

## Competency Set – Principal Research Officer

### **Task-Focused Competencies**

#### **Technical and Expert Knowledge**

Definition: The Principal Research Officer must demonstrate a level of subject knowledge and technical expertise that would meet international standards of recognition. They should be a reference source for other researchers within and outside Teagasc.

Elements:

- Expertise around subject matter and research methodologies attested by international recognition.
- National research reputation.
- Expert knowledge of the range of technologies available to support research.
- Develops a vision for the broader context and national direction for research (industry, sector, regulatory) in his/her areas of expertise.

Behavioural Anchors:

- Demonstrates a robust understanding of a range of research methodologies.
- Uses IT and Computer Applications effectively to support the research process.
- Knows the industry and the sector that they are working in.
- Demonstrates clear understanding of regulatory and legislative environment.
- Is a recognised expert in their specific subject matter.

#### **Quality in Experimental Work**

Definition: The Principal Research Officer should produce work that is of a very high standard and that merits national recognition for both its content and quality of delivery. He/she should act as a role model to less experienced researchers in terms of conceptual quality and experimental rigor.

Elements:

- Showing a high level of accuracy, precision and quality control in the experimental process.
- Being distinctive in the research approach.
- Produces a body of work that is recognised nationally and internationally for its quality.
- Produces work that is of a high conceptual standard.

Behavioural Anchors:

- Demonstrates consistent and reliable attention to detail.
- Is conscientious and precise.
- Takes appropriate action in dealing with anomalies.
- Maintains accurate records.
- Keeps relevant documentation up to date.
- Complies with health and safety regulations and other relevant procedures.
- Monitors the quality of their work consistently.

## **Writing Skills**

Definition: The Principal Research Officer must demonstrate scientific writing skills of the highest standard. They must have a facility in writing compelling proposals that attract substantial support.

### Elements:

- Constructing clear, succinct well structured documents.
- Demonstrate excellence in writing scientific papers.
- Creates compelling written proposals that attract substantial support.

### Behavioural Anchors:

- Compiles clear and succinct reports and proposals.
- Compose structured and well-argued proposals for funding.
- Constructs informative articles taking the needs of the audience into account.
- Adapts their writing style effectively for different audiences.
- Sets out compelling applications for funding/tenders that emphasise the value-add argument and address the specific award criteria.

## **Enabling Knowledge and Technology Transfer**

Definition: The Principal Research Officer needs to ensure that he/she effectively conveys the benefits of the research findings and its applications using a broad range of media, channels and formats. He/She must also develop effective tools and templates to enhance the practical application of his/her research. He/She must identify and develop opportunities to apply his/her methods and expertise.

### Elements:

- Communicating research findings and their benefits across a broad front and using a broad range of media to disseminate research findings.
- Taking initiatives to promote research transfer.
- Developing frameworks, tools and templates to support and enhance research dissemination in a practical and effective way.
- Identifying and developing opportunities to apply research.

### Behavioural Anchors:

- Invests time in actively disseminating research findings in an effective manner.
- Takes the initiative to transfer knowledge to other groups.
- Shapes technical information into practical and useable formats.
- Ensures effective knowledge management around their own particular research area.
- Designs innovative programmes and workshops to disseminate knowledge and applications to others.
- Educates others on the practical applications and opportunities that may arise from research.
- Makes a clear benefits case for the application of research findings.
- Uses models and templates to enhance the applications of research.

## **Interactional Competencies**

### **Communicating with Credibility**

**Definition:** The Principal Research Officer communicates in a compelling way that positively influences others as to the benefits and applications of their research. They can make a persuasive and evidential case that secures commitment and support from senior stakeholders within and external to the organisation.

**Elements:**

- Communicating in a credible and compelling manner.
- Making an influential impact on others that secures commitment and support.
- Communicating with considerable authority and gravitas.

**Behavioural Anchors:**

- Explains research findings and scientific concepts in a clear and informative way.
- Gets complex or detailed information across in a simple and effective manner.
- Communicates in an accurate and timely way.
- Communicates succinctly.
- Finds the right level with diverse audiences.
- Presents in a clear and effective manner.
- Listens and clarifies well.
- Checks understanding.

### **Collaboration and Co-operation**

**Definition:** The Principal Research Officer must proactively contribute to the culture of collaboration within Teagasc by building strong relationships across other teams, disciplines and research centres. He/She should develop an effective external network of collaborators and other stakeholders that enhances the overall impact of his/her contribution.

**Elements:**

- Seeking to build and sustain a network of collaborative working relationships outside the organisation.
- Working flexibly with others in order to achieve 'win-win' outcomes.
- Promoting cross-disciplinary (cross-functional) working.

**Behavioural Anchors:**

- Consults others and seeks their views and input.
- Is willing to share information and data with others.
- Provides assistance, support or advice to others.
- Supports less experienced research officers and students in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Looks to involve other disciplines in the broader research process.
- Seeks to build relationships with other centres.
- Develops and sustains collaborative working relationships with internal and external partners.
- Negotiates skilfully around involvement or resources.
- Is prepared to compromise to achieve 'win-win' solutions.

## **Personal Qualities Competencies**

### **Integrity and Resilience**

**Definition:** The Principal Research Officer frequently manages multiple priorities. They need to be able to sustain performance and composure when under significant demand or pressure.

They must also operate with integrity in all aspects of their work – from reporting on research findings to delivering on commitments.

#### **Elements:**

- Managing themselves effectively by focusing on priorities and being resilient under workload demand.
- Accepting full ownership and responsibility for all aspects of their work.
- Being honest and showing integrity in all aspects of their work.
- Coping in an adaptive way with setbacks and disappointments.

#### **Behavioural Anchors:**

- Takes personal responsibility for his/her work.
- Admits mistakes and looks to learn from them.
- Is open and honest in communication with others.
- Meets the commitments that he/she makes.
- Demonstrates integrity in reporting research findings.
- Operates in the best interest of Teagasc.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

**Definition:** It is critical that the Principal Research Officer stays at the forefront of leading edge trends and thinking in order to maintain the currency and value of their research. They should invest time in regularly updating and deepening their expertise and actively participate as both a leading contributor and a participant in ongoing professional development activities.

#### **Elements:**

- Keeping at the forefront of science and trends in their area.
- Actively leading and pursuing professional development.
- Contributing in a proactive way to professional development.
- Investing ongoing time in the Personal Development Plan process.

#### **Behavioural Anchors:**

- Is disciplined and methodical in pursuing professional development.
- Keeps up to date on developments in the field.
- Actively engages in the peer review process and treats feedback as a learning opportunity.
- Ensures that his/her Personal Development Plan (PDP) from PMDS is relevant and specific.
- Puts into effect PDP aspects of his/her PMDS plan.
- Avails of informal coaching or mentoring opportunities.

## **Flexibility and Openness to Change**

Definition: The Principal Research Officer must be able to adapt and change their work approach to suit changing circumstances. They also must be flexible in cooperating and collaborating with colleagues and other teams within and outside Teagasc. They should anticipate the level of future change that is implicit in their work and generate a readiness for this.

### Elements:

- Openness to change and new thinking.
- Adapting their approach to fit in with scientific colleagues and other research teams.
- Providing suggestions for improvement in structures and methods.
- Anticipating and signalling the future impact of their work.

### Behavioural Anchors:

- Open to new ways of doing things.
- Willing to adapt to changing business requirements.
- Adapts to changing requirements/demands flexibly.
- Shifts focus between requirements as needed.
- Helps others to adapt to change and new challenges.
- Sees change as a opportunity to develop new skills.
- Actively provides suggestions for improvements in processes.