

This Handbook is designed to be read by candidates for appointment change and/or review, their supervisors (faculty members), and RSAC members.

Details of membership, responsibilities, and operation of RSAC are described in the RSAC Terms of Reference.

The Research Staff Appointment Committee (RSAC) has a responsibility to review and decide upon:

1. Continuing appointments
2. Performance review for research staff with continuing appointments
3. Appointment changes from Postdoctoral Scholar to Staff Scientist
4. Appointment changes from Staff Scientist to Senior Staff Scientist
5. Research staff-related tasks other than those above upon DFA's request (See "Responsibilities" in RSAC Terms of Reference)

## **1. Continuing Appointments**

### **1.1 Overview**

#### **The Continuing Appointment at OIST**

The Continuing Appointment is a rarely applied mechanism for maintaining critical research functions at OIST. Some research units may need long-term staff to maintain continuity of specialized expertise, and the Continuing Appointment provides a mechanism to retain essential personnel beyond 10 years of employment. However, universities thrive on new people and ideas. An accumulation of permanent staff, many of whom may stay after their original host unit has closed, could lead to scientific stagnation. Moreover, as research groups leave OIST and others are established over time, it is paramount that incoming faculty have flexibility to choose their own scientific directions and personnel. Thus, it is essential that Continuing Appointments remain a reasonably small group of staff at OIST. Most research unit staff should plan to move on from OIST before ten years of employment, and supervisors should have yearly discussions with their employees about their future so there is a common understanding. Moreover, faculty have responsibility to develop the careers of their staff, so they are competitive for jobs outside of OIST.

#### **Fixed-Term Appointment**

Fixed-term research staff have a short-term contract with a specific end date, subject to normal conditions for renewal. As a rule, research staff should not be awarded a fixed-term contract that brings them past the 10-year employment mark unless they have passed a Continuing Appointment Review. Postdoctoral scholars are fixed-term appointment only.

#### **Continuing Appointment**

Continuing appointments are non-fixed term contracts which continue until retirement age, apart from the termination clause in the contract. Continuing appointment can be requested by the employee after 10 years of continuous employment or, under certain conditions (see below), immediately after passing the Continuing Appointment Review (CAR).

For continuing appointment of STA (Science and Technology Associate), please see the STA Review Handbook in PRP 4.6 [[Link](#)].

## **The Continuing Appointment Review (CAR)**

The Continuing Appointment Review is performed by the Research Staff Appointment Committee (RSAC). The CAR must be passed before researchers can receive a continuing (nonfixed term) contract or receive a fixed-term contract that will cross the boundary of 10 years total employment at OIST.

Normally, the CAR should be initiated early in the 8th year of employment and be completed within that year (8th year CAR). Thus, there is one year to complete the review, and the possibility of two subsequent years of fixed-term employment before reaching the ten-year boundary. This allows for the employee to adjust their career plans with plenty of advance acknowledgement that their employment at OIST will end before 10 years.

In principle, the CAR can be applied for earlier than the 8th year (early CAR). However, early CAR should only be considered in extraordinary cases where there is a specific, well-justified reason requiring urgency, in addition to the candidate meeting a higher standard of excellence than is applied in the normal 8th year review.

## **8th-year CAR**

If the 8th-year CAR is successful, the candidate can receive a fixed-term contract that takes them beyond ten years employment, after which time they can request conversion to a non-fixed term contract without an additional review process, consistent with Japanese law.

If the 8th-year CAR is unsuccessful, the employee can continue as a fixed term employee subject to normal conditions for contract renewal, however they should not be given a contract that would allow them to continue past the 10-year boundary.

## **Early CAR**

In extraordinary cases, an early CAR can be requested before the 8th year of employment. Upon successful early CAR, the employee can request their next contract to be a continuing (non-fixed term) contract. The employee can also choose to remain as a fixed-term employee and convert at a later time.

