



United States Department of Agriculture  
Research, Education and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

January 10, 2011

SUBJECT: Notice of Case Writeup

TO: , Lincoln

THROUGH: Kenneth Vogel, RL, Lincoln  
W. H. Blackburn, AD, Fort Collins /s/

FROM: Michael R. McGuire, Associate Area Director /s/

The following is the current Area-wide procedure to be followed in submitting your case writeup for panel review. Please refer to Manual 431.3. Some of the procedures have been changed again as of FY 2011.

**Initial Draft** – Submit by e-mail the case and ARS-570 in Word, the ARS-514, AD-332, and exhibits in PDF, to Carol Durflinger by **April 22, 2011**. If the attachments are more than 50 mb, you should send them in two separate e-mails.

After your RPES case writeup has been reviewed by the Area Office and returned to you by e-mail with comments on content and format, you need to revise your case writeup accordingly.

**Final Version** – Forward by e-mail your final case and 570 in Word, exhibits in PDF if there were changes, by **May 13, 2011**. We will already have the copies of the 332 and 514 here. The Area Office will review all and forward to the RPES section.

If you have any questions, please contact Carol Durflinger or me. Also, please feel free to contact Merle Cole or Pat Humphrey (HQ RPES) at 301-504-1563.

Attachments: (4)

Mandatory Position Review Notice (includes format change)

Checklist (including format change)

Web Address for Manual 431.3-ARS

Additional Guidance: Enhancing Impact Statements in Case Writeups



January 10, 2011

SUBJECT: Mandatory Position Review Notice

TO: Kenneth Vogel, Research Leader, Lincoln, NE

THROUGH: Wilbert Blackburn, Director, NPA /s/

FROM: Pat Humphrey, RPE Staff /s/

Scientist	Peer Group Affiliation	Final Case Writeup Due in Area Office
	Plant Health (PHL)*	May 13, 2011
<i>* Please notify us immediately if this is incorrect or if scientist wishes to change affiliation.</i>		

### Case writeup preparation

Detailed guidance is provided in **Part I of Manual 431.3-ARS**, available online at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/431-3M-ARS.pdf>

Pay particular attention to **Chapter 6**, which provides extensive samples for preparing Demonstrated Accomplishments under Factor 4 (to include research, team research, special assignments/projects, technology transfer, systems research and integration, and leadership accomplishments) and information on typical exhibits

### Draft case writeup submission

Your Area Office may require submission of a draft writeup for review by the Area Director prior to finalization. If so, the Area will advise you of those procedures.

### Supervisor's responsibility

Carefully review the writeup and discuss it with the scientist to ensure accuracy and completeness.

**Ensure the writeup complies with the instructions. Area Offices are not authorized to accept noncompliant cases, and must return them.**

### **Caution**

If the scientist has received a performance rating of less than Fully Successful on a Critical Element, or will receive such a rating before the case is reviewed, or if other performance-related action is being considered, **please notify the Area Director and this office immediately.**

### **Final case writeup submission**

Final case writeup is due in the Area Office by the date shown above. **Your Area Office will explain how they wish you to submit final case materials to them.**

### **Updating writeups**

Scientists may update their writeup up to the day the panel meets (approximately 2 months after the cutoff date).

Updates are to be **emailed** directly to this office, with a copy to the Area Director.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions, please contact me on 301-504-1565 or [pat.humphrey@ars.usda.gov](mailto:pat.humphrey@ars.usda.gov)

**CHECKLIST FOR RPES CASE WRITEUPS**  
Using Manual 431.3-ARS

This checklist is to be used as a guideline only. Details for each item may be found on the page numbers indicated.

(Factors 1-3B) constitute official position description and must not exceed 3 single-spaced pages)

- Factor 1      Research Assignment (p.8)**  
(Official Job Description – Use Gender Neutral Terms)
- A.      Assigned Responsibility (p.8)**  
(Identify specific National Program(s) supported)
  - B.      Research Objectives and Methodology (p.9)**  
(Specific research objectives; methodology; distinguish between personal and team research objectives)
  - C.      Expected Results (p.9)**  
(Expected results and impact on science or technology)
  - D.      Knowledge Required (p.9)**  
(Limit to a brief list of specific, directly applicable disciplines and skills needed to perform the current research assignment)
  - E.      Supervisory Responsibilities (p.9)**  
(Title and grade of ARS employees supervised; nature of supervision given; EEO statement)
- Factor 2      Supervisory Controls (p.10) (Use Gender Neutral Terms)**
- A.      Assigned Authority (p.10)**  
(Summarize freedom to do research within scope of assignment)
  - B.      Technical Guidance Received (p.10)**  
(Describe general technical supervision received)
  - C.      Review of Results (p.10)**  
(Describe supervision (freedom given) to analyze, interpret and report results)
  - D.      General Supervision (p.10)**  
(Describe broad supervision received)

**Factor 3 Guidelines and Originality (p.11)**

- A. Available Literature (p.11)**  
(Indicate extent to which literature applies to assigned area, objectives, and methodology)
- B. Originality Required (p.11)**  
(Indicate difficulty identifying objectives, hypotheses, or expected results)
- C. Demonstrated Originality (p.11) (BEGIN ON NEW PAGE)**  
(Describe originality and creativity considered the best evidence of originality related to the current assignment; ½ page limit)

**Factor 4 Contributions, Impact, and Stature (p.12)**

(Under each sub element, include only relevant information and select limited numbers of entries considered the most significant over incumbent's entire career)

