



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education



**NZEI
TE RIU ROA**

Science Technicians' Pay Equity Claim Settlement

Work Matrix Guide for schools and kura

Use this to check employees have been translated to the right grade and to correctly grade new employees, or employees in a new role

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Contents

In this guide	1
Key information	1
The work matrix	2
The work of science technicians	2
Science Technicians' Work Matrix Table	3
How schools and kura use the work matrix	5
How to interpret the work matrix	7
Who to contact for further advice.....	10



In this guide

This guide is to help you understand and navigate the implementation of the Science Technicians' Pay Equity Claim Settlement and how to use and interpret the work matrix.

The work matrix is primarily used to determine in which grade new employees should be placed when starting a new role or position. It can be used when an employee takes on a new role with different skills, demands and responsibilities, or to confirm that an employee has been placed in the right grade following automatic translation. It can also be used if the school or kura and employee agree regrading is required after the automatic translation has occurred.

Key information

The key points below will be explored in depth throughout the guide.

- » The pay equity claim settlement covers science technicians, union and non-union members, in all state and state-integrated schools and kura, including specialist residential schools and Te Kura (the Correspondence School), except employees who opted out of the claim.
- » The relevant collective agreements are the *Support Staff in Schools' Collective Agreement* (SSSCA), *Specialist Residential Schools' Collective Agreement* (SRSCA) and *Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu Specialist and Support Staff Collective Agreement* (Te Aho o Te Kura SSSCA). The work matrix is used across all three collective agreements and in any individual employment agreements (IEAs) based off these collectives.
- » The work matrix is to be used from now on for all current employees covered by the pay equity claim settlement and all new science technicians, and applies to anyone whose work is described in the work matrix – regardless of their job title or designation.
- » The grade placement for a new role/employee should take into account the routine and ongoing skills, demands, and responsibilities of the role, so that the grade recognises the highest-level skills, demands and responsibilities required for competent performance of the role.



The work matrix

A work matrix was developed to set out the skills, responsibilities and demands of science technician roles. The work matrix has three grades (1-3) that determine the pay grade a science technician employee is on. The audience for this guide is primarily principals, school boards, executive officers in secondary schools, science technicians (covered employees and new employees), and their supervisors or managers.

The Science Technicians' Work Matrix has three grades and sets out the most common skills, demands and responsibilities that apply to science technician roles.

Most science technicians are covered by the SSSCA negotiated by NZEI Te Riu Roa, or an IEA based on this collective agreement. The remainder of the workforce is covered by:

- » the SRSCA
- » the Te Aho o Te Kura SSSCA; or
- » an IEA based on one of these collective agreements.

The pay equity claim settlement applies to the covered science technicians on the SSSCA, Te Aho o Te Kura SSSCA and the SRSCA and those on IEAs based on these collectives. All covered employees will use the same work matrix.

For employees covered by the pay equity claim settlement, the Science Technicians' Work Matrix replaces:

- » the Position Elements Table in the SSSCA (*clause 3.4*)
- » the Position Elements Table in the SRSCA (*clause 4.3*); and
- » the Position Characteristics Table in the Te Aho o Te Kura SSSCA (pages 7-9).

The work of science technicians

The following is a descriptor of work for employees who are covered by the Science Technicians' Pay Equity Claim Settlement. The Science Technicians' Work Matrix Table applies to employees employed in a state or state-integrated school who:

Work in a science laboratory role in support of the delivery of the science curriculum, such as laboratory assistants, science technicians, laboratory technicians, laboratory managers and other employees who are doing the same or substantially similar work. A full description of this work can be found in the Work Matrix Table.

A full description of this work can be found in the Science Technicians' Work Matrix Table contained in the [Settlement Agreement](#), which applies from **23 November 2022** and is set out below.

It is important that existing and new employees' work is assessed correctly and at the appropriate times. Please refer to the [How schools and kura use the work matrix](#) section in this guide for step-by-step guidance.



