

# ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

## *Policies and Procedures*

**Title:** Assessment of Impact of Person on the Job  
for ARS Category 4 Positions

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This P&P describes the procedures and requirements for reviewing the grade level of encumbered ARS Category 4 positions.

## Table of Contents

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b> .....  | <b>3</b>      |
| <b>2. References</b> .....  | <b>3</b>      |
| <b>3. Covered Positions</b> .....                                     | <b>3</b>      |
| <b>4. Exclusions</b> .....  | <b>3</b>      |
| <b>5. Definition of Impact of Person on the Job Concept</b> .....     | <b>4</b>      |
| <b>6. Position Review Process and Evaluation Criteria</b> .....       | <b>5</b>      |
| <b>7. Employee Inquiries</b> .....                                    | <b>5</b>      |
| <b>8. Summary of Responsibilities</b> .....                           | <b>5 - 7</b>  |
| <b>9. Glossary</b> .....  | <b>7 - 8</b>  |
| <b>Appendix A – Supplemental Data</b> .....                           | <b>9 - 13</b> |
| <b>Appendix B – Subject Matter Contact List</b> .....                 | <b>14</b>     |
| <b>Appendix C – Case Materials Certification</b> .....                | <b>15</b>     |
| <b>Appendix D – Accretion of Duties Promotion Certification</b> ..... | <b>16</b>     |

## **1. Introduction**

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), recognizes there may be times when a Category 4 scientist may impact the grade of the position because of unique capabilities, experience, or skill. The grade level of most Federal government positions, including these positions, is determined by criteria in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification standards. Most positions are limited by assignment characteristics and supervisory controls and do not have unlimited promotion potential. The maximum grade level is determined using appropriate OPM standards and is referred to as the full performance level (FPL).

This document establishes a systematic method of submitting a request for consideration of a noncompetitive action due to impact of the person on the job for Category 4 scientist positions.

An employee's job performance has no direct relationship to classifying the position. Classification measures what an employee is assigned to do, not how well the employee performs. Outstanding performance is *not* a basis for review under this P&P and should be recognized using the performance evaluation and ratings process and the incentive awards program.

Positions graded based upon impact of person on the job are limited to the incumbent's occupancy of the position and will revert to the previous grade at time of departure.

## **2. References**

OPM General Schedule Position Classification Standards (GSPCS), Introduction to Position Classification Standards, August 1991.

OPM GSPCS, The Classifier's Handbook, August 1991.

## **3. Covered Positions**

All ARS Category 4 Service Scientist positions.

## **4. Exclusions**

Positions will not be reviewed if:

The scientist has been at the FPL for less than one year.

The assignment changes and the scientist has been in the position for less than one year.

The incumbent is in a career ladder position and has not reached the FPL.

The scientist has been previously promoted based upon impact of person on the job while in the same position or having the same assignment.

The incumbent's performance rating of record is less than "Fully Successful" on a Critical Element or if management expects to assign such a rating before the scientist's case is reviewed.

The incumbent is affected, or will be affected by budget reduction, impending assignment changes, or other organizational issues.

## **5. Definition of Impact of Person on the Job Concept**

The following paraphrases information taken from the Introduction to Position Classification Standards:

This concept takes into account the significant differences an employee brings to the job because of experiences, training, talents, achievements, and capabilities. The employee broadens the scope, nature, and intent of the position based on these factors and in turn affects the work being performed, the work assigned, the expectations, and therefore the classification. The employee's unique qualities make the position substantially different than what it would otherwise be. We may not consider the fact that the employee has higher qualifications or educational background compared to others in the same position to warrant using this concept. The employee's special qualifications do not affect the grade unless they are required to perform higher-level duties.

Another requirement is that management recognizes and endorses the duties and responsibilities acquired by the employee and allows them to continue to be performed.

In order to classify a position as impact of the person on the job, higher-level duties have to be demonstrated and performed. This concept applies to individuals, and when the position becomes vacant, the position reverts to the previous classification and is filled at the lower level.

Examples of indicators when person on the job concept may exist:

- Freedom from close supervision when performing scientific service activities.
- Assignment of projects where the employee plays a significant part in identifying issues to be studied and developing proposals, and addressing significant milestones.
- Skill in performing most all of the duties independently with very little input by the supervisor.

- Recognition as an expert and sought out by peers.
- Special authority to speak for and commit ARS and/or USDA to a course of action.

