SECTION 13 : Chemistry and Physical Chemistry of Soft Matter

1. General remarks on the profession of researcher and its evaluation

A CNRS tenured researcher's role encompasses multiple activities, and excellence in these areas can take various forms. In their evaluations, the members of the section primarily focus on scientific contributions, while also taking into account how researchers engage with and integrate into their professional environment.

In all of these areas, the evaluation will be based on the nature, scope, quality, and impact of these activities, taking into account their context (scientific, material, and human) and the scientific opportunities that were available to the researcher. It will not rely solely on quantitative indicators. The evaluation will consider the quality and impact of the results achieved by the researcher, taking into account their career stage and trajectory, the available contextual elements, and any information they wish to provide to help clarify that context and their capacity to participate in certain types of activities, as well as the coherence of their work and results obtained during the period under review.

Researchers are invited, if they wish, to mention any events that have impacted their career activity.

To allow for a qualitative assessment, the Section recommends that researchers provide a clear explanation of the scope and impact of their achievements, as well as their personal contribution to the relevant evaluation criteria. Researchers should highlight the importance of main contributions and activities rather than relying on numerical indicators.

For scientific output, the section asks researchers to identify any invited conferences, underline the presenter in the case of oral or poster presentations, and mark corresponding author(s) of articles with an asterisk*.

The section reminds researchers to ensure that they report contributions that fall within the relevant evaluation period.

2. Periodic evaluation of researchers

2.1 Common criteria for all researchers

The evaluation of researchers, regardless of rank, primarily focuses on the quality, originality, and dynamism of their research (scope, impact and personal contribution) as well as on the dissemination of their results (scientific output and visibility). Willingness to take risks, whether by exploring new thematic or geographic areas or by developing new methodologies or instrumentation to address scientific questions, will be examined and valued. Although this evaluation is individual, it also considers the researcher’s position and involvement within their laboratory and within the French and international scientific community (their scientific profile and recognition).

Other criteria that complement the researcher’s scientific contribution will also be viewed positively, in particular:

- research training and supervision (doctoral students, interns, postdoctoral researchers);

- teaching and science outreach (promoting scientific and technical culture to the wider public, especially to young people);

- involvement in collective responsibilities at the unit level;

- ability to respond to competitive funding calls;

- management of research projects, whether academic or industrial;

- participation in the national open science policy;

- participation in the development of the European Research Area;

- valorization of research and innovation (patents, licenses, business creation).

The researcher's future plans will be assessed in light of the projects and research themes presented, with particular attention paid to their coherence and contextualization within the broader scientific landscape.

2.2. Specific criteria according to ranks

CRCN Researchers

In addition to the criteria common to all researchers, the scientific autonomy of the researcher (their ability to develop a scientific project), the implementation of their research program, and their originality (willingness to take risks) are evaluated more specifically. Their ability to take initiative (scientific dynamism) is also considered. The training of early career researchers through research (ability to supervise staff) will be viewed favorably. Participation in the operation of the unit and/or involvement in local, national or international organizations will also be viewed favorably.

CRHC Researchers

In addition to the CRCN criteria, the evaluation focuses more specifically on the researcher's scientific expertise, their involvement in research programs, scientific collaborations, and collective tasks at the local level. Their commitment to sharing the scientific or technical knowledge derived from their expertise, within the laboratory or the broader community, and their ability to develop and adapt their expertise as required are also considered.

DR2 Researchers

In addition to the CRCN criteria, the research themes chosen and the manner in which they are addressed, which together make up the researcher’s identity, are examined. The ability to mobilize resources (including success in securing competitive research funding) and to establish collaborations (national and international visibility) is also taken into account.

In addition to supervisory roles (direction and co-direction of PhD theses) and research leadership (ability to lead a team; administrative responsibilities; research management), the ability to design, lead and/or participate in national and international projects will be considered.

DR1 Researchers

In addition to the DR2 criteria, a higher level of expectation applies. Assuming greater responsibility and involvement in tasks or collective missions at the national or international level are expected (team coordination, national or international responsibilities, supervision of researchers and/or research support staff). Particular attention will be given to national and international recognition and influence, as well as the ability to develop new research themes or strategies.

DRCE Researchers

The DR1 criteria are applied with heightened demands, considering their exceptional nature: a leading role in structuring research and the highest level of international recognition are expected.

3. Promotion of researchers

Promotion to the considered grade will be reviewed based on the previously defined criteria for each grade (potential or proven ability to meet the evaluation criteria of the targeted grade).

4. Recruitment of researchers

Common criteria for all researchers

- the nature, scope, quality, and impact of scientific production: publications in peer-reviewed journals, books and book chapters, patents, invited conference presentations, oral communications at conferences, poster presentations at conferences, seminars;

- teaching and dissemination of scientific culture;

- individual contribution to the research project;

- clarity of written documents;

- oral presentation skills: quality of the presentation and relevance of responses to questions.

Access to CRCN level

Selection of candidates is based primarily on their intrinsic scientific qualities which determine their long-term potential, and then on the relevance of their research program and the alignment of their skills with this program. The scientific background, originality, and the momentum of their scientific output will be evaluated. Any thematic and/or geographical mobility will be viewed positively.

In addition to the criteria common to all researchers, the committee will pay attention to:

- the extent of general scientific knowledge;

- the quality of previous work;

- the relevance of the research project, its consistency with the candidate's background, its alignment with the objectives of the hosting unit (and its compatibility with any thematic or assigned priority indicated in the official competition notice), and the added value it brings relative to existing work;

- the candidate's inventiveness;

- their ability to develop a scientific project;

- their aptitude for research training;

- their ability to contribute to the valorization of research.

Access to the DR2 rank

A level of responsibility in terms of supervision (direction and co-direction of PhD theses), team leadership or scientific coordination, and scientific initiative will be considered. Particular attention is given to the ability to coordinate projects, as well as to thematic and/or geographical changes consistent with the research activity. The candidate's scientific profile and recognition at the national level plays an important role at the DR level.

In addition to the criteria for access to the CRCN rank, the section will pay attention to:

- responsibility for an original theme;

- national and international visibility;

- ability to develop projects;

- willingness to take scientific risks;

- ability to lead a team;

- involvement in collective tasks and responsibilities, and in research management.

Access to the DR1 grade

In addition to the DR2 criteria, the section will apply a higher level of expectation with regard to:

- scientific risk-taking;

- assuming responsibilities;

- international influence and recognition.

Remarks: The above criteria are intended to assess the value and originality of research projects as well as the inventiveness of researchers. The evaluation will also take into account all aspects of the researcher's profession. The common and specific criteria mentioned above are not listed in order of importance. It is not necessary to satisfy all criteria; it is the overall evaluation of the dossier that matters. Therefore, a clear and precise presentation of the researcher's activity and project is essential.

5. Request or renewal of emeritus status

- Quality of scientific activity;

- Integration of the project and scientific activity into the collective strategy of the hosting unit;

- Contribution to the hosting unit through their network, the development of new collaborations, and the transfer of knowledge and skills.