

---

# Job Level Descriptors

---

## Research Staff

---

Published: 2006

---

1	Research – Grade 6	1
1.1	Job Summary	1
1.2	Representative Work Activities	1
1.3	Knowledge, Skills and Experience	2
1.4	Quality Indicators	2
2	Research – Grade 7	3
2.1	Job Summary	3
2.2	Representative Work Activities	3
2.3	Knowledge, Skills and Experience	4
2.4	Quality Indicators	4
3	Research – Grade 8	5
3.1	Job Summary	5
3.2	Representative Work Activities	5
3.3	Knowledge, Skills and Experience	6
3.4	Quality Indicators	6
4	Research – Grade 9	7
4.1	Job Summary	7
4.2	Representative Work Activities	7
4.3	Knowledge, Skills and Experience	8
4.4	Quality Indicators	8
5	Research – Grade 10	9
5.1	Job Summary	9
5.2	Representative Work Activities	9
5.3	Knowledge, Skills and Experience/Quality Indicators	9

---

# Job Level Descriptors

## Research Staff

### 1 Research – Grade 6 (Research Assistant)

#### 1.1 Job Summary

Postholders are assisting within a research team and are working on an established research programme under general supervision. Postholders are managing their own activities and prioritising their own workload within agreed objectives to ensure that all activities are completed to deadlines. Postholders assist within a research project, by, for example, undertaking literature reviews, collecting and collating data and undertaking and recording the outcomes of experiments. Postholders may assist with the supervision of student projects and the delivery of introductory classes.

#### 1.2 Representative Work Activities

Based on National Role Profiles.

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare, set up, conduct and record the outcome of experiments and field work.</li> <li>• Develop questionnaires and conduct surveys.</li> <li>• Conduct literature and database searches.</li> <li>• Continue to update knowledge and develop skills.</li> </ul>
Teaching and Learning Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in the supervision of student projects.</li> <li>• Contribute to introductory classes, for example on the use of research methods and equipment.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with colleagues and students and external research sponsors (if any) as deemed necessary by research supervisor.</li> <li>• Make relevant contacts to develop knowledge and to foster good working relationships for future collaboration.</li> <li>• Write up results of own research.</li> <li>• Contribute to the production of research reports and publications.</li> <li>• Present information on research progress and outcomes to bodies supervising research, e.g. steering groups.</li> </ul>
Planning and Managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan own day-to-day activity within the framework of the agreed research programme, with guidance if required.</li> <li>• Contribute to the planning of research programmes.</li> <li>• Co-ordinate own work with that of others to avoid conflict or duplication of effort.</li> <li>• Provide guidance as required to support staff and any student, who may be assisting with research.</li> </ul>
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate as a member of a research team.</li> <li>• Attend and contribute to relevant meetings.</li> </ul>
Initiative, problem-solving and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deal with problems which may affect the achievement of research objectives and deadlines.</li> <li>• Contribute to decisions affecting the work of the team.</li> <li>• Make use of standard research techniques and methods.</li> <li>• Analyse and interpret the results of own research and generate original ideas based on outcomes.</li> </ul>
Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May involve a working environment other than a normal office.</li> </ul>

### **1.3 Knowledge, Skills and Experience**

Postholders have the knowledge, skills and experience normally associated with a degree and may have some previous relevant work experience.

This includes:

- Sufficient breadth or depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline to effectively contribute to the research programme.
- Knowledge of appropriate research methods including, for example, carrying out literature searches, developing questionnaires, conducting surveys and carrying out analyses and tests.
- The ability to organise own research workload with general supervision from senior colleagues.

### **1.4 Quality Indicators**

- Engage in continuing professional development through developing further skills and knowledge of research methods and techniques.
- Relate positively and professionally to students, colleagues and/or clients.
- Knowledge of, and adherence to, the University's Policies such as Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies.

## 2 Research – Grade 7 (Research Associate)

### 2.1 Job Summary

Postholders are undertaking one or more specific research projects, usually under the general guidance of a research leader. They are establishing a personal research portfolio and planning research proposals, with assistance as required, and within the parameters of the Department's research strategy. Postholders write up research work for publication individually or in collaboration with colleagues and disseminate results as appropriate to their discipline by, for example, conference presentations and peer reviewed publication. Postholders are contributing to collaborative decision making with colleagues on research matters within their area of competence and are providing some input to departmental administration and teaching.

