

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION**

TRANSMITTAL

NUMBER: NAO 202-511

DATE: July 16, 1993

SUBJECT: POSITION CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
POSITIONS

1. THIS TRANSMITS:

NAO 202-511, Position Classification of Scientific Research Positions, dated July 16, 1993.

2. PURPOSE:

This Order establishes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) policy for classifying scientific research positions and processing the appeals of these classifications.

3. FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

Insert this Order in the proper numerical sequence in the NOAA Administrative Order system.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA Administrative Order 202-511	
NOAA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SERIES	DATE OF ISSUANCE July 29, 1993	EFFECTIVE DATE July 16, 1993
SUBJECT POSITION CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH POSITIONS		
<p><u>SECTION 1. PURPOSE.</u></p> <p>This Order establishes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) policy for classifying scientific research positions and processing the appeals of these classifications.</p> <p><u>SECTION 2. POLICY.</u></p> <p>.01 Incumbents occupying scientific research positions conduct and/or lead basic or applied research in biological, medical, agricultural, physical, mathematical, engineering, and psychologic sciences as defined in the OPM Research Grade-Evaluation Guide (RGE), dated June 1964, as amended.</p> <p>.02 The process for classifying a research position recognizes the person-in-the-job concept based on the principle that the qualifications of the incumbent have a profound impact on the dimensions of a position as it is actually performed. This process provides for consideration of the work situation or assignment as well as the total qualifications, professional standing, recognition, and contributions of the incumbent.</p> <p>.03 The RGE evaluation system assigns specific point values for Degrees A through E. NOAA considers the use of point values between any two of these five degrees to be inappropriate because such refined distinctions in judgment cannot be made on a reliable basis.</p> <p>.04 Any appeal issue resulting from a classification action that is not specifically provided for in this Order shall be subject to the specific provisions of Department Administrative Order (DAO) 202-511, Position Classification Under the General Schedule, dated July 10, 1987.</p> <p><u>SECTION 3. RESPONSIBILITIES/PROCEDURES.</u></p> <p>.01 <u>Advisory Committees.</u></p> <p>a. Each Staff Office (SO), Line Office (LO), and Program Office (PO) shall establish written procedures for the convening of advisory committees to provide advice on Factor IV and Factors I-III, as requested. These advisory committees may be part of the SO/LO/PO overall Personnel Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) process and incorporated in its procedures but shall fulfill the requirements for providing advice on Factor IV. These procedures shall be submitted to the NOAA Personnel Programs and Organization Analysis Division for approval prior to their implementation. At a minimum, the procedures must include:</p>		

1. a functional statement of the advisory committee;
 2. the evaluation procedures to be used such as the review of the record presented or solicitation of peer review evaluations from outside the organization; (If peer review evaluations are to be solicited, the procedures must specifically explain how these are to be used by the committee.)
 3. the composition of the Factor IV review committee in terms of the number of committee members and how and from where they will be selected; and
 4. the specific materials to be submitted and their formats.
- b. The advisory committee on Factor IV shall be comprised of at least three (3) research scientists who are capable of making a valid judgment on candidate qualifications, professional standing and recognition, and scientific contribution. Any employee who is either the immediate supervisor or a subordinate of any candidate being reviewed by a particular advisory committee shall not serve on that advisory committee. However, the immediate supervisor may be present in order to provide specific information regarding the candidate at the request of the advisory committee.
- c. A representative of the SPO shall be included as a non-voting member of the committee for the purpose of providing advice and assistance on the consistent and accurate application of the RGE.

.02 Classification.