If an early CAR is unsuccessful, the faculty can propose the employee as a candidate again in the 8th year (8th year CAR). However, a second early CAR is not possible without special permission from the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

## **Counting years of employment for CAR eligibility**

Counting starts with the first contract at OIST after April 1, 2013. A 6-month interruption of the contract at OIST resets the clock. Prestigious fellowships, like the JSPS or Marie Curie Fellowships, with OIST as the host institution can be counted as years of employment at OIST with the condition that they have employment relationship with OIST to start with (for example, OIST&JSPS&OIST). However, they also can be considered employment interruptions that reset the 10-year clock if the employee prefers.

## **In case of continuing employee separation from unit**

As a principle, the continuing employee counts against the proposing unit's PEREX head count until either the closure of the unit, unless the employee gets a position in another unit at OIST

(using the new unit's PEREX), or the employee leaves OIST. The RSAC should consider the circumstances of every case and act prudently in applying these policies.

## **In case of unit closure**

Over time units may close due to retirement and other reasons, and continuing employees will potentially stay on after unit closure. It is in the interest of both OIST and the employee that their skills and talents are best utilized, thus efforts should be made to find a suitable placement that maximizes their potential. However, OIST cannot guarantee continuation of the original research activity or functional role and may not be able to maintain employment if there are no positions available. In case the continuing employee is not offered or does not accept a position in another research unit or another division in the University, the employment may end at the time of unit closure.

## **1.2 Review Procedures**

### **General goal of the review**

Awarding of a continuing appointment represents a significant, long-term commitment on the side of both the research unit and OIST in general, thus the review should be both informed and rigorous. The CAR evaluates whether an employee is likely to provide essential contribution to their research unit's scientific activities in the long-term, and holds skills and experience that are difficult to replace through recruitment. Furthermore, the RSAC evaluates whether they are likely to continue to contribute to OIST's scientific mission in the long term, even in the case of unit closure. The latter requires assessment of the transferability of skills and flexibility of the applicant.

### **Procedures:**

- (1) Requests to grant a member of the research staff a continuing appointment should come from the head of a research unit or, exceptionally, from the President or Dean of Faculty Affairs (the "Proponent"). Such requests are made only for the research staff who are considered high-performing and with high potential to maintain this performance in the future. The request should be sent to the Academic HR Section at the Faculty Affairs Office (FAO).
- (2) The candidate's dossier is completed and delivered to the Academic HR Section at the FAO and to the RSAC committee members.
- (3) At an RSAC meeting, the RSAC reviews the dossier, interviews the supervisor, and discusses the request.
- (4) The final decision is made during the RSAC meeting, and the appointment outcome is announced to the candidate and supervisor.

## **1.3 Staff Scientist and Senior Staff Scientist**

### **1.3.1 Submission of dossier**

- (1) An up-to-date CV of the candidate, including a complete list of publications, patents, invited talks and conference presentations, seminars, peer review activities, conference and workshop organization, assistance with supervision, and service to the University, and demonstrating scientific or technical skills that meet the factors in dossier evaluation below;
- (2) A letter from the candidate outlining their qualifications for a continuing appointment, their role in their current unit, and their desire to remain in their proposing unit and at OIST for the long term. Given the possibility of eventual unit closure, the candidate

should make a case that they have transferable skills and explain the kind of research units or other positions where they would be able to contribute. Finally, they should accept the conditions that accompany continuing status, including acknowledging that OIST may not be able to provide employment doing similar research in the long-term, and that they may need to assume a very different position to maintain employment if they wish to stay at OIST.

- (3) A letter from the Proponent setting out clearly the grounds for making the proposal, addressing the factors in the dossier evaluation below. Faculty should acknowledge in their letter the commitment to allocate a unit PEREX to the candidate until his/her resignation from OIST, retirement at OIST, or hiring in another research unit.