- A. Demonstrated Accomplishments (p.12)**
  - No more than 3 for GS-11 & below; 5 for GS-12; 8 for GS/GM-13 and above
  - Leadership accomplishment encouraged if applicable
  - What was done, not how it was done
  - If team effort, incumbent's exact contribution to total accomplishment
  - Why significant (impact on science; adoption; economic importance)
  - Chronological order
  - Must not exceed ½ page in length
  - Accomplishments since last promotion (or entry on duty with ARS) identified with an asterisk.
  - Must be written using accomplishment/role/impact subheadings
  - Maximum of 2 exhibits per accomplishment
  - Maximum of 3 supporting statements can be bundled with AD memo (and thereby counted as a single exhibit)

**Additional Accomplishments (p.29)**

- Remains optional
- Same format as Demonstrated Accomplishments
- Must not exceed ½ page in length
- Limited to a maximum of 2 entries
- Must illustrate impact equal to that of the Demonstrated Accomplishments
- Exhibits not permitted

**B. Stature and Recognition (p.29)**

1. **Honors and Awards (p.30)** (list 20 most significant)  
(Do not include civic or social awards, or performance awards, including Certificates of Merit for employee performance recognition)
2. **Special Invitations (p.30)** (list 20 most significant)
3. **Offices and Committee Assignments Held in Professional and Honorary Societies (p.31)** (list 20 most significant)
4. **Participation in Professional Meetings, Technical Conferences, Workshops, etc. (p.31)** (List each society separately)

**C. Advisory and Consultant Activities (p.32)**

1. **Professional Advisory and Consulting Activities (p.32)**  
(list 20 most significant)
2. **Special Assignments (p.33)** (list 20 most significant)

**D. Other (p.33)**

1. **Educational Background (p.33)**
2. **Research Experience (p.33)**
3. **Other Significant Information (p.34)**

**E. Publications (p.35) (BEGIN ON NEW PAGE)**

(Subdivide into 2 sections: 1. Peer Reviewed Journal Articles and Patents  
2. Additional Publications)

- List in chronological order
  - Continue the page numbering from the writeup
  - Scientific journal articles – list only those already published or accepted
  - Provide date accepted if not yet published
  - Identify other than scientific journal articles
  - Delineate by a dashed line across the page those materials published or accepted for publication since last promotion (in both sections)
  - Bold incumbent's name, italicize names of graduate students
  - Inclusion of abstracts or abstract list is not permitted
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ARS 514 – RPEC Writeup Cover Sheet (signatures required with first draft)

AD 332 - Position Description Cover Sheet (with immediate supervisor's signature)

ARS 570 – In-depth review Contact Sheet (include immediate supervisor)

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### General Guidance

In addition to studying Part 1, case writers should review the Research Grade Evaluation Guide to get an understanding of the evaluation objective of each factor.

In writing Factors 1, 2, and 3, use gender-neutral terms and style instead of saying “he,” “she,” “his,” or “her.” Begin sentences with action verbs (the subject is understood). Write brief narrative paragraphs following the outline shown above.

Undue detail, excess verbosity, and needless repetition may weaken rather than strengthen a case writeup.

United States Department of Agriculture  
Research, Education, and Economics

**ARS □ NIFA □ ERS □ NASS**  
*Manual*

**Title:** RPES Case Writeup Preparation and Guidance for Panelists

**Number:** Manual 431.3-ARS

**Date:** October 20, 2010

**Originating Office:** Research Position Evaluation Staff, REE Services Branch, Human Resources Division, AFM/ARS

**This Replaces:** Manual 431.3-ARS dated 9/24/08

**Distribution:** ARS Headquarters, Areas, and Locations (provide a copy to each ARS research scientist)

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 Research Position Evaluation System (RPES). This revision incorporates policy decisions made and announced since the 2008 version was published.

For reference go to:

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/431-3M-ARS.pdf>

This is the most recent Manual, dated October 20, 2010.

Manuals with prior dates should not be used.

## Enhancing Impact Statements in Case Writeups

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Research scientist grade levels are determined by applying criteria of the OPM Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG). The core value of the RGEG—and therefore of the ARS Research Position Evaluation System (RPES)—is the scientist’s *impact* in his or her field. Factor 4 is the RGEG’s driving force. It requires an aggregate evaluation of what a scientist has done across their career—with an emphasis on recency—and of how their contributions are used and recognized by ARS customers.

Impact, and the derived personal stature and recognition, are double-valued in Factor 4 of the RGEG rating scheme. *To attain maximum RGEG credit*, scientists must be able to demonstrate that their contributions have made a difference—that the work is being adopted by our stakeholders and other customers, are of economic or program importance, or contribute meaningfully to the scientific literature.

The “Impact” subheading of each Demonstrated Accomplishment statement must always clearly present the best *possible evidence* of the incumbent’s impact and recognition. Impact is best addressed in terms of invitations, consultations and advisory activities, grants received, honors, formal awards, patents issued, licensing agreements, technology transfer, and other typical evidence that the work described in the accomplishment statement is used, valued, or otherwise making a difference for ARS customers.

Submitted publications per se provide little evidence of tangible impact. Therefore it is not particularly beneficial to state, for example, “this research resulted in three senior-authored manuscripts” as evidence of impact. Ensure the *outcome*—not just the *output*—of each Demonstrated Accomplishment is clearly presented.

(July 2010)