your password to the default.

### 3. Assess Potential Conflicts of Interest

After you have created a new password, click **REVIEW GROUPS**, and your review assignment will appear. To access the list of applications assigned to you, click **VIEW**.



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**Online Reviewer System**

Reviewer Login [ [LOGIN](#) | [REVIEW GROUPS](#) ]

Review Groups

My Online Account [Your Review Groups List](#)

Review Group Code	No. of Applications	Review Status	
RG-MH-00-2018-PR-001	31	Incomplete	<input type="button" value="VIEW"/> <input type="button" value="PRINT"/>

Welcome to IMLS review online. Your current review panel assignment is listed above. You will need to complete a review for each application you have been assigned. In order for a review to be considered complete, you will need to give a score and a comment to each review criteria for every application.

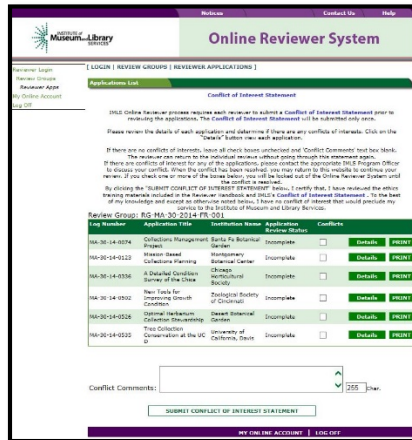
To begin, click on the view button, and you will see a list of all the applications you have been assigned to review with their identifying numbers and their completion status. When you have completed **all** of the application reviews you will submit the entire set to IMLS. Then the status for you panel assignment will change from incomplete to submitted.

Thank you for choosing to use the IMLS online review.

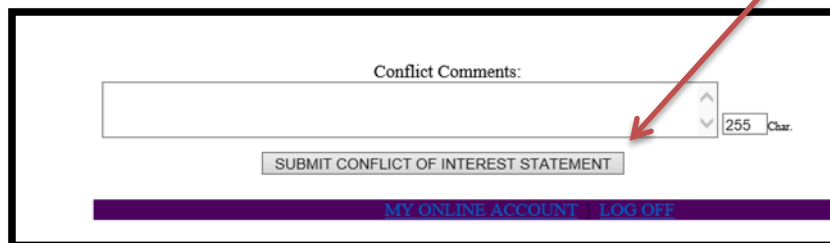
[MY ONLINE ACCOUNT](#) [LOG OFF](#)

Read through your list of applications again to see if there are any potential conflicts of interest. Please see [“Complying with Ethical Obligations and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest.”](#)

If you think you may have a conflict of interest, do not check any of these boxes as doing so will disable access to the system and make it impossible for others in your review group to do their work. Instead, call or email your IMLS program officer immediately if you have a conflict, or what may appear to be a conflict.



If you have no conflicts of interest with any of the applicants on the list, click **SUBMIT CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT** at the bottom of page.



#### 4. Read Applications

As you read through your assigned applications, keep the [Panel Review Criteria](#) handy to use as guide your review. The panel review criteria should guide your thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of each application.

You may also want to revisit the Museums Empowered Notice of Funding Opportunities at <https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/fy18-oms-me-nofo.pdf> to learn more about the instructions provided to applicants and the required elements of each application.

#### About Performance Measurement

On the Program Information Sheet (Section 4), applicants were required to select at least one pre-determined performance goal that reflects a measurable change or outcome they intend their project to achieve. These performance measure statements are

associated with specific information that they will be required to collect during the grant period and report at the end of their projects.

These pre-determined performance goals statements will help IMLS document the collective achievements of the projects we fund, and they may be found here: <https://www.imls.gov/performance-measure-statements-and-information-learning-and-community-projects>.

As a reviewer you will evaluate the likelihood of the project being successful in achieving its intended results. Those intended results should relate directly to performance goal(s) and performance measure statement(s).

## 5. Draft Comments

You must write a constructive and substantive comment for each of three review sections (Goals, Implementation and Results) for each application you review. To prepare your written review comments you may use the “[Panel Review Notes Template](#)” to help organize your notes.

As you think about the review criteria, be sure to consider all the required components of the application as well as relevant Supporting Documents as resources for your evaluation. You are seeking information in the application to help you answer the following three questions:

1. Does the project meet the goals of the Museums Empowered grant program and the project category?
2. Is the project poised for successful implementation?
3. If funded, will the project achieve its intended results?

