

Medical Scientists Association of Victoria

Guide to the Merit Reclassification Process

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Introduction

Application for reclassification is possible under the merit process. An agreed set of criteria (see appendix) is applied by the employing Institution Reclassification Committee. These committees consist of 2 employer representatives and 2 representatives nominated by the MSAV.

Preparing an Application

This is very important as the candidate is frequently unknown to the MSAV representatives on the committee. Consider the criteria carefully; the process is one of establishing indisputably to the committee that these are satisfied. A good application will address each one in turn, stating the criterion and why it is fulfilled. Actual examples of works completed are very important as mere assertion that, for example, an evaluation has been performed, is very hard for the committee to assess.

Grade 2

1 *A wide range or complex and specialised diagnostic tests*

This should be fairly easy to satisfy for anyone with reasonably extensive experience. Having experience and skills in both Haematology and Biochemistry for example seems a reasonable case.

2 *Professional advice*

This one nearly always gives us problems. Many people claim that being on duty alone at night is proof that professional advice is given to clinical staff. We find this somewhat unconvincing and are much more persuaded if the candidate has for example trained nursing staff in the use of instruments or given a presentation at a grand round.

3 *Training of undergraduate and graduate scientists*

Again specific examples are important to identify that this is not just showing someone how you load samples onto an instrument.

4 *Development of new procedures*

One criteria we sometimes apply is whether a written report (internal to the department) was presented and the new procedure adopted into routine use.

5 *Critical assessment of New equipment*

Again a written report which leads to instrument purchase is very persuasive.

6 Role in R and D

Note that the project should be at the employing institution rather than something done years ago for a previous job. Evidence of presentation or publication is critical to satisfying this criterion.

7 Enrolled for Degree

Being enrolled means just that, not that you are thinking about it. Satisfactory progress means that some comment from a supervisor or an exam mark is required.

Grade 3

1 Eight years experience

The experience requirement is strictly applied.

2 At least 4 Grade 2 criteria

The more the merrier

Other factors taken into consideration

3 Wide range or Complex equipment

This needs to be more than just the G2 requirement

4 Professional Development

It would be unusual for a candidate to be unable to claim some involvement in professional development. Remember that just claiming you turn up to a few branch meetings sounds rather weak.

Publications and presentations are rather to be expected by this stage in your career

6 Statistics and Budgets

This experience is to prevent someone with a largely management role from being excluded from merit, since they would presumably have little opportunity to perform research and publish. Evidence of these duties is required.

Grade 4

These are unusual so that the individual case requires consideration. It is necessary to demonstrate significant expertise and professionalism, together with evidence that this expertise is drawn upon by both the employing institution and the wider professional community.

Grade 5

These are so rare that no generalisation is appropriate. If you are considering applying, we suggest you contact one of us and discuss your case.

Comment

Go for it! You just might succeed.

Appendix

GUIDELINES FOR MERIT RECLASSIFICATION OF MEDICAL SCIENTISTS

The following merit reclassification guidelines have been agreed on the basis that:

- 1 Merit reclassification provisions do not take into account supervisory roles, management functions, or responsibilities of scientists which are covered under the Specific Weighting Factors formula.
- 2 Scientists employed in clinical diagnostic laboratories, with limited opportunities to pursue research and development work, are not excluded from career advancement on the basis of merit.

35. MEDICAL SCIENTISTS MERIT RECLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

35.1 Guidelines for merit reclassification of Medical Scientists

35.2 The following merit reclassification guidelines shall apply on the basis that:

35.2.1 merit reclassification provisions do not take into account supervisory roles, management functions, or responsibilities of Scientists which are covered under the specific weighing factors formula;

35.2.2 Scientists employed in clinical diagnostic laboratories, with limited opportunities to pursue research and development work, are not excluded from career advancement on the basis of merit.

35.2.3 A reclassification on merit is a personal classification, based on the personal skills, attributes and capacities of the individual irrespective of organisational structure.

35.2.4 Scientists who are re-classified under this clause will be expected to continue to exercise the particular capabilities, skills and responsibilities which may have been the basis of their reclassification.

35.2.5 The Employer may provide an employee with duties commensurate with the identified abilities and competencies in the relevant merit review classification level descriptors.

35.3 Scientist Grade 2

35.3.1 Is a Scientist appointed to this grade, and/or who is employed on work which requires special knowledge or depth of experience, and/or requires the application of a level of performance worthy of additional remuneration.

35.3.2 Experienced Scientists who can perform, without direct supervision, a wide range of diagnostic tests or procedures, and or work which requires specialised knowledge.

35.3.3 At this level, Scientists are required to have achieved a high level of performance and to have shown a commitment to further professional development.

