



Public
Service
Commission



Research Scientist Classification Policy and Guidelines

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1.0

Policy statement



1.1

General

The Research Scientist Classification recognises the importance of scientific research in the public service by providing a career structure for public service employees who mainly conduct and publish original research. The classification is used to develop and maintain the quality of scientific research and the resulting advice that is made available to the public service.

For the purpose of the classification, scientific research is interpreted broadly. It extends from traditional disciplinary areas – including the natural and physical sciences, statistics and economics – to emerging scientific areas. Methodologically, scientific research ranges from conventional laboratory or field-based experimentation to computer-assisted modelling of entire natural or managed environmental systems.

Any systematic research that is likely to lead to innovative changes and improvements to Government policy, programs and public services falls within the scope of the classification. This includes research that improves scientific understanding, the use and management of natural resources, education and extension, technology transfers and commercialisation.

It is recognised that disciplinary fields for scientific investigation are always changing. Entry to, and continuation and progression in the classification are therefore not limited to those engaged in traditional, established fields of science.

The classification has four levels: Research Scientist, Senior Research Scientist, Principal Research Scientist and Senior Principal Research Scientist. Entry to, and continuation and progression in the classification are open to all eligible full-time and part-time employees, subject to the committee's assessment. This ensures fair and comparable evaluations of applications across the public service.

1.2

Related documents

Other documents associated with the classification are:

- Crown Employees (Research Scientists) Award 2007 (the Award)
- Crown Employees (Public Sector – Salaries 2019) Award, as varied or renewed from time to time

2.0

Definitions



Research Scientist Classification – referred to as ‘the Classification’.

Public Service agency – referred to as ‘the agency’, as defined in the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.

Agency head – matches the definition of ‘head’ in the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.

Employee – a person employed on an ongoing or temporary basis subject to Part 4 of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.

Public Service Commissioner – referred to as ‘the Commissioner’, as defined in the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.

Research Scientist – an employee within the classification, in accordance with the Award.

Research Scientist Classification Committee – referred to as ‘the committee’, as described in clause 3.



3.0

Research Scientist Classification Committee



3.1 Role

The committee assesses applications and makes recommendations to the Commissioner for approval. In addition to assessing applications to enter, or continue or progress along the levels of the classification, it also evaluates whether employees should regress or cease working under the classification. The committee makes these recommendations in accordance with these Guidelines.

3.2 Structure

The Commissioner appoints the committee members and the Chair. The committee does not convene with fewer than three members, and has a maximum of four members, including the Chair. Excluding exceptional circumstances, the Chair conducts all committee meetings. The Commissioner may appoint an additional committee member if specialist knowledge is required in a particular case.

The committee Chair is an independent eminent scientist. The Commissioner may approve a committee member to act as Deputy Chair, who deputises for the Chair in their absence.

Committee members have appropriate standing in the scientific community or are otherwise considered by the Commissioner to be qualified to consider the merits of applicants. Committee members may be independent or NSW Government employees.

The Commissioner is committed to promoting equity and diversity in the government sector workforce in relation to (but not limited to) gender, cultural

and linguistic background, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people with disability. In appointing members to the committee, the Commissioner has regard to this commitment and aims for the committee membership to reflect the diversity of the wider community.

3.3

Nominations

The Commissioner may consult with participating agencies, committee and other relevant experts, or call for public expressions of interest from suitably qualified, scientifically expert individuals, when appointing the committee Chair or committee members.

3.4

Appointment, tenure and removal

Initially, committee members may be appointed for up to five years. They may be considered for reappointment for further periods of up to five years. The Commissioner may appoint a person to the committee at any time required. The change of membership recognises the need to maintain continuity of the committee's collective expertise and experience while undertaking an orderly renewal of membership over time. The Commissioner may terminate the membership of a committee member at any time.



3.5

Duties of committee members

Committee members are required to assess the merit of each application and make a recommendation based on all the evidence. In doing so, committee members are to:

- apply the criteria relevant to the application
- exercise independent judgement
- rigorously evaluate all sources of evidence relied upon
- accord procedural fairness to applicants
- adhere to these Guidelines
- advise the Chair or Commissioner where there is an actual or perceived breach of these duties.

