



# UNSW Scientia Program

## 2023 Guidelines

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### 1. UNSW's Strategic Priorities

UNSW has a bold vision to be Australia's global university. UNSW seeks to improve and transform lives through world-leading research, exemplary education, and by advancing a just society.

The [UNSW 2025 Strategy](#) sets out the University's vision to be **recognised as an international exemplar in equity, diversity, and inclusion. Our success will be built upon embracing the diversity and cultural richness of our communities and ensuring that our staff and students can achieve their full potential regardless of background.** Measures of success include the gender balance in UNSW roles at all academic levels and the inclusion of a significant proportion of Indigenous staff in the Scientia Program. To realise this vision, the UNSW Scientia Program will pursue diversity in appointment practices to ensure appropriate gender representation, cultural diversity, and depth of disciplinary expertise.

### 2. The UNSW Scientia Program

The UNSW Scientia Program (**Program**), established as a cornerstone of the UNSW 2025 Strategy, aims to attract, and retain the highest quality research performers who are on a trajectory to becoming exceptional research leaders and mentors. Over the 10-year lifespan of the Program, up to 290 researchers will be appointed into these research-focussed positions. To date, more than 127 Scientia research-focussed academics have been appointed to the Program.

The UNSW Scientia Program appointments provide a pathway to continuing academic careers at UNSW for both internal and external applicants entering the Program, subject to performance against agreed research excellence criteria. UNSW intends to create partnerships with academics competitively appointed as UNSW Scientia Associate Lecturers, Scientia Lecturers, Scientia Senior Lecturers and Scientia Associate Professors, mentoring, and nurturing their careers.

Academics on the Program must hold an academic appointment with a relevant faculty on either a continuing or convertible tenure track basis. Appointments to the Program will be for four-year periods only. Fractional appointments, at a minimum of 0.4FTE, will be considered. Scientia appointments are research focussed, with the ability to teach a light load (up to 02 FTE.)

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### 3. Scientia Program Framework

Scientia Program academics are expected to demonstrate research performance **at the highest level (top 10%) of the equivalent UNSW disciplinary cohort** (relative to opportunity). The initial appointment to the Program will be for four years, with the potential for a renewal of the Scientia appointment. Scientia academics' Key Performance Targets (KPTs) will be based on discipline-appropriate research excellence metrics at entry to the UNSW Scientia Program. In the event an Associate Professor (Level D) is promoted to Professor (Level E) during the term of the Program, the Scientia appointment will cease, and the Scientia academic will exit the Program. As the purpose of the Scientia Program is to support early to mid-career research academics, from 2020 Level D appointments, given their seniority, will only be made under exceptional circumstances and for one term only, without the possibility of renewal. Pre 2020 appointees, who are at level D at the time of their first end of term review, or will be at level D at the commencement of their new term, if successful, will be renewed for one term only. A Scientia academic at level D who is promoted to level E during their term will exit the Program.

Scientia academics have the opportunity to apply for promotion via the same academic promotion process which applies to all other UNSW academic staff: <https://unsw.sharepoint.com/sites/unsw-capability-development/SitePages/Academic-Promotion.aspx>

#### **Leadership, Development and Mentoring**

Scientia academics will have access to a range of development opportunities relevant to career stage across research, teaching, and leadership. UNSW will provide a support and collaboration package for UNSW Scientia academics to assist them to build their research capacity, develop networks, and further their leadership skills through personalised development plans and by participation in mentoring activities.

#### **Flexibility of Program**

Flexibility is another distinctive feature of the Program, with Scientia academics having the option for planned exit and then re-entry to the Scientia Program subject to approval by UNSW. Scientia Program appointments provide flexibility concerning leave during a Scientia academic's research-focussed academic career while permitting time out either for personal or professional reasons. Leave will be negotiated with the Head of School, and, in the case of alternative employment, approval will be subject to existing UNSW Policies and Procedures such as the UNSW Paid Outside Work by Academic Staff Policy and the UNSW Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Management Policy. To ensure these arrangements are in the best interests of UNSW and the academic, approval of the SHARPer Committee will also be required. Extended periods of absence of up to two years, such as leave without pay, will be considered in accordance with UNSW policy and relevant approvals. Subsequent periods of leave extending the total time to greater than two years will be permitted in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the DVCR.

#### **Social Engagement and Global Impact**

Scientia academics will be expected to engage with activities that are aligned with the Strategy 2025+ priorities. These include those that reflect social engagement, global impact, and academic excellence.

The current UNSW Academic Expectations Framework provides further information on the structure of these responsibilities:

<https://unsw.sharepoint.com/sites/academic-excellence-exec/SitePages/Academic-Expectations-Framework-Tool.aspx>

## 4. Performance Criteria

### Setting Performance Criteria

At the time of commencement, or renewal on the Program, the Scientia academic's Key Performance Targets will be reviewed and approved by the SHARPer Committee. These performance targets will be based on the expected outputs outlined in the application for the Scientia Program that was put forward by the faculty, or in the case of renewal, by the Scientia academic in their review form. The KPTs will also be consistent with the relevant discipline-specific expectations for a top-tier researcher in the top 10% of the appropriate academic level at UNSW and must be approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research. The criteria will include flexibility to allow for different requirements of Scientia academics based on their environment. These targets will be documented in a Performance Development Plan (PDP) in discussion with a Scientia academic's supervisor and reviewed annually. KPTs may also be adjusted from time to time during the term of any Scientia appointment.