These affect the difficulty of work and responsibility and authority given to the employee and can make the position materially different that they affect the classification decision.

## **6. Position Review Process and Evaluation Criteria**

The Human Resources (HR) Specialist will review the proposed position description, supervisor's rationale, and supporting documentation and will interview the incumbent, supervisor, and four of the Subject Matter Contacts (SMC) identified by the incumbent. The HR Specialist may also interview appropriate National Program Leaders and any other individuals who could contribute to the fact-finding process to assess the incumbent's impact and contributions to science, technology, or programs. Questions focus on the incumbent's impact, stature, recognition, and resulting higher graded work. Face to face or telephonic interviews may be conducted. Names of individuals interviewed are confidential and will not be released to the incumbent. The positions will be evaluated using the applicable OPM position classification standards, incumbent's package, and information gathered through interviews. The HR Specialist retains position classification authority including final grade level determination.

Upon completion of the fact-finding process, the HR Specialist will prepare a written evaluation report to include the rationale and supporting documentation, if appropriate. This report will be released to the supervisor.

If the request supports an increase in grade based upon person on the job concept, the SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, will be processed for a noncompetitive promotion and the supervisor will be informed. The AD-332, Position Description Cover Sheet, will be annotated, "Classification limited to tenure of current incumbent." If the request does not support an increase in grade, the AD-332 will be annotated, "Redescription of duties – no change to classification" and the employee will be informed by the supervisor.

## **7. Employee Inquiries**

If the employee disagrees with the decision made by the HR Specialist, the employee may request a reconsideration of the decision following the guidelines outlined in P&P 431.1, Position Management and Position Classification. In addition, they may also file a classification appeal (information also found in P&P, 431.1).

## **8. Summary of Responsibilities**

## Category 4 Scientists

- Review evaluation procedure requirements.
- Prepare supplemental data in accordance with Appendix A.
- Prepare Subject Matter Contact List in accordance with Appendix B.
- Certify case materials are accurate, complete, and in proper format in accordance with Appendix C.
- Notify SMCs they may be contacted.
- Assemble package: 1) Supplemental Data, 2) Subject Matter Contact List, and 3) Case Material Certification and give to supervisor.

## Supervisors

- Consult with Area Director (AD) to determine if position meets criteria for consideration.
- Assist scientists in preparing case materials.
- Review the current position description (PD) and draft a proposed PD describing the unique qualities and characteristics that support reclassification based on impact of the person in Factor Evaluation Format.
- Prepare SF-52.
- Prepare Accretion of Duties Promotion Certificate, Appendix D.
- Certify case materials are accurate, complete, and in proper format in accordance with Appendix C.
- Assemble documents and forward to the AD.
- Assist servicing HR Specialist in the review of the position.

## Area Directors

- Review encumbered Category 4 scientist positions in the Area periodically and consult

with supervisors to determine whether any meet submission criteria.

- Approve or disapprove requests for review of Category 4 positions.
- Perform final review and certify case materials for accuracy and completeness in accordance with Appendix C.
- Forward package to the servicing HR Specialist, HRD.

## **Human Resources Division**

- REE Classification Officer develops policy and procedures and provides advice to HR Specialists on review process.
- REE Classification Officer provides a list of Category 4 scientists to the ADs annually.
- Servicing HR Specialists advise scientists and supervisors on preparation of case materials and related matters, conduct fact-finding, classify positions, issue evaluation reports, and process SF-52, when appropriate.

## **9. Glossary**

**AD** Area Director

**Case Material** The position description and Supplemental Data.

**Category 4 Service Scientist** Permanent positions whose incumbents either primarily or exclusively serve as project or program leaders over or personally perform, work assigned to ARS involving professional scientific services to the public or to other governmental agencies, such as: identification of animals, plants, or insects; diagnosis of diseases; mass production of plants, animals, or insects; collection, introduction, and maintenance of germplasm or specimens; vaccine production; education, extension, or technology transfer activities; or nutrient data and food intake surveys. Category 4 scientists are SY positions.

**Full Performance Level (FPL)** The highest-grade level of work described and classified for a particular position.

**GS** General Schedule

**HRD** Human Resources Division, ARS

**Impact of person on the job concept** The unique capabilities, experience or

knowledge a particular employee brings to the position may affect the work performed and the classification of the position. The relationship of the employee to the position can be recognized when these aspects broaden the nature or scope and effect of the work being performed.

