



CLASSIFICATION REVIEW GUIDELINE FOR STAFF AND SUPERVISORS

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1.0 Context

Each position will be classified using the University of Newcastle Classification Descriptors (Schedule 5 of the Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2023 [“the Agreement”]) at a level which most accurately reflects the value of the work required to be performed and the duties and responsibilities of the position.

The Classification Review process supports the University’s capacity to continually adapt to meet its strategic direction, providing the capacity to recognise changes in work value of positions and business requirements and goals. Organisations undergo continuous change, causing business requirements and goals to evolve over time. In the event of change, new needs may arise which result in significant and substantial variations to duties and responsibilities which can require a change in the classification of a position.

The Classification Structure and Review framework is described in the Agreement (Clause 4.6 and Schedule 6) and maintains position classifications and determines the relative work value of Professional Staff Positions (HEW Levels 1 to 10) within the University. In addition, Classification Review assists the University to maintain internal relativities between positions, ensuring fair and equitable classification.

So as to meet the above objectives, new positions and vacant positions are assessed by Human Resource Services to ensure appropriate classification. Occupied positions are reviewed annually as part of the Performance Review and Development process between the staff member and their line manager, as well as through discussion with the appropriate Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor. When the Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor considers a position to have undergone significant and substantial change, or in a situation where a position is considered to be incorrectly classified, a referral will be made to Employee Relations, Human Resource Services, to assess that position.

2.0 General Principles

Classification Review:

- is a process for assessing the requirements of a position not the level of performance of an individual;
- is used to ensure positions meet needs and business requirements;
- recognises ongoing, significant and substantial changes to a position;
- is conducted on an annual basis and/or on the occurrence of significant change in a position’s duties and responsibilities;
- is linked to the Performance Review and Development process;
- is applied to assure equity and consistency between similar positions;
- is related to the needs of the position and does not relate to performance, length of service, market forces or retention;
- operates within the organisational structure of the University; and

- takes into account that work value relates to the nature of the work, skill and responsibility required.

3.0 Timeline and Action

Date	Action
During November and December	The Performance Review and Development (PRD) process will generate discussion about the previous twelve months in addition to the coming year. The staff member's position description will be reviewed during this process.
During January and February	Identified changes in work value during the PRD process will be reported to the appropriate Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor.
By month end, February	Recommended Classification Review proposals to be referred to the Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy and Chief Operating Officer, by the Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor.
During March and April	The Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy (or nominee), will examine each proposal and where necessary seek further information so that a recommendation addressing the merits of the case can be provided to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer for a decision.
In a timely manner - generally within 10 working days of receipt	The relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer will approve or reject recommendations made by the Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance and Policy (or nominee).
In a timely manner - generally within 10 working days of receipt	The Associate Director, Workplace Relations, Governance and Policy will notify the staff member (through their supervisor) of the determination.

In circumstances where a staff member or supervisor do not comply with the timelines indicated, the Associate Director, Workplace Relations, Governance and Policy will determine the actions to be taken. These actions will be communicated promptly to the appropriate Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor, supervisor and staff member.

4.0 Self-Guided Formats

Self-guided formats have been designed to assist staff members and their supervisors to provide appropriate information to facilitate informed decision making. Staff members and their supervisors are encouraged to utilize these formats to ensure appropriate and equitable outcomes in a timely manner.

Formats are available at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-staff/working-here/managing-and-recruiting-staff/position-classification-and-reviews> with links to:

- Performance Review and Development <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-staff/working-here/performance-and-development/performance-review-and-development-prd>
- The Classification Review form and
- Associated processes.

If assistance is required regarding formats or elements of the process, assistance can be sought from Human Resource Services.

5.0 Alignment with Other Processes

Supporting Professional and Career Development (Clause 8.2 of the Agreement) is aligned with the Classification Review Process. During the annual Performance Review and Development discussion, staff members and their supervisors are encouraged to discuss all aspects of the staff member's position.

5.1 Having the Discussion

Supervisors will work through a prescribed structure for the Performance Review and Development discussion. The staff member and their supervisor will review the position description during the discussion, to ensure details are relevant and up to date.