The committee has the discretion to employ any method required to best assess the merit of an application.

Committee members must sign the report to the Commissioner that contains its recommendations. The Commissioner relies on the report to support the decisions made. Where a committee member or members have a differing opinion to the majority, they may submit a minority report for the Commissioner's consideration.



Committee members are required to assess the merit of each application and make a recommendation based on all the evidence.

The committee Chair

The Chair leads the committee members in conducting the committee's business, including:

- convening the committee to review applications or undertake other business
- chairing all committee meetings
- ensuring the business and proceedings of the committee are conducted in an efficient and effective manner
- inviting applicants, agency representatives, experts in science and other individuals as appropriate to appear before the committee or to assist the committee in its deliberations
- representing the committee as required
- ensuring rigorous and consistent assessment of applications
- exercising a casting vote on split decisions of the committee.

If the Chair becomes aware of any concern on the part of any committee member about the operations of the committee, the Chair advises the Commissioner of the situation. The Chair may also recommend an appropriate course of action to deal with that concern.



3.6 Experts and observers

The committee Chair, on behalf of the committee, may invite a scientist who is an expert in a particular field to help committee members judge an application. The expert is not a committee member.

The committee Chair, on behalf of the committee, may also invite any other visitor to sit with the committee as an observer or to help the committee members undertake their responsibilities.

An applicant may bring an independent observer from their union, or other observer of their choice, to an interview.

3.7 Conduct of committee members

Committee members must demonstrate high levels of personal conduct that are consistent with the Ethical Framework outlined in Part 2 of the *Government Sector Employees Act 2013*. This includes committee members disclosing any real or reasonably perceived conflicts of interest.



4.0

Entry to the classification



4.1

General

The committee assesses applications for entry using the relevant criteria in these Guidelines. The committee recommends entry into the classification where it is satisfied that all criteria for entry have been met. The committee also recommends the appropriate level within the classification to appoint an applicant, irrespective of the level requested by the applicant.

Overview of requirements

To enter the classification, an applicant must:

- be a public service employee
- meet service and academic requirements (clause 4.2)
- meet the criteria for entry (clause 4)
- make an application for entry (clause 9).

4.2

Criteria for entry

Service requirements

To enter the classification, an employee must have completed 12 months of service in their current role. Undertaking scientific research must form the most significant part of their duties.

In special cases, entry may be available to employees who have not been in their current role for 12 months. The committee must be satisfied that the employee's current research program is established and can be sustained at the appropriate level to justify entry into the classification.

Academic requirements

The minimum academic qualification for entry to the Research Scientist Classification is usually a PhD in a scientific or related field relevant to achieving the agency's objectives.

If an applicant does not hold a PhD, they must have a master's degree by research or an equivalent academic qualification in an appropriate discipline from a recognised university. They must also provide evidence of published research.

Criteria for levels within the classification

To enter the classification at any level, an applicant must be able to unequivocally demonstrate a currently active program of research, its related publications and its contribution to the agency's objectives. It is not sufficient for an applicant to demonstrate a willingness or capability to undertake research, a lapsed research career, or a career where management or administrative duties have overtaken research. The following criteria are specific to each level within the classification.



Research Scientist

The employee must provide evidence of originality in their approach to research and have prime responsibility, usually in consultation with more senior employees, for selecting the most appropriate line of investigation of a problem. Where appropriate, they must be able to explain and promulgate results within the agency and publish research results in appropriate scientific journals.

Senior Research Scientist

The employee must have considerable research experience, including undertaking research with a degree of independence – under only general direction – and achieving results. There must be evidence of a scientific leadership role that exceeds the efficiency barrier. The employee may also play a significant role in providing the scientific direction for other scientific staff and carry out performance assessments where appropriate.

A Senior Research Scientist is also expected to contribute to broader program planning in their area of expertise and to meet the agency's objectives.



Principal Research Scientist

The employee must have extensive research experience and a record of outstanding achievement in scientific research that has led to a continuing national and/or international reputation. Their contribution is expected to be at an advanced level, both as an individual and, where applicable, as leader of a research group. This contribution to knowledge must be sustained and have resulted in significant influence on a field of science.