All three questions have equal weight and are equally important in identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of an application.

Your final review comments should be written in complete sentences and constitute strong, coherent, constructive, and substantive assessments of the application. Draft your comments using a word-processing program for later copying and pasting into the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Remember that each comment must be between 30 and 2000 characters long.

When drafting your comments ...

- use your professional knowledge and experience to assess the information objectively;
- judge the application on its own merits, and do not base your evaluation on any prior knowledge of an institution; and
- if you question the accuracy of any information, call us –not the applicant–to discuss it.

Effective comments ...	Poor comments...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are presented in a constructive manner.</li> <li>• are both substantive and easy to read and understand.</li> <li>• reflect the resources of the institution.</li> <li>• are specific to the individual application.</li> <li>• reflect the numeric score assigned.</li> <li>• highlight the application’s strengths and identify areas for improvement.</li> <li>• are directed to applicants—not IMLS or panel reviewers—for their use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simply summarize or paraphrase the applicant’s own words.</li> <li>• make derogatory remarks.</li> <li>• penalize an applicant because you feel the institution does not need the money.</li> <li>• offer or ask for irrelevant or extraneous information.</li> <li>• make vague or overly general statements.</li> <li>• question an applicant’s honesty or integrity.</li> </ul>

***Make sure your comments justify the scores you provide. A highly complementary comment does not “remove the sting” of a low score, and a negative comment does not “even out” a high one. Comments and scores must complement each other and make sense as a whole.***

Below are some examples of **effective** panel reviewer comments:

<b>Goals</b>	
<p>“You clearly identify a critical need among the staff of your museum. The professional development activities are part of a comprehensive strategy designed to generate systemic change within the institution. Your intended results are achievable within the project time period and incorporate current research and best practices. The proposed project is an excellent fit for the Museums Empowered special initiative.”</p>	<p><i>Comment is substantive, addresses the review criteria, and employs a positive tone.</i></p>
<p>“You make a strong case for the need to develop new curriculum for K-12 audiences visiting the museum and have identified partnerships with the local school district. However, I could not find any supporting material about how this project would build the internal capacity of the museum through professional development for museum staff – and therefore this project does not meet the goals of the Museums Empowered special initiative.</p> <p>This project more closely matches the goals of the Museums for America – Learning Experiences grant program and you may want to consider submitting an application to the MFA program in a future year.”</p>	<p><i>Comment correlates with the score of 1 and makes implementable suggestions for securing funding.</i></p>
<b>Implementation</b>	
<p>“Your work plan is clear and outlines specific activities necessary for achieving your goals. The training programs for museum staff on evaluation tools, strategies and techniques are customized to address a specific audience need. You might consider adding a</p>	<p><i>Comment provides a constructive assessment of the application</i></p>

few iterations of each training program to explore its potential for adaptation to a variety of audiences.”	<i>and suggestions likely to benefit the applicant.</i>
<b>Results</b>	
“Your program evaluation will yield specific and measurable results about the impact of the professional development and training program on museum staff. The focus on change management and succession planning supports the core issues identified in your needs assessment. The revised strategic plan, built upon a solid core of staff training and development, will result in a more resilient museum that can respond to the changing needs of your community. I would have liked to have seen more plans for sharing your work beyond posting your new strategic plan on the website.”	<i>Comment addresses questions from the review criteria.</i>

In contrast, below are some examples of **poor** panel reviewer comments:

<b>Goals</b>	
“The museum plans to organize a symposium on the topic of after-school programs in art museums that will bring together museums professionals to discuss best practices. They will partner with the Parks and Recreations Department, the Boys and Girls Club, and other after school providers.”	<i>Comment paraphrases the applicant’s own words.</i>
<b>Implementation</b>	
“The work plan would be improved by putting in more time onsite.”	<i>Comment is very brief, vague, and has little value to the applicant.</i>
“One suggestion is that you have a discussion about what the term ‘key deliverable’ means. Usually it pertains to a physical product rather than a nebulous goal or objective.”	<i>Comment does not provide useful feedback.</i>
<b>Results</b>	
“The plan, staffing, and external reviewers indicate a good possibility of success.”	<i>Comment is very brief and has little worth or value to the applicant.</i>

The chart below summarizes the most frequently asked questions from reviewers:

Should I consider ...?	Yes	No
Whether a project helps the organization advance its strategic plan	X	
An institution's financial or staffing needs		X
Whether the project is well planned and the organization has the appropriate resources to complete the project	X	
Whether the applicant has included all the information necessary for an adequate evaluation of the project's merits	X	
Whether an application is new or a resubmission		X
The size or age of the applicant organization		X
The applicant organization's indirect cost rate		X

## 6. Assign Scores

Assign a single preliminary score to each application. Use a scale of 1 to 5, as described below.

