

Staff Research Associates Guidelines

Classification Guidelines for Staff Research Associates (SRAs)

This series includes staff positions that require the observation and measurement of scientific phenomena. Positions allocated to this series typically require some specialized skill and/or knowledge which is usually, but not necessarily, acquired through formal education in the natural, physical or social sciences at the collegiate level. Most Staff Research Associates are engaged in research to seek new or further information about a subject or substance. However, there are a few positions in this series which are concerned primarily with producing materials for study by others, such as histological technicians.

Generally, Staff Research Associates are not completely free to undertake independent scientific research, since this is typically a faculty function. Staff Research Associate positions are designed primarily to assist the faculty in identifying and selecting problems for investigation, planning experiments, and in evaluating, interpreting, and publishing results. In addition to the actual performance of methods, Staff Research Associates may participate substantially in the selection, development, evaluation of methods, and writing of research articles for publication.

There are five distinguishable levels within the Staff Research Associate Series and five allocating factors to be used as common denominators in determining the appropriate level within the series for a particular position. The following is a brief summary of the five allocating factors.

- 1. Supervision exercised over the position.**

The nature and degree of supervision exercised over a position ranges from explicit methods with directions as to steps to be taken and the review of the results of all operations for accuracy and completeness to giving objectives in very broad terms or goals and allowing the methods of determination be worked out by the Staff Research Associate.

The amount of review by a supervisor is pertinent in this factor, as is the degree of independence and judgment exercised by the Staff Research Associate. Many laboratory techniques consist of a large number of steps, any of which individually may be relatively simple to perform. However, to connect the steps in sequence to produce an end result requires evaluation of the results at the completion of each step and selection among alternative courses of action, including, in some instances, reversing the process to the preceding step.

- 2. Kind and degree of originality of the innovational aspects of the work.**

This factor measures original contribution or innovation within the realm of methods and procedures.

Original contributions or innovations range from relatively simple suggestions, such as substituting one kind of pipette for another or recognizing irregularities and invalid results and calling them to the attention of the supervisor, to breaking new ground by

attempting something which has not been previously attempted or achieved, proceeding both by reference to the general body of scientific knowledge and by application of trial and error methods.

3. **Skill requirements inherent in the performance of a particular method or procedure.**

Skill requirements are usually manipulative skills. Some techniques are not particularly difficult to understand, but to perform them may require unusual finesse with laboratory instruments because of the perishable or fragile nature of the objects. Skill requirements may also refer to knowledge of scientific principles, procedures, and judgment in evaluating results. The knowledge which an incumbent may bring to a job does not in itself affect the level of skill unless it is specifically expressed in the job in some way.

4. **Variety of the work.**

Variety within the Staff Research Associate series means the degree of diversification and utilization of unrelated techniques or the requirement of essentially dissimilar knowledge and skills.

NOTE: The Skill (3) and Variety (4) factors can combine for allocation to the Staff Research Associate III level if the work performed involves functions and responsibilities evaluated at the Staff Research Associate III level of skill (work requiring unusual finesse or knowledge to perform) in each of at least two separate occupational fields or scientific disciplines.

5. **Laboratory management responsibilities, including responsibility for the work of others.**

Laboratory management responsibilities may be defined as (1) having responsibility for the work of others, including planning and reviewing work assignments and giving assistance in the solution of work problems; (2) having responsibility for ordering and the upkeep of supplies and equipment; (3) personal contact with the public in performing laboratory work in the field; and/or (4) responsibility for instructing, through lectures and/or demonstrations, or training in laboratory procedures, or generally overseeing a group of students in laboratory sections of their course work.

All five factors are not necessarily significant or critical in the evaluation of the lower level positions within the Staff Research Associates series. However, all five factors are critical in the determination of the highest level of the Staff Research Associate level. The functions and responsibilities present in a position are allocated to an appropriate level (Staff Research Associate I, II, III, IV or V) for each of the significant factors and the position is classified at the highest level at which the majority of these factors are evaluated for levels I, II, III, IV, and V. For classification at level III, a majority of the incumbent's time must be spent performing functions and responsibilities allocable to one of three significant factors. Further illustration appears in the following chart:

Allocation Factors:

Level	(1) Supervision	(2) Originality	(3) Skill	(4) Variety	(5) Lab Mgmt.	Number of Significant Factors
SRA V	V	V	III (Skill/Variety combined)	III (Skill/Variety combined)	V	3 or 3 at V; Skill/Variety at III
SRA IV	IV	IV	***	***	IV	2 of 3 at IV
SRA III	***	III	III (Skill/Variety combined)	III (Skill/Variety combined)	III	1 of 3 at III; majority of remainder at II
SRA II	II	II	II	II	II	3 of 5 at II
SRA I	I	I	I	I	I	3 of 5 at I