The employee usually plays a major role in the scientific direction of other employees and carries out performance assessments where appropriate. A Principal Research Scientist is expected to make a significant contribution to developing the agency's strategies and to achieving its goals.



Senior Principal Research Scientist

The employee must have expert research experience and a track record of extensive, substantial and consistent publishing in peer-reviewed journals that are acknowledged to have a high international impact. They are expected to have made an expert-level contribution to research. They are also expected to have provided significant leadership and direction in their field. The employee will be able to identify emerging research and economic issues, and plan and implement research in anticipation of international scientific, economic and/or environmental change. The employee will have a sound understanding of other disciplines to create new research directions/hypotheses that challenge accepted theories and practice.

The employee's research outcomes must also make a significant contribution to commercialisation or provide an economically valuable return to their agency, or evidence-based policy where relevant. The employee is also primarily responsible for attracting research support through direct funding or funding in kind for their agency.

Formal recognition through a significant award (if available) by a relevant international or highly prestigious professional society of peers or the equivalent is one of the pieces of supporting evidence that the committee would consider. The recognition should be based on the Principal Research Scientist's outstanding contribution to, or development of, their discipline.





General scientific research activities

General expectations relating to scientific research activities apply at all levels of the classification. The extent of each activity varies, depending on the level. General scientific activities that are expected across all levels include:

- undertaking scientific research involving problems and opportunities that align with the Government's and agency's objectives
- designing, performing and analysing experimental programs or projects, writing literature reviews, and making scientific observations to evaluate hypotheses or generate new knowledge
- providing supervision (including conducting performance assessments where appropriate) and scientific instruction in aspects of research programs, and leading and co-ordinating research activities
- ensuring that new knowledge and research results are known and applied throughout relevant areas of the agency and Government
- critically assessing the relevance of scientific information to agency objectives
- assessing the extent to which scientific research can contribute to solving problems or advancing understanding in a relevant discipline
- conceiving new ideas and selecting the appropriate research methodology to explore them
- evaluating known theoretical and practical research techniques, and developing new techniques where necessary
- collating, analysing, interpreting, evaluating, implementing and disseminating the results of research through publication, both in peer-reviewed scientific literature and through effective reporting and extension to the agency's clients
- ensuring, where appropriate, the development and application of research results and initiating patent action relating to those results.

4.3

Evidence of achievement

Assessing performance

The main criterion for assessing an employee's performance is evidence of past and recent achievements, and the ability to continue pursuing research projects and bring them to a satisfactory conclusion. Whether working alone or as part of a team, research methods must be innovative and scientifically sound, and directed at meeting the agency's approved objectives. This ability will be reflected in the impact the employee's findings have on the work of the agency and on the course of ongoing research. It may also be reflected in the way Government and industry take up the employee's results.

Other evidence of performance

Other evidence of an employee's performance and standing could include, but is not limited to:

- having industry and/or Government implement the results or apply them in education, Government policies and strategies, public management or regulation
- making appropriate contributions to research undertaken by multidisciplinary teams
- showing evidence of demonstrable standing within the scientific community, by:
 - winning research funds
 - being an active member of scientific or related policy advisory committees
 - undertaking editorial roles with significant scientific journals
 - participating at an executive level in professional societies
 - being invited to present lead conference papers or write significant reviews in peer-reviewed journals or books
 - receiving awards or other forms of recognition by scientific bodies or societies, or other external bodies
- developing a biotechnological product or new industrial process
- disseminating results
- undertaking responsibility for directing, interacting with and training other scientific staff, and coordinating and overseeing their research activities
- participating in university-level collaboration that leads to supervising graduate students
- producing a definable outcome such as breeding a new variety of plant or animal or describing a new species of plant or animal
- patenting results of your work.

Publication

Publishing research work in reputable refereed scientific journals and/or writing scientific books are widely accepted means of establishing a personal reputation as a scientist. They are also critical elements in demonstrating achievement.

Where an applicant relies on citations or other indices to illustrate the scientific impact of their publications, the committee expects them to provide a clear explanation for any claims made about their significance.

Publishing online is a valid medium for communicating scientific research to a relevant readership. However, when evaluating scientific papers and reports circulated on the internet, the committee seeks evidence of peer-level refereeing, comparable to that exercised by leading conventional journals. Similar considerations apply when assessing the significance of other publications such as conference papers, books and book chapters.