### 2.2 Representative Work Activities

Based on National Role Profiles and building on the level of demand in Grade 6.

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop research objectives and proposals for own or joint research, with the assistance of a mentor if required.</li> <li>• Conduct individual and/or collaborative research projects.</li> <li>• Identify sources of funding and contribute to the securing of funds for research.</li> <li>• Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism to inform research activity.</li> <li>• Disseminate knowledge of research advances to inform departmental teaching effort.</li> </ul>
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be involved in the assessment of student knowledge and supervision of projects.</li> <li>• Support the work of students, providing advice on study skills and helping them with learning.</li> <li>• Contribute to teaching via, for example, practical work, and running tutorials.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deal with complex information of a specialist or highly technical nature.</li> <li>• Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks for the exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration.</li> <li>• Join external networks to share information and ideas and identify sources of funding.</li> <li>• Liaise with colleagues and students and external research sponsors (if any) as deemed necessary by research supervisor.</li> <li>• Disseminate research results as appropriate to the discipline e.g. by presentations at conferences and the write up of research results for peer reviewed publication.</li> <li>• Prepare proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding purposes.</li> </ul>
Planning and Managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage own research and administrative activities, with guidance if required.</li> <li>• Plan and manage own tutorials/research activities as agreed with mentor/in collaboration with others.</li> <li>• Use facilities/research resources and laboratories as appropriate.</li> </ul>
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and contribute to relevant meetings.</li> <li>• Collaborate with academic colleagues on areas of shared research interest, including research methodology, results etc.</li> </ul>
Initiative, problem-solving and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop initiative, creativity and judgement in applying appropriate approaches to identify areas for research, develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio.</li> <li>• Contribute to collaborative decision making with colleagues on academic content in areas of research.</li> <li>• Use new research techniques and methods.</li> <li>• Use creativity to analyse and interpret research data and draw conclusions on the outcomes.</li> </ul>
Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May involve a working environment other than a normal office.</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Postholders have the knowledge, skills and experience normally associated with a first degree, together with:-

- a PhD or an equivalent professional qualification; or
- at least 4 years appropriate professional experience

This includes:

- Sufficient breadth or depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline to effectively contribute to research programmes and to the development of departmental research activities.
- A developing ability to prepare research proposals, to conduct individual research work and to disseminate results, with the assistance of a mentor if required.
- The ability to organise own research workload, with some guidance from senior colleagues if required.

## 2.4 Quality Indicators

- Making a clear contribution to the departmental research effort.
- Attending events, designed to improve performance, developing new skills and raising awareness of research or pedagogic issues.
- Engaging in continuing professional development and possess or be working towards membership of professional organisations as appropriate.
- Knowledge of, and adherence to, the University's Policies such as Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies.

### 3 Research – Grade 8 (Research Fellow)

#### 3.1 Job Summary

Postholders are independent researchers who develop research objectives and proposals, engage in individual and/or collaborative research and plan, co-ordinate and implement research programmes. Postholders disseminate research results by, for example, conference presentations and publications in peer reviewed journals. Postholders have a responsibility for the acquisition of research contracts and for the acquisition of funding for future research projects, as appropriate to their discipline. Post holders participate in Departmental and, on occasion, Faculty or University Committees. Postholders supervise research students and/or other research staff and may contribute to Departmental teaching efforts.

#### 3.2 Representative Work Activities

Based on National Role Profiles and building on the level of demand in Grade 7.

