

Introduction – basic explanation of the draft structure

The most important point to make is that this is a work in progress meant to stimulate discussion, no final draft has been adopted, your feedback will be considered, changes will continue to be made, and the membership, through the committees and other engagement, will continue to control this process.

The aim of the proposed classifications and definitions is to provide a transparent and fair career pathway for scientific workers employed within NSW Health. It aims to capture all science degree graduates working in scientific positions including within pathology, forensics, radiopharmaceuticals, respiratory and cardiac medicine, research and any other area. It also aims to capture holders of certificate and diploma qualifications in pathology working in scientific positions in pathology.

There are two ways to progress:

1. based on personal merit, or
2. based on the duties of the position and qualification held.

Personal merit grading is achieved either through direct application to the employer or through application to the award credentials committee and recommendation to the employer.

The award credentials committee is made up of two HSU member representatives (scientists) and two employer representatives. The credentials committee either recommends or rejects an application.

For example, if a person holds a PhD in the area of work they are employed, has high professional standing, has published a significant number of research papers, and performs scientific work at a high level they may choose to apply to the credentials committee to be regraded as a Principal Scientist. If the credentials committee recommends regrading the employer must not unreasonably refuse the regrade.

If the application is rejected, the credentials committee must provide reasons for that rejection. If the recommendation is refused by the employer, the employer must provide reasons for that refusal.

Position/qualification classification is based on the duties required to be performed and the qualifications held by the incumbent. No application for grading is required.

The grade is determined by assessing the duties performed and the qualifications held against the classification definitions.

For example, if an individual holds a pathology diploma, has 2 years of experience and is competent to work unsupervised, they must be classified as **Grade 2**. If an individual holds a science degree and supervises the work of other scientists in a subdiscipline, they must be classified as **Grade 6**.

The employer does not arbitrarily choose the grading based on its preference. The employer chooses the grading of a position by allocating duties and hiring a suitably qualified individual. If the duties and qualifications do not align with the grading, a misclassification and underpayment may arise.

Other definitions and allowances provide safeguards and additional remuneration. They aim to properly reward employees for things such as engagement with professional bodies/education and taking on additional duties, provide sufficient detail and objective criteria to ensure classifications are properly applied, and give employees the right to challenge incorrect gradings and unreasonable decisions.

Draft classification definitions

Note: the FAQ has more information about how the classifications have been set within the structure and the tension between some of the grades (for e.g. the tension between where the former STO position and former base level Hospital Scientist position sits) – please see that document.

A **Scientist – Grade 1** is an employee who is the holder of certificate, associate diploma, or diploma level qualifications (AQF levels 3 to 6) or equivalent and performs work to support Scientists to perform their duties. Scientist – Grade 1 performs scientific work under the supervision of a Scientist – Grade 4 or above who is on shift and responsible for the work performed.

Other info:

- pay increments for year 1 through 4
- automatic progression to higher year increment depending on type of certificate/diploma
- typically a scientist will move quickly through this grade to Grade 2 (once competent)

A **Scientist – Grade 2** is an employee who is the holder of certificate, associate diploma, or diploma level qualifications (AQF levels 3 to 6) or equivalent and performs scientific work. A Scientist – Grade 2 is an employee who has been assessed as competent to work unsupervised in an area of work. A Grade 2 Scientist may perform duties in an area they have been assessed as competent in unsupervised. A Grade 2 Scientist cannot be required to supervise the work of other scientists.

Other info:

- pay increments for year 1 through 8
- once working at Grade 2, employees will not move backwards to Grade 1 if they move positions or locations and require further supervision
- automatic progression to higher year increment depending on type of certificate/diploma
- working unsupervised means there may be no other scientist of a higher grade on shift that takes responsibility for the work completed, i.e. a Grade 2 may work night shifts without more senior staff on site

A **Scientist – Grade 3** is an employee who is the holder of certificate, associate diploma, or diploma level qualifications (AQF levels 3 to 6) or equivalent and performs scientific work. A Scientist – Grade 3 is an employee who is regularly sought out and relied on for trouble shooting and scientific advice within their area of knowledge and may provide training to new staff. A Scientist – Grade 3 has at least 10 years of discipline or subdiscipline specific expertise. A Grade 3 Scientist may perform duties in an area they have been assessed as competent in unsupervised. A Grade 3 Scientist cannot be required to supervise the work of other scientists.