35.3.4 To satisfy these requirements, Scientists must comply with at least four of the following criteria:

- a. demonstrated experience and competence in the performance and understanding of a wide range of diagnostic tests or procedures or of complex and specialised tests;
- b. demonstrated ability in giving professional advice within and outside the laboratory on appropriate scientific and clinical matters;
- c. participation in laboratory programmes for training of undergraduates and graduate scientific staff;
- d. demonstrated ability to initiate and develop new diagnostic or research procedures applicable in their laboratory environment;
- e. demonstrated ability to critically assess and evaluate new equipment, instruments or products relevant to the diagnostic work of their laboratory;

35.3.5 a recognised role in a development or research project approved by the employing institution. The significance of their role will be demonstrated by their presentation of results at scientific meetings or by publications in scientific journals;

35.3.6 being enrolled for a Membership of the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists (MAACB), Diploma of Bacteriology, Master.Science (M.Sc.), Master.Applied Science (M. App. Sc.), Member of the Australian Institute of Physics (MAIP), Fellowship of the Human Genetics Society of Australia (FHGSA), Graduate Diploma in Health Administration, Doctor of Science,(D.Sc.), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Medical Science (FAIMS), Member of Human Genetics Society of Australia, Graduate Diploma Biostatistics, Graduate Diploma Epidemiology, Master of Applied Epidemiology, MPH, Master of Epidemiology or any other recognised equivalent Degree or Diploma relevant to medical sciences from a tertiary institution pursuant to clause of this Agreement where they have passed some subjects or where they, in the opinion of their academic supervisors, have made satisfactory progress for the success of the scientific thesis.

35.4 Scientist Grade 3

35.4.1 Is a Scientist appointed to this grade and/or who has been qualified (as defined) for at least eight years and is engaged on specialised scientific work or work of a research or developmental nature.

35.4.2 Widely experienced Scientists with sound knowledge and skills relating to an extensive range of diagnostic tests or procedures, and/or work of a specialised nature. At this level, Scientists may validate test results or be engaged in work of a research or developmental nature and are expected to have achieved a high level of professional development.

35.4.3 To satisfy these requirements Scientists must:

- a. have a minimum of eight years professional experience;
- b. have satisfied at least four of the merit criteria for Scientist grade 2.
- c. Other factors to be taken into consideration are:
- d. demonstrated experience and expertise in the direct performance and interpretation of a wide range of diagnostic procedures and/or in the evaluation, operation and maintenance of complex equipment and instruments;
- e. demonstrated commitment to professional development. Elements which will be taken into consideration include, inter alia:
 - regular participation in meetings of professional organisations;
 - membership of professional committees;
 - teaching activities.
- f. academic development achieved. The following qualifications will be considered:
 - Membership of the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists (MAACB), Diploma of Bacteriology, Master of Science (M.Sc.), Master of Applied Science (M.App.Sc.), Membership of the Australian Institute of Physics (MAIP), Fellow of the Human Genetics Society of Australia (FHGSA), Graduate Diploma in Health Administration, Doctor of Science (D.Sc.), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Fellow of the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists (FAACB), Fellow of the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists (FAIMS), Fellow of the Australian Institute of Physics (FAIP), Fellow of the Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists (FIMLS), Member of the Royal College of Pathologists, Graduate Diploma Epidemiology, Graduate Diploma Biostatistics, Member of the Human Genetics Society of Australia (MHGSA), Master of Applied Epidemiology, Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Epidemiology or any other recognised equivalent Degree or Diploma relevant to medical sciences from a tertiary institution pursuant to Error! Reference source not found., clause **Error! Reference source not found.** of this Agreement.
 - publications in which the applicant is a major contributor.

- presentations at scientific meetings relevant to medical sciences.
- academic appointments.

g. demonstrated experience in:

- maintaining laboratory statistics;
- formulating and maintaining programmes for the development and cost containment of the laboratory's work;
- making budgetary submissions for their area.

35.5 Scientist Grade 4

35.5.1 A Scientist appointed as such with at least ten years experience, utilising advanced and specialised professional knowledge and experience.

35.5.2 Very experienced Scientists with advanced and specialised professional knowledge relating to one or more disciplines of medical science. At this level, Scientists are expected to have made significant contributions to medical science and to be recognised as local experts in a relevant scientific and/or diagnostic speciality or activity.

35.5.3 To satisfy these requirements, scientists must:

- have a minimum of ten years professional experience;
- have satisfied most of the criteria for a scientist grade 3;
- have a high standing in the scientific community as assessable on the basis of: qualifications; awards; past appointments; publications; membership of committees and of professional organisations; consultancies; research grants in which the applicant is the principal or associate investigator; teaching appointments/commitments.
- Other factors to be taken into consideration are:
 - capacity in formulating, initiating and conducting programmes devoted to laboratory organisation, introduction of new procedures in service, development and research; and
 - assessing the value of such programmes in relating to the medical objectives and priorities of the employing Institution.

35.6 Scientist Grade 5

35.6.1 All such applications shall, where disputed, be considered by the Committee constituted with an independent chairperson.