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend, transform and apply knowledge acquired from learning to research and appropriate external activities.</li> <li>Develop research objectives, projects and proposals.</li> <li>Supervise research students and/or other research staff.</li> <li>Identify and secure research funding.</li> <li>Conduct individual or collaborative research projects as appropriate to their discipline.</li> </ul>
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the teaching and learning programmes in the department.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely communicate complex and conceptual ideas to those with limited knowledge and understanding as well as to peers using high level skills and a range of media.</li> <li>Participate in and develop external networks, for example to identify sources of funding, obtain research consultancy programmes etc.</li> <li>Disseminate results as appropriate to the discipline, e.g. produce and present conference papers and publish in peer reviewed publications, making a clear contribution to the Department's research efforts.</li> <li>Deal with problems and help colleagues resolve their concerns about progress in research.</li> <li>Collaborate actively within and outwith the Institution to complete research projects and advance thinking.</li> </ul>
Planning and Managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentor colleagues with less experience and advise on personal development.</li> <li>Plan and manage the work of others, e.g. Research Assistants, Research students.</li> <li>Manage projects relating to own area of work and the organisation of external activities, e.g. research consultancy.</li> <li>Coach and support colleagues in developing their research techniques.</li> <li>Plan, co-ordinate and implement research programmes.</li> <li>Manage the use of research resources and ensure that effective use is made of them.</li> <li>Manage research budgets.</li> <li>Help to plan and implement commercial and consultancy activities.</li> </ul>
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordinate the work of colleagues to ensure equitable access to resources and facilities.</li> <li>Lead small research project teams at departmental level.</li> <li>Act as a responsible team member, leading where agreed, and develop productive working relationships with other members of staff.</li> </ul>
Initiative, problem-solving and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess, interpret and evaluate outcomes of research.</li> <li>Develop new concepts and ideas to extend intellectual understanding.</li> <li>Resolve problems of meeting research objectives and deadlines.</li> <li>Develop ideas for generating income and promoting research area.</li> <li>Develop ideas for application of research outcomes.</li> <li>Decide on research programmes and methodologies, often in collaboration with colleagues and sometimes subject to the approval of the head of the research programme on fundamental issues.</li> </ul>
Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May involve a working environment other than a normal office.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Postholders have the knowledge, skills and experience normally associated with a first degree, together with:-

- a PhD plus research experience to enable the delivery and dissemination of independent research e.g. 4 years relevant post-doctoral work experience; or
- a professional qualification and 7 years relevant professional experience.

This includes:-

- Experience of planning and organising workload including the ability to supervise and delegate work to ensure the timely completion of research programmes.
- The ability to develop research proposals and to attract research students and funding, as appropriate to the discipline.

### 3.4 Quality Indicators

- Research project deadlines and objectives are met.
- Research proposals are developed and research students and funding are attracted.
- There is a clear contribution to the department's research outputs.
- Knowledge of, and adherence to, the University's Policies such as Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies

## 4 Research – Grade 9 (Senior Research Fellow)

### 4.1 Job Summary

Postholders provide research leadership, including the ability to foresee new research directions for themselves and research teams. Postholders play a key role in developing new research strategies and contribute to teaching and student supervision at all levels. Postholders contribute to the strategic direction of the department and enhance the departmental research reputation e.g. through; publications in refereed journals, contributions to edited volumes or authorships of major text(s) as appropriate to the discipline, over a sustained period (generally over five years). Postholders identify and obtain sources of funding of significant value as appropriate to the discipline. Postholders have or are developing a national reputation within their specialism evidenced by invitations to present at national and/or international conferences together with, for example, membership of editorial boards, membership of councils/committees of national or international learned societies. Postholders deal with complex and difficult problems, which colleagues have referred to them as the recognised expert, where there may be a lack of precedent in how to deal with such problems. Postholders play a significant role within their own department, e.g. through acting in senior departmental administrative positions and contributing to teaching and learning programmes. They may also contribute at Faculty/University level, through Committee Membership and participation in administrative, management and other service responsibilities.

### 4.2 Representative Work Activities

Building on the level of demand in Grade 8.