The committee also appreciates that using popular media and the internet to disseminate research results can provide a quick, broad impact for a Research Scientist. It can also expose the research work to further general scrutiny by the wider community, including those who may ultimately benefit from the work.

Whether an applicant uses scientific publications alone or combines them with other measures of scientific standing as the basis of evaluation, they must provide proof of rigorous scientific endeavour. This must result in successfully conducting a clearly defined, active research program.

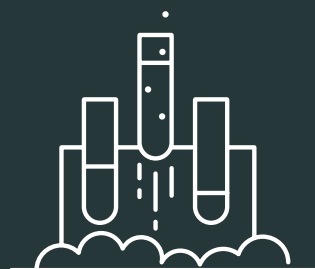
Scientific leadership and individual performance

It is recognised that Principal Research Scientists and Senior Principal Research Scientists may have to devote significant time to providing scientific direction and leadership, and maintaining and improving the scientific excellence of other scientists. These activities promote the agency's objectives, strategies and policies, and scientific administration that is consistent with their agency's status. Due weight is given to an applicant's contributions to the publications of scientists they supervise. Nevertheless, personal involvement in successful research remains the most important criterion for continuation and progression within the classification. Refereed publications are significant indicators of such success. Evidence of significant intellectual contributions to these publications will be sought.

When evaluating an application, other relevant measures of research calibre are also taken into account. These include activities associated with research such as those oriented to industry, computing systems development, or confidential work in which the publication record may not adequately reflect research performance and achievements.

Part-time employees, secondment and leave

In the case of part-time employees, or where employees have gone on secondment or taken approved leave (such as maternity, extended or leave without pay), the committee takes into account the limitations this may place on their research. The committee looks for evidence of the quality and impact of research that is appropriate to the level of the classification.



5.0

Progression
through the
classification



5.1

General

Overview of requirements

Research Scientists must apply to either progress or continue at their current classification at specified intervals, which are outlined in Schedule 1.

To progress through an efficiency or level barrier, a Research Scientist must:

- meet service requirements (Schedule 1)
- meet performance requirements (clause 5)
- apply to progress (clause 9).

5.2

Performance requirements – progression through efficiency barriers

Efficiency barriers exist in the following levels: Research Scientist, Senior Research Scientist and Senior Principal Research Scientist. Progression through an efficiency barrier or to a higher level is determined by the Research Scientist's performance against factors as they apply to the relevant level and area of science. These include:

- demonstrated research ability
- scientific rigour when performing research
- results achieved
- dissemination of results, including showing ongoing and increasing output to scientific publications
- work's relevance to achieving the agency's objectives, and successful knowledge transfer
- reputation and professional standing, including being invited to contribute to reviews and multidisciplinary studies, attend major conferences and supervise post graduate students
- level of industry or other competitive funding received
- cooperation with other major research providers; for example, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and universities
- refereeing papers for internationally recognised journals
- meeting all, or a substantial majority of, the entry criteria to each level of the classification.

5.3

Performance requirements – progression through level barriers

To meet the performance requirements to progress to a higher level, the Research Scientist must present a compelling case for advancement. They must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the committee that their ability, achievements and standing have reached the standards expected for the level sought. A Research Scientist must meet all, or a substantial majority of, the relevant criteria for the level being sought.

Progression to Senior Research Scientist

Progression to the level of Senior Research Scientist is determined by:

- demonstrable increases in the level of scientific rigour, complexity and productivity of the research performed
- demonstrable increases in output to publications, particularly in peer-reviewed scientific journals
- the range, impact and extent of results achieved and the effective dissemination of those results
- evidence of a significant contribution to the agency's general scientific culture and objectives, program planning or project design
- demonstrable contributions to the scientific, social, industrial or economic development of the state
- the extent and level of scientific standing, leadership and supervision of other scientists, individually or as a group or team
- having attracted competitive funding, both for their own and their agency's research program.