### Monitoring Performance

Scientia academics will meet with their Heads of School on an annual basis to review performance as outlined in the PDP as part of their UNSW myCareer process, following which the Head of School will provide a report to the Scientia Program.

### Performance Review at the Conclusion of the Scientia Term

At the conclusion of the four-year period, a Scientia academic's achievements will be reviewed against the agreed performance criteria at the time of appointment and outlined in the PDP and discipline-specific expectations for a top-tier researcher in the top 10% of the appropriate academic level at UNSW.

A Scientia academic seeking a further term on the Scientia Program is required to complete a review form approximately six months prior to the conclusion of the Scientia Program term. The faculty will undertake a review and make a recommendation to the SHARPer subcommittee. Separate to the Program, the faculty will also review the Scientia's substantive employment where appropriate. The decision whether to award a second, or subsequent, term on the Scientia Program will be made by the SHARPer Subcommittee.

Second and subsequent terms would be awarded for an additional four years, within the life of the Program.

### Scientia Program Remuneration and Support Packages

#### Remuneration

Scientia academics will be remunerated in a manner that is commensurate with their academic appointment level. For current remuneration scales, see the UNSW [HR Hub](#) page.

Fractional appointments, at a minimum of 0.4FTE, will be paid on a pro rata basis, including remuneration and the development and collaboration support package (see below).

#### The Development and Collaboration Support Package

In addition to salary, Scientia Program appointees will be provided with a Development and Collaboration Support Package of up to \$30k per annum if they are in HASS disciplines and up to \$50k per annum if they are in STEMM disciplines due to different research requirements. A HASS Faculty appointee may be entitled to the higher amount, depending on the nature of the research undertaken. The Scientia academic's home Faculty will propose the appropriate package for new appointees, to be approved by the PVC. The

Development and Collaboration Support Packages are provided to Scientia academics to assist in research endeavour and for this reason cannot be taken as additional salary.

Scientia academics who commenced their appointment on the Scientia Program from 2017-2019 inclusive will have any pre-existing Support Package amounts and arrangements preserved for the first term of the appointment. Any new Scientia Program appointment awarded by UNSW from 2020 onwards, and any appointees being renewed for a second or subsequent term on the Scientia Program, will be subject to the Development and Collaboration Support Package arrangements as set out above for amounts and below for conditions.

Development and Collaboration Support Packages are intended to support Scientia academics' research and their career and professional development goals. The funds can be used for conference travel, leadership programs, or other career development opportunities. Up to 50% of the first year's package may be used in the first year of appointment as a partial contribution to relocation costs, with the approval of the PVCR. The package can also be used to support research needs in the form of research assistance, grant support, and the development of pilot programs, for example. It cannot be used for teaching relief, infrastructure, or the purchase of large equipment. Any additional infrastructure or start-up costs must be provided by the host faculty or institute, or grant, where appropriate.

The Development and Collaboration Support Package cannot be taken as personal remuneration. Access to funds from this support package is provided at the University's absolute discretion and is always subject to relevant UNSW policy and procedure.

The Development and Collaboration Support Package will be annually paid once the Scientia academic's development plan is approved. The first year's funding is valid for twelve months from the start date. To ensure that Scientia academics maximise the impact of the development and collaboration funding to support their research objectives within the duration of their term, unused funds can only be rolled over from the first to the second year. From the second year, the funds must be used annually and cannot be rolled over to the next calendar year. Any funds not spent within the twelve-month period are returned to the Program ***and any unspent funds remaining at the time a Scientia exits the Program, for example on promotion to Level E, must be returned.***

### **Holders of External Fellowships**

If an existing external fellowship is held by the Scientia academic, such as a fellowship from the ARC or NHMRC, remuneration related to the Program will top up the difference between that fellowship and the value of the Scientia Program appointment, namely salary plus development fund. Once the existing external fellowship has ceased, the full amount of the Scientia Program appointment will be provided by the UNSW Scientia Program.

Scientia academics without an externally funded fellowship, or other significant external research funding, are expected to actively seek such funding.

## **5. Eligibility**

Application for a position on the Scientia Program is open to internal and external applicants including:

- internal continuing, fixed term, or casual UNSW staff;
- academics who are not currently employed by UNSW; and
- those with recent doctoral awards which must be conferred by the time of application.

Appointments to the Scientia Program will be available in research areas that are determined by faculties.

These guidelines are subject to periodic review and UNSW reserves the right to vary these from time to time. Scientia academics will be advised if there is any change to their arrangements as relevant and appropriate.

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