Other info:

- pay increments for year 1 through 4
- this is a very experienced employee who may be considered the subject matter expert within their work area

A **Scientist – Grade 4** is an employee who is the holder of an AQF level 7 degree in science or equivalent and performs scientific work. Scientists include, but are not limited to, Medical Scientist (working in pathology laboratories), Forensic Scientists (working in forensics), Research Scientists (working in research positions), Respiratory Scientists, and other employees doing scientific work. Once assessed

as competent in an area, a Grade 4 Scientist may work unsupervised in that area but cannot be required to supervise the work of other scientists.

Other info:

- pay increments for year 1 through 8
- automatic progression to higher year increment if relevant qualifications are held:
 - o degree with concurrent experience in the area of work (years of relevant work experience to be recognised)
 - o the degree specific to area of work (for e.g. immunology focused degree for an immunology position or a chemistry focused degree for mass spectrometry) (year 2)
 - o degree with honours (year 2)
 - o master's degree (year 4)
 - o PhD or relevant specified fellowship (year 6)

A Scientist – Grade 5 is an employee who is the holder of an AQF level 7 degree in science or equivalent and performs scientific work.

A Scientist – Grade 5 is an employee who meets the either of the following two criteria:

- A. Regularly sought out and relied on for trouble shooting and scientific advice within their area of knowledge and may train new staff. A Scientist – Grade 5 has at least 10 years of discipline or subdiscipline specific expertise. OR
- B. Required to hold professional accreditation to perform the position held.

A Grade 5 Scientist may perform duties in an area they have been assessed as competent in unsupervised. A Grade 5 Scientist cannot be required to supervise the work of other scientists.

Other info:

- pay increments for year 1 through 4
- this is a very experienced employee who may be considered the subject matter expert within their work area
- examples of positions with a requirement to hold professional accreditation include those in cytology

Grade 6 (formerly in-charge of section), **Grade 7** (formerly in-charge of laboratory), **Grade 8** (a new multi-side classification), and **Grade 9** (a new LHD, sector or region-wide classification) all require more work prior to drafting being released for feedback.

Grade 10 (Clinical Scientist)

A Clinical Scientist manages a scientific discipline and is responsible for quality assurance and performance, quality control, assay performance, and troubleshooting within that discipline. The employee will be responsible for scientific advice directly to medical and non-scientific staff, train other scientists in their area of expertise, maintain up-to-date expert knowledge of their discipline, review abnormal results and plan/advise on resolving identified issues, participate in clinical governance, assist in developing and maintain scientific policies and procedures, and evaluate and advise on new assays and equipment. The employee may be delegated duties of the discipline pathologist.

Other info:

- pay increments for year 1 through 5

- this position works hand in hand with pathologists and may take on the duties of a pathologist
- usually required to be qualified in accordance with NPAAC – i.e. holding a PhD or specific fellowship

Note: personal regrade criteria (Senior and Principal Scientists) are outlined in the below credentials committee clause.

Other definitions and allowances

Credentials Committee Clause

- (1) A committee consisting of two representatives of the employer and two representatives of the Union shall be constituted to consider and recommend to the employer upon application by the Union or the relevant Health Service:
 - (a) The classification of a new employee as a Senior Scientist (Technical), Senior Scientist, or a Principal Scientist.
 - (b) The promotion of a Scientist to Senior Scientist (Technical).
 - (c) The promotion of a Scientist to Senior Scientist.
 - (d) The promotion of a Scientist to Principal Scientist.

- (2) The committee must:
 - (a) Make any recommendation in a reasonable period of time (no longer than 4 months from an application being made).
 - (b) Where an application is rejected, provide the applicant with reasons and guidance regarding steps the applicant may take to improve any future application.
 - (c) Disclose any conflicts of interest, for example having a close personal relationship with the applicant.
 - (d) Assess the application against the criteria listed below.
 - (e) Continue to adopt a rigorous approach to the assessment and approval of applications.

- (3) Implementation by the employer of a recommendation by the committee must occur, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- (4) Because of the diverse and dynamic nature of scientific work, it is not possible to prescribe all relevant criteria. Assessment is of the overall circumstances and meeting one or all criteria does not necessarily require a recommendation for appointment or promotion. The criteria for assessment applications are as follows:
 - (a) Senior Scientist (Technical):**
 - i. 7 or more years' experience specific to the relevant discipline or subdiscipline.
 - ii. Advanced scientific and technical skills.
 - iii. Significant responsibilities within the department and a demonstrated ability to work independently.
 - iv. Responsibility for training of staff in the actual performance of their scientific duties, including methods, trouble shooting, common issues, clinical implications, and other technical aspects.