Progression to Principal Research Scientist

Progression to Principal Research Scientist is assessed on the basis of expanded scientific achievement and leadership. This will be at a demonstrably superior level to that of a Senior Research Scientist, and is determined by:

- high-level scientific rigour, complexity and productivity, and the degree of difficulty of the research performed
- substantial, increasing and consistent output to publications, and the impact achieved in peer-reviewed scientific journals
- scientific results having a considerable impact, and the extent and nature of dissemination of those results
- a clearly demonstrated impact on the Senior Research Scientist's scientific discipline
- integration of the research into the agency's broader programs, and making a major contribution to the agency's objectives
- contributions to the scientific, social, industrial or economic development of the state
- having attracted a high level of competitive funding, both for their own and their agency's research program
- evidence of national and/or international standing, including being an invited keynote speaker to national and international conferences, serving on editorial boards of scientific journals, and reviewing proposals for national and/or international funding bodies.

Progression to Senior Principal Research Scientist

Progression to Senior Principal Research Scientist is assessed on the basis of continuing scientific achievement and leadership at an expert level. It is determined by:

- having been a Principal Research Scientist within the classification for at least six years (except in exceptional circumstances, which are determined by the committee)
- having an extensive, consistent and substantial publication record, including publishing high-impact papers in leading peer-reviewed international journals. This includes providing evidence of standing; for example, through being invited to prepare lead review articles in their discipline for leading international journals
- evidence of outstanding innovation and/or originality in the development of their discipline
- research outcomes that have made a significant contribution to the public good or the commercialisation of science, or have earned economically valuable returns for their agency if the research is in an appropriate applied field. The applicant must provide evidence that, through their scientific creativity and leadership, they have achieved demonstrable and

substantial scientific outcomes that have contributed to the agency achieving its strategic goals. These outcomes must also have contributed – in a consistently significant and constructive manner – to the leadership and culture of their agency

- evidence of primary responsibility for attracting research support in the form of direct funding or funding in kind for their agency. This is based on their scientific leadership and standing, and their ability to demonstrate their superior scientific standing to national and/or international funding agencies
- having established and successfully led research teams and networks of national and/or international significance, adding major value to their individual contributions. They must also provide evidence of contributing to the positive development and creative mentoring of university students and/or junior staff under their supervision.

Note: The Senior Principal Research Scientist level is not to be regarded as an automatic career advancement for Principal Research Scientists. Rather, this level of the classification is only available to candidates who meet all, or a substantial majority of, the above criteria to a significant extent.

5.4 Accelerated progression

Successful applications normally progress through an efficiency or level barrier to the next salary step. In exceptional circumstances where the committee assesses that a Research Scientist has satisfied all the criteria for progression – and has demonstrated sustained, substantial and outstanding performance in relation to their peers at the same level of the classification – it may recommend accelerated progression to a higher salary step or level. A decision to recommend accelerated progression will be based on the committee's assessment alone. A Research Scientist cannot apply for it.

5.5 Unsuccessful applications

Unsuccessful applications to progress normally result in the committee recommending that the applicant continue at the same salary step and reapply after a specified period (see Schedule 1(3)). A recommendation to continue is determined against the criteria set out in clause 6. A recommendation of regression or cessation may only be made in accordance with clause 7.

6.0

Continuation in classification



6.1

General

A fundamental feature of entry or continuation within each level of the classification is that it is not granted for previous performance, but for active and sustained research and performance in a current or related role. Therefore, Research Scientists must bring the achievements from their continuing research before the committee for assessment within specified time periods. It is not sufficient for an applicant to demonstrate a willingness or capability to undertake research, a past but lapsed research career, or that management or administrative duties have overtaken their research.

It is a requirement that to remain in the classification a person must be assigned to a role that has primary responsibility for conducting scientific research. Where a Research Scientist's primary responsibility is no longer conducting scientific research, the matter is to be resolved by the agency. Being transferred to another agency (for example, because of machinery of government changes) will not affect the Research Scientist's continuation if the committee is satisfied that appropriate research is being undertaken in the new agency.

Unsuccessful applications for continuation may result in the committee recommending regression or cessation, in accordance with clause 7.