SCORE DEFINITIONS	
<b>5 – Excellent</b>	The applicant's response is outstanding and provides exceptional support for the proposed project.
<b>4 – Very Good</b>	The applicant's response provides solid support for the proposed project.
<b>3 – Good</b>	The applicant's response is adequate but could be strengthened in its support for the proposed project.
<b>2 – Some Merit</b>	The applicant's response is flawed and does not adequately support the proposed project.
<b>1 – Inadequate/Insufficient</b>	The applicant's response is inadequate or provides insufficient information to allow for a confident evaluation.

## 7. Review Your Work

Review your draft comments and preliminary scores. A review with a missing score or even one missing comment cannot be accepted by the IMLS Online Reviewer System. Adjust your scores, if necessary, to reflect more accurately your written evaluation. Scores should support comments, and comments should justify scores.

## 8. Enter Your Scores and Comments

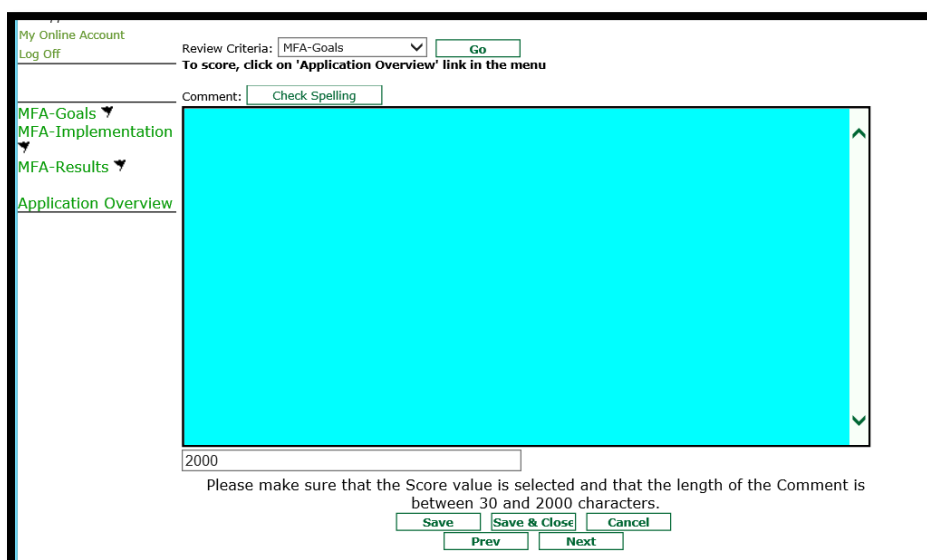
Return to the IMLS Online Reviewer System at

<https://www.imls.gov/grants/become-reviewer/reviewer-resources/museum-reviewer-resources>

Then scroll to the bottom of the page to “Review Online,” and click on the link to access the [IMLS Online Reviewer System](#) login screen.

Log in with the email address you have on file with IMLS and the password you created in Step 2. Go to your list of assigned applications and click **REVIEW** beside any of them to begin.

Copy and paste your comments into the appropriate blue blocks for each section of the narrative for each application.



The screenshot shows the IMLS Online Reviewer System interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "My Online Account" and "Log Off" links. Below this, the "Review Criteria" dropdown is set to "MFA-Goals", with a "Go" button next to it. A message reads: "To score, click on 'Application Overview' link in the menu". Below the message is a "Comment:" label and a "Check Spelling" button. The main content area is a large blue text input field. Below the input field is a character count "2000" and a message: "Please make sure that the Score value is selected and that the length of the Comment is between 30 and 2000 characters." At the bottom of the form are buttons for "Save", "Save & Close", "Cancel", "Prev", and "Next". On the left side of the form, there is a vertical menu with links for "MFA-Goals", "MFA-Implementation", "MFA-Results", and "Application Overview".