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define relevant research objectives and prepare research proposals.</li> <li>Contribute to the development of research strategies within the department.</li> <li>Carry out research and act as principal investigator and project leader on major research projects.</li> <li>Publish research findings in leading journals, on a sustained basis, and make presentations at national and/or international conferences.</li> <li>Develop proposals for research projects which will make a significant impact by leading to an increase in knowledge and understanding and the discovery or development of new explanations, insights, concepts or processes.</li> <li>Actively seek research funding and secure it as far as it is reasonably possible.</li> <li>Generate new research approaches and identify, adapt, develop and use research methodologies and techniques appropriate to the type of research.</li> <li>Review and synthesise the outcomes of research studies.</li> <li>Interpret findings obtained from research projects and develop new insights, expanding, refining and testing hypotheses and ideas.</li> <li>Contribute generally to the development of thought and practice in the field.</li> </ul>
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervise the work of research students.</li> <li>Contribute to teaching and learning programmes.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate conceptual and complex ideas to a wide variety of audiences using appropriate media and methods to promote understanding.</li> <li>Disseminate and explain research findings through leading peer-reviewed publications on a sustained basis.</li> <li>Lead and develop internal networks for example by chairing and participating in committees.</li> <li>Lead and develop external networks for example with other active researchers and leading thinkers in the field.</li> <li>Develop links with external contacts such as other educational and research bodies, employers, professional bodies and other providers of funding and research initiatives to foster collaboration and generate income.</li> </ul>
Managing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide academic leadership to those working within research areas by for example co-ordinating the work of others to ensure that research projects are delivered effectively and to time or organising the work of a team by agreeing objectives and work plans.</li> <li>Contribute to the development of teams and individuals through the personal development planning system and providing advice on personal development.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as line manager (e.g. of research teams).</li> <li>• Act as a personal mentor to peers and colleagues.</li> <li>• Contribute to the overall management of the department in areas such as administration and budget planning and take responsibility for the delivery of own research programmes.</li> <li>• Be involved in departmental level strategic planning and contribute to wider strategic planning processes in the University.</li> <li>• Plan and deliver research, consultancy or similar programmes, ensuring that resources are available and required income levels are achieved.</li> <li>• Contribute to the management of quality, audit and other external assessments e.g. the Research Assessment Exercise.</li> </ul>
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead teams within areas of responsibility.</li> <li>• Ensure that teams within the department work together.</li> <li>• Act to resolve conflicts within and between teams.</li> </ul>
Initiative, problem-solving and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolve problems affecting the delivery of research projects within own area and in accordance with regulations.</li> <li>• Make decisions regarding the operational aspects of own research programme.</li> <li>• Contribute to decisions which have an impact on other related programmes.</li> <li>• Provide advice on issues such as ensuring the adequate balance of research projects, appointment of researchers and other performance matters.</li> <li>• Spot opportunities for strategic development of new projects or appropriate areas of activity and contribute to the development of such ideas.</li> </ul>
Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May involve a working environment other than a normal office.</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Postholders have the knowledge, skills and experience normally associated with a first degree, together with:-

- a PhD and a sustained track record of research within a specialism; or
- a professional qualification and significant relevant professional experience at a senior level.

This includes:

- Having a growing national reputation, evidenced by activities such as: membership of the editorial board of learned journals; invitations to present papers at national/international conferences; authorship of a major textbook based on original research; sustained record of publications in refereed journals.
- The ability to attract significant research funding and supervision of students as appropriate to the discipline.
- Experience of managing and leading research team(s), including staff motivation and management.
- The ability to organise own workload and manage the research workload of others.

### 4.4 Quality Indicators

- Externally recognised authority in discipline/field.
- Attraction of significant research funding/grants.
- Evidence of positive innovation and impact (e.g. funding, income, national agendas).
- Evidence of a clear contribution at Departmental and Faculty/University level through chairing/membership of committees.
- Knowledge of, and adherence to, the University's Policies such as Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies.

## **5 Research – Grade 10 (Principal Research Fellow)**

### **5.1 Job Summary**

Postholders are undertaking roles similar to Grade 9 but in addition their research contributions give them a national and growing international reputation in their field evidenced by authorship of an authoritative/acclaimed body of work and invitations to present keynote/plenary lectures at international conferences or equivalent as appropriate for the discipline.

### **5.2 Representative Work Activities**

See Research Grade 9.

### **5.3 Knowledge, Skills and Experience/Quality Indicators**

In addition to that indicated at Grade 9:

- Externally recognised authority with a national reputation and growing international reputation.
- Evidence of positive reports on excellence, breadth and visibility of research contributions from appropriate external experts in the postholders' field of study.