Overview of requirements

Research Scientists are required to apply to either progress or continue at the specified intervals outlined in Schedule 1. A Research Scientist who fails to apply within the time limits required by these Guidelines may be removed from the classification. The Commissioner decides the matter, based on the committee's recommendation and in consultation with the head of the Research Scientist's agency. Before the committee makes a recommendation, the Research Scientist is given an opportunity to show cause as to why they should not be removed from the classification, and their response is taken into consideration.

Once reaching an efficiency or level barrier, a Research Scientist must:

- meet service requirements (Schedule 1)
- meet performance requirements (clause 6)
- apply to progress or continue (clause 9).

6.2

Performance criteria for continuation

Research Scientist

To continue at this level, a Research Scientist's scientific performance must demonstrate an appropriate level of:

- research and publication output
- continuing high professional standing
- contribution to the agency's objectives.

Senior Research Scientist

To continue at this level, a Senior Research Scientist's scientific performance must meet the standard achieved when they progressed to this level. This means they must continue to demonstrate an appropriate level of:

- research and publication output
- scientific leadership and research direction, including, where appropriate, contributing to mentoring and assessment of other scientists
- continuing high professional standing
- significant contributions to the agency's objectives.



Principal Research Scientist

To continue at this level, a Principal Research Scientist's scientific performance must meet the standard achieved when they progressed to this level. This means they must continue to demonstrate an appropriate level of:

- research and publication output continuing evidence that they are passing skills on to other research staff where appropriate
- scientific leadership and direction, including, where appropriate, contributing to mentoring and assessment of other scientists
- impact in their field of science
- continuing high national and/or international standing, making a major contribution to the agency's objectives.



Senior Principal Research Scientist

To continue at this level, a Senior Principal Research Scientist's scientific performance must meet the standard achieved when they progressed to this level. This means they must continue to demonstrate:

- extensive research and publication output on a national and international scale
- continuing evidence that they are passing on skills to other research staff
- high-level scientific leadership and direction, including providing direction to, mentoring and assessing other scientists
- an ongoing high impact on their field of science
- continuing outstanding national and international professional standing, and make substantial and consistent contributions to the agency's objectives
- if in an applied field, their ongoing contribution to the public good or the commercialisation of science, or that they have earned economically valuable returns for their agency.

7.0

Regression and cessation



7.1

Procedure for regression or cessation

The committee may recommend the regression of a Research Scientist to a lower salary step or level, or that they cease to be in the classification.

The committee may not recommend the regression or cessation of a Research Scientist unless it has:

- determined that the Research Scientist's performance does not meet the criteria at their current level
- advised the Research Scientist that their performance is unsatisfactory and given clear reasons for this finding
- advised the Research Scientist of actions that can be taken to rectify the identified performance deficiencies, specifying a time frame. If the Research Scientist fails to act in time, they should be given an opportunity to show cause as to why they should not be regressed or ceased
- considered the Research Scientist's response to the above.





Notification of decisions



Notification of decisions

8.1

Notification of outcomes

After taking into account the committee's recommendations, the Commissioner notifies the agency head of the outcome of an application. The agency head then notifies the applicant of the outcome, including the committee's supporting commentary.

8.2

Review of decisions

A recipient of an unsuccessful outcome can request a review of a decision by presenting a compelling case to the Commissioner:

- within 28 days of the written notice of the decision
- through their agency
- on the grounds of denial of procedural fairness

On receiving such a request, the Commissioner appoints an appropriate person (the reviewer) to review the process leading to the committee's recommendation.

If the reviewer is satisfied that the process was procedurally fair, they will confirm the decision.

If the reviewer is satisfied that the process was not procedurally fair, the Commissioner will convene committee members who did not assess the original application. This new committee will assess the applicant's original application in accordance with these Guidelines, to provide a recommendation to the Commissioner for consideration.



9.0

Application procedures



9.1

Applicant's documentation

The committee calls for applications in mid-May each year by advertising on the Public Service Commission (PSC) [website](#). All applicants need to complete and submit an online application form via the [Research Scientist Classification page](#) on the PSC's website.

Applicants must ensure that all details on the application form are correct, including the contact details of their referees. The PSC website provides information for applicants, agencies and referees on the application process and time frames for submitting individual components.

Each application must contain the following elements.

