

Competency Set – Senior Research Officer

Technical and Expert Knowledge

Definition: The Senior Research Officer must show a level of subject knowledge and technical expertise that allows them to do research at an independent level. They should produce work that is of a technical standard that would merit national recognition. They must identify new research opportunities while also developing useful application areas for their current research output

Elements:

- Expertise around subject matter and research methodologies attested by independent research reputation and/or national recognition.
- Expert knowledge of the technologies available to support research.
- Understanding the broader context for research (industry, sector, regulatory).
- Keeping up to date in their subject areas and tracking current and emerging trends in the market and the wider environment.

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: Senior Research Officer should produce work that is of a high standard in terms of both precision and the conceptual quality of the content. Their research should comply with all relevant external standards and protocols. It should also be distinctive and even have an element of innovation in its approach and findings.

Elements:

- Showing a high level of accuracy, precision and quality control in the experimental process.
- Being distinctive in the research approach.
- Produces elements of work that are recognised nationally for their quality.
- Bringing an element of innovation or new thinking to the research agenda (i.e. thinking in a flexible or lateral way in order to develop possibilities).

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: Senior Research Officers need to be able to write research proposals that are of a high standard and constructed in such a way as to be an effective application for funding. They must have the competence to write in a manner that gets complex information across in a meaningful way to a variety of audiences.

Elements:

- Constructing clear, succinct well structured documents.
- Writing scientific papers and reports of a high standard.
- Creating compelling written proposals.
- Identifying the benefit case for research in a persuasive manner.

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: Senior Research Officers need to ensure that they effectively convey the benefits of the research findings and their applications using a broad range of media, channels and formats. They must also develop effective tools and templates to enhance the practical application of their research. Senior Research Officers must be on the look out for relevant opportunities to apply their 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 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: Senior Research Officers need to demonstrate credibility and be able to positively influence others as to the benefits and applications of their research. In addition, within a lab or research centre environment they may need to gain buy-in from others to the application of new protocols and methods.

Elements:

- Getting complex information across in an intelligible and compelling manner.
- Ability to influence and persuade others.
- Communicating with credibility and authority.

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 Research Officer should adopt a positive and dynamic approach to working with colleagues and teams. He/she must actively contribute to the culture of collaboration within Teagasc by seeking to build relationships across other teams, disciplines and research centres.

Elements:

- Seeking to build and sustain collaborative working relationships.
- 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 Senior Research Officer is frequently managing multiple priorities. They need to be able to sustain performance and composure when under significant demand. 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.
- 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.

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 Senior Research Officers stay abreast of current and leading edge trends and thinking in order to maintain the currency and value of their research. They should invest time in regularly updating their expertise and actively participate in ongoing professional development.

Elements:

- Keeping abreast of the leading edge trends in their area.
- Actively pursuing professional development.
- Contributing to professional development in a reciprocal manner.
- 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 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 Teagasc. They should work to get buy – in and cooperation when introducing new approaches or methods.

Elements:

- Openness to change and new thinking.
- Adapting their approach to fit in with colleagues and other teams.
- Providing suggestions for improvement in structures and methods.
- Being persuasive and eliciting cooperation with new approaches.

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.