When discussing the possible reclassification of the position due to changes in work value, supervisors should ensure the following details are addressed:

- does the current position description accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the position?
- have changes in the role over the previous twelve months occurred?
- list any changes to duties and responsibilities set out in the current position description and provide a revision of the current position description;
- are these identified changes significant and substantial?
- will the identified changes be ongoing requirements of the position?
- do the staff member and supervisor agree on the changes to the position description?
- can any additional duties and/or responsibilities be carried out by other staff member(s), or are other alternatives available?

When discussing changes in the role, it is important to distinguish between ongoing work value changes and temporary changes, as well as duties that are not resulting in the role increasing in inherent work value. If a change in a position is temporary, a higher duties allowance (HDA) may be a more suitable option. It is also important to distinguish between changes in work value and changes in workload or volume that do not result in the changes to the level of responsibility or complexity so as to increase work value.

Once the staff member and their supervisor have discussed changes to the position, the supervisor shall then determine whether:

- a) no further action is to be taken; or
- b) a request for Classification Review is to be initiated.

The supervisor will inform the staff member of the determination.

If the supervisor determines that action is to be taken, a draft updated position description and current position description are to be submitted by the supervisor with a Classification Review Form to the appropriate Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor.

If a staff member feels that their position is incorrectly classified, but their supervisor does not support the request for a Classification Review, the staff member may seek advice from Employee Relations, Human Resource Services, for assistance in obtaining a review of the position in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Agreement.

If a staff member feels this action has not resolved the issue and the position remains incorrectly classified, the staff member may request the matter be referred to an Inquiry Officer in accordance with Schedule 15 of the Agreement.

Human Resource Services will seek advice from the supervisor and appropriate Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor as to the reasons why the review was not supported. Employee Relations, Human Resource Services, may assist in resolving this issue.

6.0 Invest the Time

6.1 For the Staff Member

In preparation for the Performance Review and Development meeting:

- collect information about the job and how your position has changed, prior to the Performance Review and Development meeting;
- discuss details of the changes with your supervisor;
- have evidence available;
- consider the level of your current duties and responsibilities against the Classification Descriptors (Schedule 5 of the Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2023);
- work towards agreement in the meeting;
- include relevant details about the position; and
- have a copy of the current position description.

6.2 For the Supervisor

In preparation for the Performance Review and Development meeting:

- have copies of the University Strategic Plan, Faculty/Division Strategic Plans, Objectives or Business/Management Plans, Budget and Profile information and

Organisation Charts and position descriptions and any other relevant information available at the meeting;

- consider positions within the immediate or similar cohorts, where you are familiar with those roles (seek advice from your Human Resource Business Partner if necessary);
- consider whether position requirements have changed so as to change the work value of the position, and whether any changes are appropriate or could have been dealt with in other ways;
- discuss changes which have occurred or any anticipated change;
- consult the Classification Descriptors;
- advise the staff member on whether there will be no further action or a request for Classification Review, following the Performance Review and Development discussion;
- assess and verify the nature of the changes to the position.

When preparing the documentation to submit a request for Classification Review, ensure that all requirements of the request have been completed prior to submission, including the following:

Classification Review Form (<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-staff/working-here/managing-and-recruiting-staff/position-classification-and-reviews>);

- current position description;
- draft updated position description;
- all required signatures/authorisation; and
- current organisational chart/staffing profile.

6.3 Classification Review Form

The Classification Review Form provides the detail to support the Classification Review submission. Where a position has changed, supervisors will need to cite relevant and descriptive examples of variations to positions including:

- justification of substantial and significant change in work value;
- examples of change;
- rationale for change; and
- nature of changes – whether they are ongoing or temporary.

6.4 Position Descriptions

Please identify the new duties of the position in an updated position description. When creating the draft position description, please endeavour to:

- logically organise all duties and responsibilities, with the most important first;

- be clear and concise;
- use the approved format;
- focus on the inherent requirements of the position and not on the qualifications, experience and performance of the current occupant; and
- include all relevant criteria.