- **A cover sheet**
- **A summary page** – It should include the applicant's claim for consideration for entry to, or continuation or progression in the classification.
- **A statement detailing the applicant's claim** – In preparing the statement, applicants should clearly address each of the relevant criteria, as set out in the Guidelines. The statement should be set out in the following order:
 - **previous research** – a succinct account of research the applicant has been engaged in. New applicants should include research before entry. Research scientists should focus on research since their last interview, with scientific publications arising from the research cross-referenced to the publications list
 - **future research** – plans for the immediate future
 - **the impact of their research** – a summary demonstrating the real or potential value of past or proposed research that aligns with the agency's objectives and operations. It should include an outline of any cooperative group studies and/or knowledge transfer within the agency. This section should also clearly outline a plan showing how the applicant's research directly contributes to meeting the agency's objectives and priorities

- **their standing** – this should be described by referencing other factors that demonstrate the applicant's expertise and standing in the scientific community. It should include factors such as supervising students and other scientific staff, receiving invitations to prepare reviews or plenary papers, significant awards and research grants. Where it refers to several research grants, the applicant must append a table setting out details of each grant, including the role of the applicant in obtaining the grant. Similarly, they should use tables to summarise other key information in this section.

- **Publications** – This varies according to whether an applicant is seeking entry to the classification or is already in the classification.

Applicants seeking entry to the classification must list their publications, with the most recent listed first, following the outline in the first two categories shown below. This list should be attached as an appendix to the application.

Applicants already in the classification must list their publications by following the outlines in the first three categories and their subcategories.

- Publications released *since* the last interview, should be listed using separate subcategories for:
 - » papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals
 - » books/book chapters
 - » electronic publications
 - » conference papers – either sought or contributed – to scientific proceedings and published in refereed proceedings

- » conference papers, posters or abstracts that were not refereed
- » technical leaflets and other publications; for example, reports.

Publications should be shown clearly as either 'published' or 'in press'. Where a publication is 'in press', evidence must be provided to establish its acceptance.

- Publications being reviewed by a journal or prepared by an applicant should be listed separately using the same subcategories as above. The status of submitted publications should be clearly shown (for example, 'accepted subject to minor revision').
- Publications released before the last interview should include those relied upon but marked as 'in press' at that time. This list should cover the applicant's career, using the same ordering and subcategories as above.
- **Reprints** – No more than two reprints of particularly relevant publications should be attached to each application. Applicants should provide a statement outlining the reason for selecting these publications. They are also asked to bring two other publications to the interview for the committee to consider, if necessary.
- **Supervisor's report** – All applicants must ensure their immediate supervisor provides a succinct report endorsed by the agency, which can be submitted with their application. It should outline the relevance and impact of their research to the agency's objectives and related requirements. This report does not need to make an overall recommendation about whether the application should be granted, but it should include an assessment of the applicant's performance.

- **Referees** – All applicants who seek to enter, progress through an efficiency or level barrier, or continue at their current level must nominate three independent referees (not including their immediate agency supervisor). The referees should be well positioned to comment on the applicant's current research achievements and standing among their peers in the scientific community. In nominating referees, applicants should include at least one person who can comment on their achievements from a position of genuine independence, free of conflicting interests, such as someone involved in extended periods of co-publication or joint investigations.

Applicants must ensure that referees are aware of, and agree to, their nomination, and are familiar with the Policy and Guidelines that direct the committee's deliberations. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that their nominated referees respond within the required time frame. If a referee's report has not been submitted, the applicant's written application is distributed to the interview panel without it, which may affect the outcome. In addition, the applicant should ensure that their referees know about their current research achievements and claims; for example, by providing the referees with a copy of their application.

The committee seeks reports from the nominated referees and relies on at least two of these. The committee reserves the right to consult with other referees if this is necessary to assist with their deliberations.



The applicant is responsible for ensuring that their nominated referees respond within the required time frame.



9.2 Agency documentation

The applicant's agency contact will automatically receive a copy of the application on submission.

The agency then completes the agency summary report online. The agency then submits the application to the agency hosting the interview rounds that year.

9.3 Annual review

The committee reviews applications annually, following advertising in mid-May on the [PSC website](#). Interviews take place in August every year. Applicants should ensure that they are available for interview on the day advised.