### **1.3.2 Factors in the dossier evaluation**

- (1) The candidate possesses or has developed special expertise, skill, or set of skills that are essential to the proponent's research program or, more broadly, to the research program at OIST, and that it would not be optimal to replace this skill or expertise through recruitment, or to train someone to acquire the skill or expertise without impacting severely upon the research program.
- (2) This skill will be required by the unit's research program for the long-term.
- (3) The candidate's performance is excellent in terms of scientific or technical productivity as it relates to her/his special expertise/skills. In making this assessment, the RSAC should consider any factors that may have temporarily affected performance or productivity, including childrearing, health challenges, or other factors. The candidate must also demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development.
- (4) The candidate must have high potential to continue to contribute to OIST's mission even in the case of unit closure.
- (5) The support letter and in-person comments of the proposing faculty are the most important source for evaluating the above criteria.
- (6) The RSAC will generally not grant a continuing appointment in research units led by nontenured faculty members. However, exceptions are given when the employee has successful employment history as a researcher in other units at OIST before joining the current unit.
- (7) The RSAC will also take into consideration the time remaining for the unit to close, such as time to retirement of the faculty, in relation to the time to retirement of the candidate.
- (8) The RSAC will also consider the number of existing continuing employees in the unit.

## **1.4 Technicians**

### **1.4.1 Submission of dossier**

- (1) An up-to-date CV of the candidate, including service to the University and demonstrating technical skills that meet the factors in the dossier evaluation below;
- (2) A letter from the candidate outlining their qualifications for a continuing appointment, their role in their current unit, and their desire to remain in their proposing unit and at OIST for the long term. Given the possibility of eventual unit closure, the candidate should make a case that they have transferable skills and explain the kind of research units or other positions where they would be able to contribute. Finally, they should accept the conditions that accompany continuing status, including acknowledging that OIST may not be able to provide employment doing similar research in the long-term, and that they may need to assume a very different position to maintain employment if they wish to stay at OIST.

- (3) A letter from the Proponent setting out clearly the grounds for making the proposal, addressing the factors in the dossier evaluation below. Faculty should acknowledge in their letter the commitment to allocate a unit PEREX to the candidate until his/her resignation from OIST, retirement at OIST, or transfer to another research unit.
- (4) Records of annual evaluation by the current and previous Unit Head(s). They are provided by the Academic HR Section at the FAO.

## **1.4.2 Factors in the dossier evaluation**

- (1) The candidate possesses or has developed special expertise, skill, or set of skills that are essential to the proponent's research program or, more broadly, to the research program at OIST, and that it would not be optimal to replace this skill or expertise through recruitment, or to train someone to acquire the skill or expertise without impacting severely upon the research program.
- (2) This skill will be required by the unit's research program in the long-term.
- (3) The candidate's performance is excellent in terms of technical ability as it relates to her/his special expertise/skills. In making this assessment, the RSAC should consider any factors that may have temporarily affected performance or productivity, including childrearing, health challenges, or other factors. The candidate must also demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development.
- (4) The candidate must have high potential to continue to contribute to OIST's mission even in the case of unit closure.
- (5) The support letter and in-person comments of the proposing faculty are the most important source for evaluating the above criteria.
- (6) The RSAC will generally not grant a continuing appointment in research units led by nontenured faculty members. However, exceptions are given when the employee has successful employment history as a technician in other units at OIST before joining the current unit.
- (7) The RSAC will also take into consideration the time remaining for the unit to close, such as time to retirement of the faculty, in relation to the time to retirement of the candidate.
- (8) The RSAC will also consider the number of existing continuing employees in the unit.
- (9) Given the above, it is unlikely that staff in the junior (level I) grades will qualify for continuing appointments.

## **2. Performance review of research staff with continuing appointments**

The RSAC will also review the regular performance of research staff with a continuing appointment. The performance review will typically be done every five years, usually along with the Unit external review.

