



UNSW Scientia Program 2020 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, formerly known as the Scientia Fellowship 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 ten-year lifespan of the Program, up to 290 researchers will be appointed into these research-focused positions. To date, 118 Scientia research-focused 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. 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. These tenure-track appointments provide an opportunity for continuing employment at UNSW, subject to performance against agreed research excellence criteria.

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). Scientia appointees who are new to UNSW, or internal candidates not employed in continuing positions, will be on a pathway to continuing appointment. The initial contract will be for four years, with the potential for conversion to a continuing appointment and 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. As the purpose of the Scientia Fellowship Program is to support early to mid-career research academics, given their seniority, Level D appointments will only be made under exceptional circumstances and for one term only, without the possibility of renewal. In the event a Level D is promoted to Level E, the Scientia Fellowship will cease, and the Fellow 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 Tenure

Flexibility is another distinctive feature of the Program, with Scientia academics having the option for planned exit and re-entry to the UNSW workforce, subject to approval by UNSW. Scientia Program appointments provide flexibility concerning leave in the course of a Scientia academic's research-focused 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, will need to be approved by the SHARPer Committee. Extended periods of absence, such as leave without pay will be considered in accordance with UNSW policy and relevant approvals.

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. It is expected that Scientia academics teach, but at a reduced load tailored to their discipline, to accommodate an elevated research load. While these are research-focused appointments that are assessed with regard to research performance criteria, teaching is an essential and valued part of an academic career.

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

Within three months of commencement of employment at UNSW, a Scientia Program appointee is required to meet with their supervisor to confirm the discipline-appropriate performance criteria against which their performance as a Scientia academic will be measured annually. These performance criteria will be based on the expected outputs outlined in the application for the Scientia Program that was put forward by the Faculty and other relevant UNSW expectations. The performance criteria 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. The criteria will include flexibility to allow for different requirements of Scientia academics, for example, with regard to Indigenous Scientia academics who may have a higher level of service expectations. These measures will be documented in a Performance Development Plan (PDP) and reviewed annually.

Monitoring Performance

Scientia academics will meet with their Heads of Schools 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. Each Scientia academic must submit a final report to the Scientia Program office at the completion of their term on the Program, or upon termination, if earlier, if they are not applying for renewal on the Program.

Performance Review at the Conclusion of the Contract Term

At the conclusion of the four-year period, a Scientia academic's achievements will be reviewed against the agreed performance criteria as 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 6 months prior to the conclusion of the Scientia Program term. The Faculty will undertake a review and make a recommendation to the SHARPer subcommittee. The four possible outcomes of the review are:

1. Renewal of the Scientia Program Appointment

- 1a. Renewal for those already on continuing employment; or
- 1b. Renewal with conversion to continuing employment when the Faculty recommends conversion (if originally appointed through a convertible tenure-track position).

2. No renewal of the Scientia Program Appointment

- 2a. No Scientia appointment renewal, and reversion to a substantive continuing appointment, as per the employment contract; or
- 2b. No renewal and no conversion to continuing. Faculties may offer a 1-year "safety net" outside the Scientia Program, in accordance with the UNSW Academic Enterprise Agreement, as appropriate in circumstances where it elects not to convert the employment to continuing.

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 [UNSW Human Resources, Academic Salaries](#) 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. The Development and Collaboration Support Packages are provided to Scientia academics to assist in research endeavour and 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 agreement of UNSW. 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.

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 at all times subject to relevant UNSW policy and procedure.

The Development and Collaboration Support Package will be 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 terms, 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.

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. 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 who do not have an externally funded fellowship applicable to their discipline at the time of their appointment will be expected to actively seek other external research funding within the first two years of their appointment to the Scientia Program.

5. Eligibility

The Scientia Program is open to internal and external applicants including:

- internal continuing, fixed-term, or casual UNSW staff, and
- academics who are not currently in paid employment at UNSW.

Applicants must hold a doctoral qualification *at the time of application*.

If the doctoral award has not already been conferred by the time of application, an applicant must wait until the following year to apply.

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

End of document

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