Be sure to save each comment by clicking **SAVE** at the bottom of the page before you move on to the next one.

After entering comments for all three review criteria, go to the **Application Overview** section and choose a numeric score between 1 and 5 from the **SCORE** dropdown menu. You must enter a summary comment in this section for the system to accept your score. Use the controls on the side or top of the screen to navigate between sections.

**NOTE:** “Funding Priorities Addressed” is not relevant. You may simply ignore the radio button.

Once you have completed assigning a score and providing comments for each application assigned to you, print a copy of each completed review to keep for your files. Then click on **I AM READY TO SUBMIT THIS REVIEW TO IMLS** to send all your work to



IMLS.

**I AM READY TO SUBMIT THIS REVIEW TO IMLS**

Click on the "view" button to move to the review form for each application.  
After you have completed entering the scores and comments for each application in the current review group,  
you can submit the completed review to IMLS.

Each of the Review Criteria must be assigned a positive integer score and must have a comment entered in  
order to be considered complete. Please also note that after the review is submitted to IMLS, you will not be  
able to view or modify the review.

Please print a copy of each review for your file and retain the copy for 60 days after you submit your E-Review.

At this point, you will not be able to re-enter the IMLS Online Reviewer System unless you notify your IMLS primary contact.

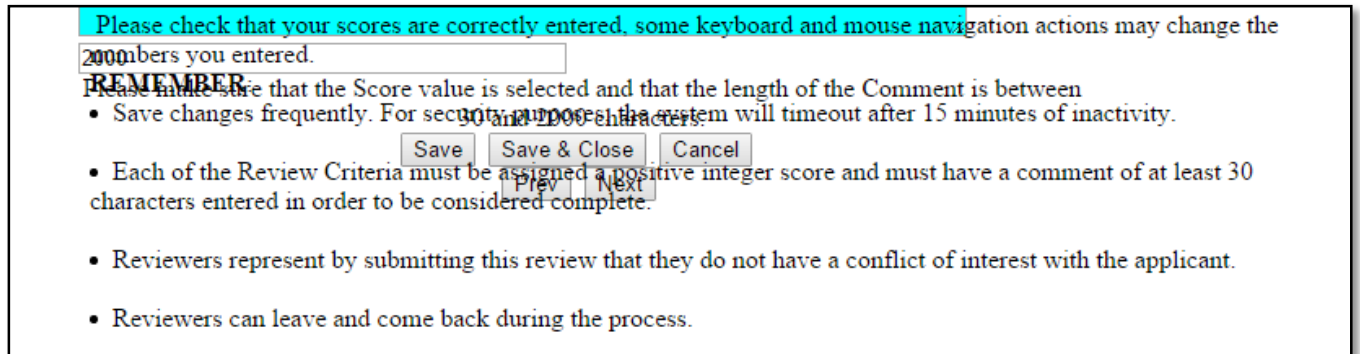
*For all questions about reviewing, either technical or programmatic, please call or email your IMLS primary contact directly.*

## 9. Manage Your Copies

Keep your applications and a copy of each review sheet until **September 30, 2018**, in case there are questions from IMLS staff. Continue to maintain confidentiality of all applications that you review by keeping electronic and paper copies in a secure place. After September 30, 2018, destroy the applications and the review sheets.

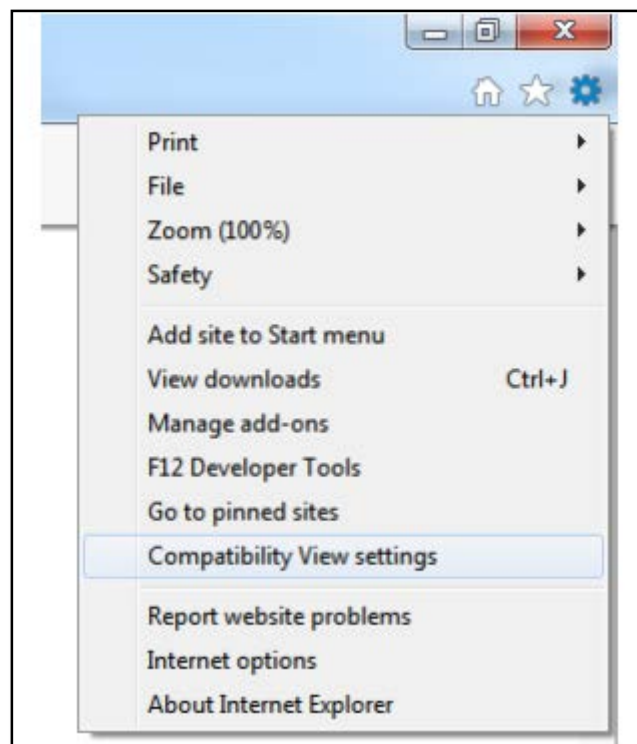
## Appendix: Online Reviewer System Troubleshooting