### **2.1 Staff Scientist and Senior Staff Scientist**

#### **2.1.1 Submission of dossier**

The Proponent (Unit head) should prepare a dossier that should include:

- (1) As provided by the candidate, their up-to-date CV, including a complete list of publications, patents, invited talks and conference presentations, seminars, peer review activities, conference and workshop organization, assistance with supervision, and service to the University (or, if a new hire, to their previous place of work), and demonstrating scientific or technical skills that meet the factors in dossier evaluation below;

- (2) A letter from the candidate containing a self-appraisal of the achievements since the appointment or the previous review. As appropriate, a research plan for the following five years;
- (3) A letter from the Proponent (Unit head) detailing the contribution of the member of the research staff to the work of the Unit;

## **2.1.2 Factors in dossier evaluation**

- (1) The quality of the work in the period under review (including publications, collaborations, awards, lectures and conference presentations, and work for the community both in OIST [or at the previous employee(s), if a new hire] and internationally) which will be classed as excellent, good, satisfactory or poor;
- (2) If a research plan(s) is appropriate, the quality of the research plan(s) will be classed as excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor.

## **2.2 Technicians**

### **2.2.1 Submission of dossier**

The Proponent should prepare a dossier that should include:

- (1) As provided by the candidate, their up-to-date CV, including service to the University (or, if a new hire, to their previous place of work), and demonstrating technical skills that meet the factors in the dossier evaluation below;
- (2) A letter from the candidate containing a self-appraisal of the achievements since the appointment or the previous review.
- (3) A letter from the Proponent detailing the contribution of the member of the technical staff to the work of the Unit;

### **2.2.2 Factor in dossier evaluation**

The quality of the work in the period under review in OIST [or at the previous employee(s), if a new hire] which will be classed as excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor;

## **2.3 STA (Science and Technology Associate)**

For details of STA (Science and Technology Associate)'s performance review, please see the STA Review Handbook in PRP 4.6 [[Link](#)].

## **3. Appointment change from Postdoctoral Scholar to Staff Scientist**

### **3.1 General conditions**

Exceptional Postdoctoral Scholars may be appointed to a Staff Scientist position as described in the PRP 4.2 section on Research Appointments.

In addition,

- (1) a qualified candidate should possess or should have developed special expertise, skill, or set of skills that are essential to the proponent's research program at OIST,
- (2) a qualified candidate should have the ambition and ability to become an independent researcher with his/her own research program, and

- (3) it would not be optimal to replace this skill or expertise through recruitment or to train someone to acquire the skill or expertise without impacting severely upon the research program. This ability will be required by the research program for at least the next 3 years.

## **3.2 Procedure**

The procedure is as follows:

- (1) Proposals to grant a Staff Scientist appointment should come from the Unit Head. The request should be sent to the Academic HR Section at the Faculty Affairs Office (FAO).
- (2) The candidate's dossier is completed and delivered to the Academic HR Section at the FAO and to the RSAC committee members.
- (3) At an RSAC meeting, the RSAC reviews the dossier, interviews the supervisor, and discusses the change of appointment.

The final decision is made during the RSAC meeting, and the appointment outcome is announced to the candidate and supervisor from the FAO.

## **3.3 Eligibility criteria for an appointment change**

- (1) The candidate's performance is excellent in terms of scientific or technical productivity as it relates to her/his special expertise/skills;
- (2) The candidate should clearly demonstrate a commitment to pursuing an independent academic career and demonstrate high potential to obtain a faculty position within 3 years after the appointment as a Staff Scientist; and,
- (3) The supervisor should verify the commitment of the candidate as specified in point 2 above.

These criteria should be considered independent of the source of funding for the postdoctoral scholar. Details of the required performance and professional development commitment are outlined in the following Sections:

## **3.4. Submission of the dossier**

After the contract discussion with the supervisor, which should be at least 6 months prior to the end of the current appointment, the supervisor should submit a dossier at least 5 months prior to the termination date.

The dossier should contain:

- (1) An up-to-date CV provided by the candidate, including a complete list of publications, patents, independent external funding, invited talks and international conference presentations, seminars, peer review activities, conference and workshop organization, assistance with supervision, and service to O I S T (or, if a new hire, to their previous place of work), and demonstrating scientific or technical skills that meet the factors in dossier evaluation below.
- (2) A letter from the candidate containing a self-appraisal of the achievements since the appointment or the previous review.
- (3) A 3-year research plan.
- (4) A letter from the supervisor detailing the contribution of the candidate to the work of the Unit.

