Competency Set – Senior Principal Research Officer

Task-Focused Competencies

Technical and Expert Knowledge

Definition: The Senior Principal Research Officer must demonstrate a leading level of subject knowledge and technical expertise that would attract recognition, scientific engagement and collaboration at an international level.

Elements:
- Expertise around subject matter and research methodologies attested by international recognition.
- Leading research reputation at an international level.
- Leads in the knowledge of technologies available to support research.
- Gives visionary leadership around the broader context and direction for research that attracts expert collaboration.

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 Senior Principal Research Officer should produce a body of work that is recognised at an international level for its quality and excellence. He/she should provide leadership to the research community in terms of the standards of conceptual content and the experimental process.

Elements:
- Excels in terms of the scientific quality in the experimental process.
- Brings thought leadership to the research approach.
- Produces a body of work that is recognised internationally for its quality.
- Produces work that excels in its 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 Senior Principal Research Officer must demonstrate scientific writing skills of the highest standard. They must have a demonstrated success in writing compelling proposals that attract significant resource support.

Elements:
- Constructing clear, succinct well structured documents.
- Demonstrates excellence in writing scientific papers.
- Writes compelling written proposals that attract significant funding.

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 Senior Principal Research Officer needs to excel in the use of a broad range of media, channels and formats to disseminate their research findings. They must also ensure that effective tools and templates are developed to enhance the practical application of their research. They must give leadership to industry in how their research can be applied to maximum benefit.

Elements:
- Excels in communicating research findings and their benefits across a broad front and using a broad range of media to disseminate research findings.
- Taking multiple initiatives to promote research transfer.
- Collaborating in the development of frameworks, tools and templates to support and enhance research dissemination.
- Leading out the dissemination and application of research.
- Giving effective leadership to industry on research applications.

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 Senior 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 substantial 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 Senior Principal Research Officer should actively contribute to the culture of collaboration within Teagasc by building collaborative and supportive relationships across other areas, disciplines and research centres. He should develop a wide international network of reciprocal relationships that enhance and broaden his/her contribution to the wider field of endeavour.

Elements:
- Builds and sustains a wide network of collaborative working relationships outside the organisation.
- Builds international and senior industry relationships based on reciprocation and mutual support.
- 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 Senior Principal Research Officer frequently manages multiple priorities and encounters challenging situations. They need to be able to sustain performance and composure when under significant demand or pressure. They must also musts 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 Senior 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 their own thinking and work at the leading edge in their area.
- Actively leading and pursuing professional development activities.
- 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 Senior Principal Research Officer must be able to adapt and change their work approach to suit the changing circumstances and rapid advancements in their scientific area. They also must be flexible in cooperating and collaborating with international colleagues and other teams outside of Teagasc. They should anticipate the level of future change that is implicit in their work and sow the seeds for this.

Elements:
- Openness to change and new thinking.
- Adapting their approach to fit in with developments in science and other international research activities.
- 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.