It is also important to submit a copy of the current position description for comparative purposes.

6.5 Role of the Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor

When considering applications for Classification Review, the Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor will take into account the following considerations:

- University (Faculty/Divisions) strategic plans and goals;
- staffing profile;
- whether position changes are substantial and significant;
- the nature of changes – whether they are ongoing or temporary;
- whether reassignment of duties is appropriate; and
- where the need is temporary and short-term (less than 12 months), whether the payment of a higher duties allowance (HDA) for a defined period is an appropriate alternative to reclassification.

7.0 Evaluation Points

The Associate Director, Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy (or nominee) will consider the following points when assessing position classification levels:

- organisational context of the Classification Review;
- scope of Classification Review recommendations;
- nature or type of work performed in the position;
- level of responsibility in the position;
- supervision received by the occupant of the position;
- supervision exercised by the occupant of the position;
- knowledge and skills required to perform the duties of the position;
- whether the University Classification Descriptors have been accurately applied to the position
- whether the proposed classification level consistent with that of similar positions in other comparable sections within the University

- alignment with the staffing profile; and
- any external job evaluation method implemented by the University to formally evaluate positions.

Further information will be sought as required to assist the appropriate assessment of positions.

8.0 Quality Considerations and Outcomes

In making the determination, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer will take into account any comments from the appropriate Pro Vice-Chancellor or Director.

Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer is considering not approving the position for reclassification, this will be discussed with the appropriate Pro Vice-Chancellor or Director prior to the decision being finalised.

8.1 Reclassification of Positions

Positions will be reclassified following the approval of the appropriate Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer. When a position is reclassified the supervisor and the staff member will be informed in writing by the Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy, Human Resource Services. Details will include:

- the new Classification level of the position;
- the date of effect of reclassification;
- the new increment date for the position occupant; and
- an updated position description.

8.2 Date of Effect of Reclassification

The date of effect of each reclassification will generally take into account:

- the date of submission of the application;
- the recommended date by the appropriate Director or Pro Vice-Chancellor; and
- the recommended date by the Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy (or nominee); and
- the date of approval.

8.3 Positions Not Approved for Reclassification

The Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy, Human Resource Services, will advise the staff member, in writing through their supervisor, of the following details:

- the reason for the position not being reclassified; and
- the process for appeal of the decision (Request for Review of Outcome).

9.0 Staff Member Request for Review of Outcome

A staff member may make an application to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer for a review by an Inquiry Officer (Schedule 6 and Schedule 15 of the University of Newcastle Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2023) on the grounds that:

- a) the process was not followed; or
- b) the position is not, or will not be, appropriately classified at a level which most accurately reflects the value of the work required to be performed and the duties and responsibilities of the position.

A review should be requested by the staff member: within ten (10) working days of the date of issue of the Classification Outcome notification letter; or

- a) during the period March to April on the basis that a Classification Review had not occurred in the preceding 12 months.

9.1 Process of Staff Member Request for Review of Outcome

A staff member may request a review of classification by completing a 'Request for Review of Outcome' (<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-staff/working-here/managing-and-recruiting-staff/position-classification-and-reviews>) form and sending it to the Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy.

The following process will then apply:

- Employee Relations will refer the application to an Inquiry Officer.
- The Inquiry Officer may be assisted by a staff member nominated by the applicant and a staff member nominated by the University.
- The staff member may have a Representative in the Inquiry.
- The Inquiry Officer and nominated staff members will conduct an Inquiry.
- The Inquiry Officer will make a recommendation to the appropriate Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer.
- The applicant will be provided with a copy of the Inquiry Officer's report and will have five (5) working days to respond in writing to the appropriate Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer.
- The appropriate Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer will approve or not approve the recommendations made by the Inquiry Officer.
- The Associate Director Workplace Relations, Governance & Policy, Human Resource Services, will notify the supervisor and applicant of the appropriate Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer decision.
- The review process and recommendation of the Inquiry Officer will be completed within thirty (30) days of the application being received, wherever practicable.