When using certain browsers, including versions of Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari, or Opera, you may see text displayed in the Online Reviewer System superimposed on top of buttons or menus, making the buttons difficult or impossible to click. It may look like this:

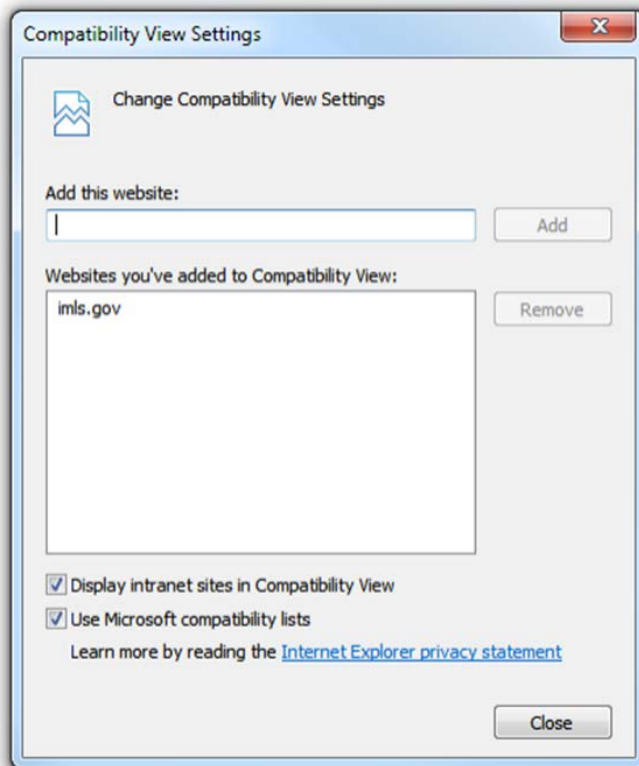


If you use **Internet Explorer (IE) with Compatibility View (or Compatibility Mode) enabled**, you may resolve this issue with the following steps:

1. Locate the Settings menu in the top right corner of the browser window and select Compatibility View settings.

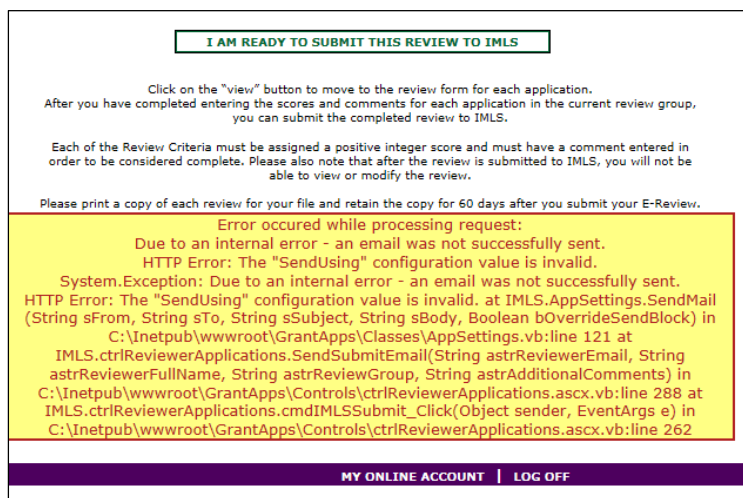


2. Type “imls.gov” in the **Add this website:** dialogue box, then click **Add**.



If you are using another version of IE, please refer to the help documentation for your version, or contact IMLS for assistance.

When you submit your comments and scores you may encounter the following error message:



Don't worry. IMLS will have received your scores and comments if you receive this message.