- v. Evidence of ongoing self-development and a significant contribution to the technical and scientific knowledge base in the department.
- vi. Evidence of a wider professional commitment such as teaching, research, communication, consultancy, professional organisations membership or office bearing in these organisations.

(b) Senior Scientist:

- i. 7 or more years' experience specific to the relevant discipline or subdiscipline.
- ii. Advanced scientific and technical skills.
- iii. Attainment of post graduate qualifications relevant to the position.
- iv. Significant responsibilities within the department and a demonstrated ability to work independently.
- v. A sound knowledge and evidence of original and innovative developments in the area of expertise demonstrated by the publication of peer reviewed articles in journals of scientific merit, oral or poster presentations at scientific meetings.
- vi. An ability to relate the area of expertise to the clinical situation and contribute to the development of new or improved criteria for testing.
- vii. Evidence of ongoing self-development and a significant contribution to the technical and scientific knowledge base in the department.
- viii. Evidence of a wider professional commitment such as teaching, research, communication, consultancy, professional organisations membership or office bearing in these organisations.

(c) Principal Scientist:

- i. 10 or more years' experience specific to the relevant discipline or subdiscipline.
- ii. Advanced scientific and technical skills.
- iii. Attainment of post graduate qualifications relevant to the position (at least master's degree, fellowship, or PhD).
- iv. Significant responsibilities within the department, requiring supervision of staff and a demonstrated ability to work independently.
- v. A sound knowledge and evidence of original and innovative developments in the area of expertise demonstrated by the publication of peer reviewed articles in journals of scientific merit, oral or poster presentations at scientific meetings.
- vi. An ability to relate the area of expertise to the clinical situation and contribute to the development of new or improved criteria for testing.
- vii. Evidence of ongoing self-development and a significant contribution to the technical and scientific knowledge base in the department.
- viii. Evidence of a wider professional commitment such as teaching, research, communication, consultancy, professional organisations membership or office bearing in these organisations.

Administrative duties allowance

Where a Scientist is required to undertake administrative duties for one hour or more in a shift, they must be paid the administrative duties allowance in [table X] for that shift. Where a Scientist is required to undertake administrative duties on a regular basis and ongoing basis, they must be paid the administrative allowance in [table X] for all shifts worked.

Multidiscipline allowance

Where a Scientist is required to undertake duties across more than one discipline in a shift, they must be paid the multidiscipline duties allowance in [table X] for that shift. Where a Scientist is required to undertake duties across more than one discipline on a regular basis and ongoing basis, they must be paid the multidiscipline duties allowance in [table X] for all shifts worked.

Other info

- most commonly applies in rural/regional areas and smaller laboratories

WHS Officer Allowance

Where a Scientist is required to undertake WHS duties for one hour or more in a shift, they must be paid the WHS duties allowance in [table X] for that shift. Where a Scientist is required to undertake WHS duties on a regular basis and ongoing basis, they must be paid the WHS duties allowance in [table X] for all shifts worked.

Qualification and professional membership allowances

1. Where an employee holds a relevant professional membership, they must be reimbursed for the cost of holding that professional membership.
2. Where an employee maintains professional certification or accreditation through a relevant certifying or accrediting body, they must be reimbursed for the cost of holding that certification/accreditation.
3. Where an employee holds a post graduate certificate (AQF level 8) or equivalent in an area relevant to the work being performed, they must be paid the Post Graduate Certificate allowance in [table X].
4. Where an employee holds a post graduate diploma (AQF level 8) or equivalent in an area relevant to the work being performed, they must be paid the Post Graduate Diploma allowance in [table X].
5. Where an employee holds a master's degree (AQF level 9) or equivalent in an area relevant to the work being performed, they must be paid the master's degree allowance in [table X].
6. Where an employee holds a PhD (AQF level 10) or equivalent in an area relevant to the work being performed, they must be paid the PhD allowance in [table X].

Forensics and other areas of scientific work

Scientific employees in forensics and other areas are encouraged to provide feedback and participate in the industrial committees for Technical Officers and Hospital Scientists. Although care is taken to draft as inclusively as possible, without their participation, we may miss important details.

Pay and pay relativities

Pay rates and the relativities between pay rates have not yet been discussed in detail. This is likely to be a significant point of contention within the membership and with the employer. It will likely require external assistance or intervention to resolve. The HSU will ensure that no employee's pay goes backwards.