

Postdoctoral fellows

The Know Your Rights series of fact sheets assist CSIRO union members better understand and enforce our rights at work. The source of these rights is the CSIRO Enterprise Agreement 2017-2020 (EA), specifically Part 3 of Schedule 2, and relevant legislation. These rights have been achieved through sustained advocacy by postdocs and researchers in the Staff Association, and we encourage continued participation to advance the work environment for postdocs and early career researchers.

1) Why does CSIRO offer Postdoctoral Fellowships?

The Science and Industry Research Act (1949) requires CSIRO to develop scientists, including in training postdocs. A Postdoctoral Fellowship is intended to enhance a person's research capability so that they are better able to pursue a career in science, either within CSIRO or beyond, as well as:

- providing early career scientists with skills and experience to develop capability for the nation;
- assisting universities to produce a pool of potential employees;
- refreshing and adding value to CSIRO's research activities (through original insights, new knowledge and/or techniques); and
- identifying and recruiting potential science leaders.

2) What special conditions of employment apply to postdocs?

- Postdocs are employed on a maximum three-year term, but in some circumstances, can be offered a further term of up to three-years. The total period of relevant work experience of a postdoc cannot exceed six years following confirmation of their doctorate.

- Postdocs must complete a training and development plan. The plan assists postdocs to develop capabilities to those expected of an independent researcher and provides opportunities to apply those capabilities in their work at CSIRO.

- The training and development plan will include defined opportunities for formal involvement in research planning, conference attendance, publication and review of scientific papers, and fully funded training courses for skills development (unless otherwise agreed between CSIRO and the postdoc).

3) How do postdocs progress through CSOF Levels?

- Postdocs are appointed at a minimum CSOF Level 4.2. However, they may be appointed at CSOF Level 4.1, until their doctorate has been confirmed. Postdocs advance through performance and development steps as part of the APA process.

- If a postdoc has demonstrated CSOF Level 5 capabilities in prior postdoctoral work experience and CSIRO determines there is scope to upgrade the role specification, a postdoc may be appointed at CSOF Level 5.

- Where consecutive postdoctoral fellowships are offered, the previous fellowship will be regarded as continuous for the purposes of access to rewards, including performance and development steps and promotion.

4) Do recent Visa changes by the Federal Government impact on postdocs in CSIRO?

Yes. Postdocs and all researchers now have to be engaged through different types of Visas.

Depending on the type of work and position in CSIRO, the Visas will either be short-term or long-term and may not facilitate consecutive postdocs or a pathway to permanent residency.

The Staff Association is meeting with CSIRO Recruitment Services on 14 February to raise these issues on behalf of postdoc members. If you are a member, please email us at csstaff@cpsu.org.au so we can raise your issue.

This resource was produced by the CSIRO Staff Association and paid for by union members. Every member contributes to the resources, strength and capacity of the Staff Association. Non-members seeking advice and support at work need to join today.

For more information about membership talk to your local organiser, email csstaff@cpsu.org.au or visit www.cpsu-csiro.org.au

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Important points

- CSIRO is required by law to develop scientists including training Postdoctoral Fellows, commonly referred to as Postdocs.
- Postdocs are employed on a maximum three-year term but in some circumstances, can be offered a further three-year term.
- Postdocs must complete a training and development plan which includes defined opportunities for formal involvement in research planning, conference attendance, publication and review of scientific papers as well as fully funded training courses for skills development, unless otherwise agreed.



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