**NPL** National Program Leader

**OPM** U.S. Office of Personnel Management

**Position Description** Description of the duties and responsibilities of the position along with the nine factors of the Factor Evaluation System, when appropriate.

**SF-52** Request for Personnel Action

**Subject Matter Contact (SMC)** An individual knowledgeable of a Category 4 scientist's contributions, stature, recognition, and impact, and listed on the Recommended Subject Matter Contacts List.

**Supplemental Data** Factual information required by reviewers to make a fair and equitable grading decision. See [Appendix B](#).

**SY** Scientist Year

EDWARD B. KNIPLING  
Administrator  
Agricultural Research Service

## Appendix A – Supplemental Data

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|--|
| <b>SUPPLEMENTAL DATA FORMAT GUIDANCE</b> |
|--|

Information on incumbents will be submitted according to the following outline. The standardized format is an important feature in assuring consistency throughout ARS. Supplemental data will be reviewed for adherence to format. Inaccurate, incomplete, or improperly prepared packages will be returned for revision.

Use gender neutral terms and style instead of saying “he”, “she”, “his”, or “her”. Begin sentences with action verbs. Write brief narrative paragraphs.

Undue detail, verbosity, and needless repetition may weaken rather than strengthen your package. In completing the package, keep in mind the importance of *recency*.

### Outline

#### Page 1

Employee Name

Organization

Phone Number

E-mail address

Supervisor’s Name

Phone Number

E-mail address

#### Page 2

Most Significant Contributions (maximum of 5)

Stature, Recognition, and Impact

- a. Honors and Awards
- b. Special Invitations
- c. Membership in Professional Societies

d. Offices and Committee Assignments Held in Professional and Honorary Societies

Advisory and Consultant Activities

a. Participation in National Scientific Meetings, Technical Conferences, Workshops, etc.

b. Professional Advisory and Consulting Activities

c. Special Assignments

Other Significant Information

a. Educational Background

Publications

a. Peer Reviewed Publications

b. Other Publications

|   |
|---|
| <b>DETAILED SUPPLEMENTAL DATA FORMAT GUIDANCE</b> |
|---|

**1. Most Significant Contributions and Exhibits.** *List up to five significant contributions having impact on science, technology, or programs. List and number in chronological order with the most recent shown last.*

a. The purpose of submitting contribution statements is to assess the impact of your original contributions to a field of science or technology, and on ARS programs. Each significant contribution must summarize the following information in a brief, concise paragraph not exceeding one-half page in length. Identify contributions since last promotion (or date of hire in ARS) with an asterisk.

*What was contributed?* Emphasize what was done, but not how it was done.

*What was your role?* This is particularly important for work involving a team effort. The classification process cannot credit group activities. Describe as accurately as possible what you contributed to the total project or group effort.

*What is the impact on science or the degree of adoption, economic, or program importance of the contribution?* Describe the impact as accurately as possible even if your contribution is not readily apparent.

b. Each contribution must have supporting documentation or exhibits. *A maximum of*

*two exhibits* may be used to document each contribution and may be a mix of types. Select exhibits carefully.

Serial articles (Part I, Part II, etc.) are counted as separate documents when used as exhibits. Similarly supporting statements are counted individually, unless a statement is an enclosure to another statement. Acceptable exhibits include publications, i.e., technical reports, germplasm releases, policy papers, review articles, peer-reviewed journal articles, patents, etc. You may include concise statements signed by a knowledgeable authority such as NPS staff scientists, supervisors, action agency officials, industry or commodity group representatives, ADs, etc. Videotapes, computer models, and other commonly accessible media are also acceptable. Submit copies as they are discarded after position evaluation.

c. Examples of contribution statements and exhibits follow:

As Germplasm Curator for the crop, coordinated the evaluation of a hundred germplasm accessions and consolidated the data into a report distributed to working crop scientists. The report has stimulated increased use of the germplasm to broaden the genetic base of the crop in the United States (Exhibit 1a, letter from State Agriculture Experiment Station scientists/Director documenting use of the report; Exhibit 1b, letter from plant breeder from Seed Company documenting utility of the report and the new germplasm in their program).

Led a small team which ....(Exhibit 2a, letter from state program official)..

Organized, standardized, and reevaluated all published information on food consumption patterns in the rural Southwest during 1910-1990. Prepared a comprehensive analytical report, which formed the foundation of major policy and guideline revisions by regional program administrators (Exhibit 3a, #23; Exhibit 3b, #142).