- a. The Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) is responsible for determining the title, series, and grade-level classification of all scientific research positions.
- b. The SPO shall use an advisory committee on Factor IV for any encumbered position proposed for classification at GS-13 and above and for any positions at a lower grade as the SPO and/or SO, LO, and PO management deem advisable.
- c. When proposing the classification of an encumbered scientific research position at the GS-13 level or above, the SO/LO/PO shall submit:
 1. a current position description with the appropriate Position Description Cover Sheet;
 2. the performance standards for the position;
 3. a curriculum vitae;
 4. a list of publications;
 5. any additional materials which the SO/LO/PO requires in its evaluation process; and

6. a justification for any proposed promotion which includes an explanation of how the position has changed warranting a higher grade.

d. The SPO shall review a proposed promotion, evaluate Factors I, II, and III, and request that the SO/LO/PO convene an advisory committee to provide advice on Factor IV.

e. The SO/LO/PO shall provide a copy of the promotion proposal to each advisory committee member who shall then review, evaluate, and score Factor IV prior to the committee meeting.

f. The advisory committee shall meet in person or by a conference call in order to discuss the candidate qualifications and scientific contributions as well as any aspects of Factors I-III on which the SPO desires the advisory committee's viewpoint. The advisory committee shall reach a consensus view, if possible, and record its conclusions.

g. The SPO shall classify the position, notify the appropriate manager of the results, process the promotion as appropriate, and complete the classification records.

.03 Appeals.

a. Before filing an appeal within NOAA, an employee must first submit a request to the SPO for a classification review. This request shall be in writing and must include the current position description and an explanation of why the employee believes that the position is incorrectly classified. The SPO shall insure the accuracy of the position description and determine the proper classification of the position including the requesting of Factor IV input from the SO/LO/PO, as necessary. Any decision to either reaffirm the current classification or reclassify the position must be explained in writing to the employee.

b. The employee may appeal the results of the classification review if he/she is dissatisfied with the results. Such appeals shall be subject to the following provisions and Section 2.04 of this Order.

c. The employee shall file an appeal in writing to the Director, Personnel and Civil Rights Office (OA2), Office of Administration, and furnish:

1. a copy of the current position description;

2. a copy of the SPO's written decision of the classification review;

3. the title, series, and grade-level classification of the position that the employee considers proper;

4. the reasons why the employee believes that the position is incorrectly classified;

5. the reasons supporting the reclassification that the employee considers correct;
 6. the performance standards for the position;
 7. a curriculum vitae;
 8. a list of publications; and
 9. any additional materials which the employee's SO/LO/PO requires in its evaluation process.
- d. The Personnel and Civil Rights Office shall:
1. adjudicate the appeal;
 2. conduct any additional fact-finding necessary;
 3. request the SO/LO/PO convene an advisory committee for Factor IV and Factors I-III, as necessary; and
 4. determine the title, series, and grade-level classification of the position;
- e. The Personnel and Civil Rights Office must request that the specific SO/LO/PO that selects advisory committees for Factor IV appeals select scientists who shall provide objectivity, make valid judgments on the qualifications, professional standing, recognition, and scientific contributions of the appellant.
- f. Factor IV appeal advisory committees shall consist of at least three (3) voting members. One person shall be designated the chairperson to facilitate the discussion process, lead the committee to a consensus if possible, and record the advisory committee findings. **The advisory committee shall not include the supervisor or subordinate of the appellant nor any individual who served on the original committee which reviewed the position.** However, the immediate supervisor may be present in order to provide specific information regarding the appellant at the request of the advisory committee.
- g. A Personnel and Civil Rights Office specialist shall participate as a non-voting member of a Factor IV appeal advisory committee in order to provide advice and assistance to the committee on the consistent and accurate application of the RGEG.
- h. Factor IV appeal advisory committees may meet in person or by telephone conference.
- i. The Personnel and Civil Rights Office shall notify the appellant in writing of the decision and of further appeal rights. The Personnel and Civil Rights Office shall send a copy of the decision letter to the appropriate SPO.

.07 The Personnel and Civil Rights Office shall notify an employee of all classification appeal decisions within sixty (60) calendar days of the date of receipt of all required documentation constituting the employee's appeal.

SECTION 4. EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES.

None.



Director, Office of Administration

Office of Primary Interest:
Office of Administration
Personnel and Civil Rights Office
Personal Programs and Organizational Analysis Division (OA22)