The initiative for making an application rests with the Research Scientist. Employees already within the classification must ensure they apply for continuance or progression, as required by the Guidelines.

In special circumstances, the Commissioner may consider a request for an extension from a Research Scientist's agency. Special circumstances may include, but would not be limited to, personal circumstances or other situations outside the Research Scientist's control that have caused them to fail to meet the due date set for the agency to receive applications.

10.0

Agency obligations



10.1

Agency documentation

The agency must maintain the employment records of any Research Scientist who enters the classification, to allow quick access to historical information about their entry, continuation, progression, regression or removal, as appropriate.

The agency is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of its summary report. It must also check that applicants are entitled to apply for entry, progression or continuation, by checking factors such as qualifications and required periods of service (see Schedule 1).

Because each Research Scientist is paid on an individual basis and for a specified period (in accordance with these Guidelines or as otherwise approved), the agency must ensure that they are notified at the appropriate time of their review date and any obligations they have regarding their continuation in the classification.

10.2

Assistance with applications

An agency may, at its discretion, assist a Research Scientist in preparing an application.



11.0

Salary structure



11.1

Salary on entry

Entry to the classification is at the first-year rate for the relevant salary scale at each level. The committee has the discretion to recommend otherwise and does so based on its assessment of the applicant's level of achievement relative to the criteria set out in the Guidelines. The committee may recommend appointment at a salary that is lower than what the applicant currently receives in their substantive role. In this case, the applicant's agency maintains the applicant's current substantive salary and any increments that would have applied until the applicant progresses to a level within the classification that has a higher salary. That salary then applies.

11.2

Progression by increment

A Research Scientist may progress through the structure by the increments shown in Schedule 1. This progression is to be in accordance with the *Increments and Progression* clause in the Award and the progression requirements in these Guidelines. The Award specifies that payment of increments is subject to the Research Scientist's satisfactory performance and conduct, as determined by their agency head.

11.3

Salary rates

Salary rates for Research Scientists are contained in the Award, or any replacement award. Salary rates in this award are adjusted by the Crown Employees (*Public Sector – Salaries 2019*) Award, or any replacement award.

12.0

Review of Guidelines



The PSC will review these Guidelines in consultation with the Public Service Association of NSW.

Schedule 1: Service requirements

Classification level	Salary step	When a Research Scientist reaches this barrier for the first time, an application for:
Research Scientist	Year 1	
	Year 2	
	Year 3	
	Year 4	progression or continuation may be made after 12 months, but no later than 24 months
	Efficiency barrier	
	Year 5	
	Year 6	
	Year 7	progression or continuation may be made after 12 months, but no later than 24 months
	Level barrier	
Senior Research Scientist	Year 1	
	Year 2	
	Year 3	progression or continuation may be made after 12 months, but no later than 24 months
	Efficiency barrier	
	Year 4	
	Year 5	progression or continuation may be made after 12 months, but no later than 24 months
	Level barrier	
Principal Research Scientist	Year 1	
	Year 2	
	Year 3	continuation must be made after 36 months, and every 36 months after that. An application for progression can only be made after 72 months as Principal Research Scientist
	Level barrier	
Senior Principal Research Scientist	Year 1	
	Year 2	progression or continuation may be made after 12 months, but no later than 24 months.
	Efficiency barrier	
	Year 3	

1. When a Research Scientist reaches an efficiency or level barrier for the first time, they must apply for progression or continuation within the time frame specified above.
2. Where a Research Scientist applies for continuation and is successful, they must apply for either progression or continuation within 36 months.
3. Where a Research Scientist applies for progression and is unsuccessful, but is approved to continue at their current salary step, they may apply for continuation or progression 24 months after the unsuccessful application but no later than 36 months after. They can only submit an earlier application if the committee has recommended they do so.
4. All time frames specified above apply to all Research Scientists, whether they are full-time or part-time employees. Research Scientists are responsible for ensuring that they always submit their application within the time limit.
5. Where an employee is absent on approved leave – such as parental leave, extended leave, leave without pay or secondment – the period away from normal duties is taken into consideration in determining the entitlement to apply for progression, or to continue in the classification.



**Research Scientist Classification
Policy and Guidelines 2020.**

This version supersedes the
2012 version of the Guidelines.

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