

Chapter 17

Research Position Evaluation System (RPES)

The Research Position Evaluation System (RPES) is the ARS system used for evaluation and position classification of permanent research scientist (Category 1) positions. The RPES is based on the person-in-the-job concept, providing open-ended promotion potential based on a research scientist's personal contributions to science and technology (and resultant stature and recognition), which can change the complexity and responsibility of their position.

The standardized case writeup format required by Manual 431.3-ARS is an important feature in assuring consistent and equitable evaluation throughout ARS.

Panelists must have information in sufficient detail to make fair and equitable classification decisions. Information on individual positions and incumbents will be submitted according to the attached checklist which is compatible with the format of the Research Grade-Evaluation Guide (RGEG).

Case material will be reviewed for adherence to format. Inaccurate, incomplete, or improperly prepared, or otherwise noncompliant, writeups cannot be accepted and will be returned for revision.

Acronyms: See [Chapter 22](#) for a comprehensive list of commonly used acronyms.

References: [P&P 431.3](#) - ARS-Research Position Evaluation System
[Manual 431.3](#) - ARS-RPES Case Writeup Preparation and Guidance for Panelists
[Form ARS 229](#) - Special Form - RGEG Factor 4, Level F Criteria
[Form AD 332](#) - Position Description Cover Sheet
[Form ARS 514](#) - Research Position Evaluation Case Writeup Cover Sheet
[Form ARS 570](#) - Indepth Reviewer Contact Sheet

Cross References: [Chapter 10](#) - Human Resources

Web Site: RPES Home Page: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes/>, especially
Online Presentations
RPES Brochures Online
Note: The RPES Home Page takes you to the most recent Issuance of 431.3-ARS.

Attachment 1

“Notice of Case Writeup” letter from Area Office
with the “Mandatory Position Review Notice” from Headquarters
plus the attachments that go with the initial notice.

(**Note:** These contain pertinent submission information. Also note
reference to the RPES Home Page: www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes
is an invaluable source of information.)

Points of Contact:

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Subjects Contained in Policies and Procedures 431.3-ARS

This policy and procedure establishes policy for the ARS RPES. It contains abbreviations and cross-references in the Glossary, followed by exhibits on Peer Groups, Filling Vacant Research Positions, and Panel Decision Options. This revision incorporates policy decisions made and announced since the 2006 version was published.

In addition to the usual explanations for authority, forms, definitions, coverage, and purpose, the other important topics that are covered are:

- Panel Administration
- Panel Review Requirements
- Panel Composition
- Confidentiality Requirement
- Panel Decision Options
- Preparation and Submission of Evaluation materials
- Supergrade Evaluation Panels
- Panel Review Records
- Summary of Responsibilities

Material Contained in Manual 431-3-ARS

This manual provides detailed guidance for (1) preparing case writeups for panel review, and (2) determining the grade level of positions covered by the ARS RPES. This revision incorporates policy decisions made and announced since the 2006 version was published.

In Part I (Case Writeup Preparation), along with the introduction, references, and general guidance, detailed information is provided on the format outline, preparation of case writeups, and a submission checklist.

In Part II (Evaluation Guidance), information is provided on:

- Panel Operating Procedures
- Ad Hoc Panels
- Conducting an Indepth Review
- RGEG and Additional Evaluation Guidance
- Additional Evaluation Guidance
- Glossary