## **3.5 Factors in dossier evaluation**

- (1) The quality of the work in the period under review (including publications, collaborations, awards, lectures and conference presentations, and work for the

community both in OIST [or at the previous employer(s)] and internationally) will be evaluated. Interactions with other scientists, other achievements, and evidence of being up-to-date scientifically and/or technically will be considered;

- (2) The strength and feasibility of a research plan (for example, as outlined in an IDP) will also be considered.
- (3) Strong evidence of high academic potential to obtain a faculty position after contract fulfillment will be a factor. The evidence might additionally include successful external funding, collaboration, teaching and mentoring experience, institutional service, and public outreach.

## **4. Appointment change from Staff Scientist to Senior Staff Scientist**

### **4.1 General conditions**

In exceptional cases, Staff Scientists with fixed-term or continuing appointments may be recommended for a Senior Staff Scientist appointment. Senior Staff Scientist appointments are based on an employment contract that can be renewed without changes in terms and conditions for the same term period repeatedly until the retirement age unless either party raises the issue of termination of the employment contract at least one month before the end of the contract term period. The RSAC reviews Senior Staff Scientists with continuing appointments at least every five years, comments upon the achievements and future plans, and makes determinations regarding salary and promotion.

### **4.2 Procedure**

The procedure is as follows:

- (1) Proposals to grant a Senior Staff Scientist appointment should come from the head of a research unit (the “Proponent”). The request should be sent to the Academic HR Section at the FAO.
- (2) The candidate’s dossier is completed and delivered to the Academic HR Section at the FAO and to the RSAC members.
- (3) At the RSAC meeting, the RSAC reviews the dossier, interviews the candidate and the Proponent, and discusses the change of appointment.
- (4) The final decision is made during the RSAC meeting, and the appointment outcome is announced to the candidate and supervisor from the FAO.

### **4.3 Eligibility criteria for an appointment change**

- (1) The candidate possesses or has developed special expertise, skill, or set of skills that are essential to the proponent’s research program and, more broadly, to the research program at OIST, and it would not be optimal to replace this skill or expertise through recruitment or to train someone to acquire the skill or expertise without impacting severely upon the research program. This ability will be required by the research program for at least the next five years and is likely to be required in the future.
- (2) The candidate’s performance is excellent in terms of scientific or technical productivity as it relates to her/his special expertise/skills.

### **4.4 Submission of the dossier**

After the contract discussion with the supervisor, which should be 6 months prior to the end of the current appointment, the supervisor should submit a dossier at least 5 months prior to the termination date. The dossier should contain:



- (1) An up-to-date CV provided by the candidate, including a complete list of publications, patents, external grants received, invited talks and conference presentations, seminars, peer review activities, conference and workshop organization, assistance with supervision, and service to OIST, and demonstrating scientific or technical skills that meet the factors in dossier evaluation in below.
- (2) A letter from the Proponent setting out clearly the grounds for making the proposal. The letter should also detail the contribution of the candidate to the work of the unit.
- (3) A letter from the candidate containing a self-appraisal of the achievements since appointment or the previous 5-year-review. The letter should also state their willingness to accept the appointment in their Unit and to accept the conditions that accompany that status, to be reassigned to work in another research unit, should their present unit close.
- (4) A 5-year research plan.

#### **4.5 Factors in dossier evaluation**

- (1) The quality of the work in the period under review (including publications, collaborations, awards, lectures and conference presentations, and work for the community both in OIST [or at the previous employee(s)] and internationally) will be considered. Interactions with other scientists, other achievements, and evidence of being up-to-date scientifically and/or technically will be evaluated.
- (2) The strength and feasibility of a research plan will be evaluated.
- (3) Strong evidence of high academic stature and an assessment of the candidate's interview will be evaluated.
- (4) Evaluation of special expertise, skill, or set of skills. Only expertise that is broadly applicable and essential to the research program at OIST will be considered.

A panel of technical experts and/or faculty might be formed to evaluate these factors in dossier evaluation as necessary.