Served as technical consultant to a series of major national workshops and symposia evaluating scientific information on food nutrient composition. This directly affected national policy in the area of \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. (Exhibit 5a, memo from series, coordinator; Exhibit 5b, memo from Chairman of Mid-Atlantic Nutrition Advisory Board).

Developed a computer based Indexing System (Exhibit 3) for insect and mite systematics. This increased the capability of Federal and state agencies to conduct economic, regulatory entomology programs.

**2. Stature, Recognition, and Impact.** *List up to 20 significant awards, invitations, and advisory/consultant activities in chronological order:*

**a. Honors and Awards:** Provide dates and a brief description. Differentiate between group and individual awards. Do not include civic, social, or performance awards.

**b. Special Invitations:** These are specific invitations to present a paper before science

or industry groups, prepare a paper or book chapter, or conduct seminars, etc. These are good evidence of professional recognition and standing. The key word is invitation. Be selective since the stature of the group issuing the invitation is just as important as the fact that an invitation was received. If an invitation was declined due to travel restrictions or other reasons, state “Declined” in parentheses after the listing.

For each entry, list the title, date, location, and organization or purpose of gathering. If a paper was subsequently published, reference it to the publication list.

**c. Membership, Offices, and Committee Assignments Held in Professional and Honorary Societies:** List and give dates.

### **3. Advisory and Consultant Activities.**

**a. Participation in National Scientific Meetings, Technical Conferences, Workshops, etc.:** List numbers per society, conferences, and meetings.

**b. Professional Advisory and Consulting Activities:** List dates, name and type of organization or situation (generally outside ARS), and type and significance of contribution. These need not be on a “paid” basis. Report journal reviewer under this section. If numerous, summarize information and list only most recent activities. It may be appropriate to cite related activities as further evidence of your impact and recognition.

**c. Special Assignments:** These should be technical and professional in nature. List each. Provide dates covered and a brief description.

**4. Other Significant Information.** Include important information not covered in paragraphs 1-3. Examples include educational and public relations efforts or other responsibilities.

Any exceptional or extenuating circumstances, which may have affected the quality or quantity of output, should be summarized here if the circumstances have not been covered under other items.

List materials such as book chapters and other publications in preparation or submitted but not accepted, here.

Non-scientific work such as Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor, Safety Officer, and certain location coordinator duties are not considered in the classification process because they are outside the scientific field and do not affect the grade. A description of the role in meeting organization goals and objectives can be included, if desired.

**5. Publications.** Start this section on a separate page. List only those items already published or accepted and cite acceptance date for the latter.

Include policy papers, technical reports, patents, review articles, technical bulletins, books, book chapters, conference or society proceedings, thesis/dissertation, popular publications, and others. Exclude speeches and radio or other presentations unless they have been published.

List publications in chronological order. Give complete reference including journal, volume, and complete pagination. For example:

**Smith, J.A.** and Tucker, J. An analysis of chromosomal proteins. National Science Magazine. 21: 10-12. 2005.



**Appendix C – Case Materials Certification**

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| <b>CASE MATERIALS CERTIFICATION</b> |
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The enclosed case materials are accurate, complete, and in the prescribed format.

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Employee's Signature/Date

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Supervisor's Signature/Date

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Area Director's Signature/Date

**Appendix D – Accretion of Duties Promotion Certification**

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|--|
| <b>ACCRETION OF DUTIES PROMOTION CERTIFICATION</b> |
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Name of Employee \_\_\_\_\_

I recommend that the above named employee be promoted without competition. I certify that the following conditions are met:

1. The employee continues to perform the same basic functions of the position to which originally assigned.
2. The major duties of the former position are absorbed into the new position (i.e., the new position is a clear successor to the previous position).
3. The new duties could not be reasonably assigned to any other position within the organization.
4. The new position has no further promotion potential.
5. No other positions within the organizational unit, whether encumbered or vacant, are adversely affected by the action. (For example, the “new” duties were not removed from another position in the organization, which could result in an adverse impact on that position’s grade level.)
6. Time in grade requirement has been met.
7. The new position is not a reclassification from nonsupervisory to a team leader or supervisory position.
8. The new position is not a reclassification of the position from one-grade interval to a two grade interval series.

I certify that the above conditions are met.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date