Science Technicians' Work Matrix Table

Work Matrix Grade	General description	Supervision and management	Level of necessary skills and knowledge	Problem solving	Interpersonal and communication skills
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Holds responsibility for own work under general supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No formal supervision or mentoring of others is required. » Monitors other people in the laboratory for health and safety compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » As directed, prepares resources, equipment and learning environment to meet teacher requirements. This includes clearing away and counting equipment back in, safely disposing of waste, cleaning and storing science equipment and materials as required, and recognising and alerting supervisor when equipment is missing or in need of repair. » Undertakes general administration tasks for the science department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not expected to take a lead in problem solving. » Uses clear patterns and procedures to deal with clearly defined problems, or escalates up to supervisor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communicates primarily on day-to-day issues and takes instruction from supervisor.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Manages own work and day-to-day priorities under limited supervision. » Often in a sole role and may manage several laboratories across the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Trains teachers and students on laboratory practices, policies and procedures, including health and safety requirements. » Holds responsibility under limited supervision for all the science chemicals and hazardous substances at the school. » Runs or assists with risk assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Runs the scheduling and resource booking system ensuring teachers' requests are managed. » Holds cultural knowledge related to sensitivities in science experiments. » Has knowledge of the science curriculum and shares relevant knowledge with others, including teachers. » Sets up and demonstrates experiments to classes. » Supports students with class activities or preparation for external exams. » Maintains in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of health and safety procedures and practices. Shares this knowledge with teachers and students to uphold safety requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operates within existing policies and procedures and identifies when issues need to be escalated. » Provides advice on new builds or rebuilds of the science block or laboratories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provides advice and information on appropriate classroom practical activities and experiments to colleagues and students to ensure compliance with health and safety policies. » Provides feedback to teachers in cases where planned class activities are deemed unsuitable for the age group or not possible due to resource availability, safety issues or cost and time constraints.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Assists with induction of new staff including other science technicians or science teachers. » Takes part in extracurricular activities with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » and operate all experiments and equipment safely. » Develops, conducts, maintains and updates inventory and chemical registries. » Operates specialist apparatus and/or machinery to support curriculum delivery. » Researches, creates, builds, recalibrates, repairs and assembles resources such as chemicals and equipment. » Procures resources. » Keeps abreast of new developments in science through professional learning and development (PLD), as well as own and collaborative research with professional organisations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Liaises with staff about individual student needs. » Produces bilingual labels and posters for science equipment and resources. At this level includes respect for, and basic knowledge of, te reo Māori and tikanga and other cultures. » Builds and maintains relationships with resource and equipment suppliers.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Holds full responsibility for management of the laboratory or laboratories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Manages other science technicians or laboratory assistants including hiring, training and delegating, or determining tasks and day-to-day work. » Holds the designated laboratory manager/ taiwhanga kaiwhakahaere health and safety role for the science department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Uses knowledge of department needs and requirements to develop and manage budget accordingly to ensure adequate resources are available. » Collaborates with teachers on lesson planning, curriculum delivery and designing student assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identifies, authorises and implements policy changes, and uses initiative to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the laboratory and its health and safety protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Gives expert advice to those in more senior positions on laboratory policies and practice.



How schools and kura use the work matrix

How to use the Work Matrix Table for new or changed roles to determine grade

The work matrix replaces the Position Elements/Characteristics Table in the applicable collective agreements and all IEAs based on the collective agreements. The employment agreements of employees covered by the pay equity claim settlement are automatically varied to reflect this. The job description for the intended role needs to accurately reflect the responsibilities, skills and demands of that role.

When determining the grade for a new or changed role, the school or kura will need to:

- » assess the regular, routine and ongoing skills, demands and responsibilities of the role
- » ensure that the grade reflects the highest-level routine and ongoing skills, demands and responsibilities required for the overall competent performance of the role. Note: not every activity in a grade has to be part of the role for an employee to be placed in a particular grade
- » not include anything that is a one-off or isolated event.

Note: It is important to remember that if an employee is expected to routinely do work at a certain grade on an ongoing basis, then they should be placed at that grade, even if most of their work sits in a lower grade.

Understanding the difference between grade and step

Grades and steps serve different purposes. Which grade an employee is placed in is based on the routine and ongoing work (skills, demands and responsibilities) undertaken by an employee as required for that particular role. It does not consider previous experience. The grade of the work should be determined prior to recruitment with an up-to-date and current job description for the role. Use the work matrix as a guide to define the roles and responsibilities of the role and determine the grade you are going to place the role into.

Note: Schools and kura should take the opportunity of a vacancy to reassess the requirements of an existing role, to identify whether the role has grown or requires changes to the job description before advertising the vacancy.

The step an employee is placed on within a grade takes into account relevant work experience (paid or unpaid), and the particular skills and qualifications of the person being employed as determined during the information-gathering stage of recruitment and in consultation with the new employee. If agreeing to a higher rate of pay, use the steps to achieve this noting the following:

- » Salary loading (SALLO) for an agreed higher pay rate can only occur at the top step of a grade. New SALLO cannot be added at any other step of a grade.



Please see the [Translation Guide](#) for detailed information on SALLO, including case studies which demonstrate how SALLO works.

An employee can be appointed at any step within the relevant grade of the Work Matrix Table. Please refer to the Science Technicians' Pay Equity Claim Settlement to see what steps are available within each grade. When deciding where to place an employee, employers need to take into account the above points, as well as any that may be relevant to 'placement on appointment' in the respective collective agreements (the SSSCA, Te Aho o Te Kura SSSCA and the SRSCA).

Placing an employee with a break in employment (less than 12 months)

If an employee was employed in a science technician role under a collective agreement or IEA covered by the Science Technicians' Pay Equity Claim Settlement, and any break in employment (including between schools or kura) has been less than 12 months, then placement on appointment must take into account:

- » their previous service
- » any relevant information provided by any previous school or kura
- » any relevant skills development and qualifications undertaken
- » previous relevant paid or unpaid work experience.

When the skills, demands and responsibilities of the new role are within the same Work Matrix Grade as the previous role, the starting step should be at least the step last held.



How to interpret the work matrix

The following case studies provide guidance on how to interpret each grade of the matrix when assessing the routine and ongoing skills, demands and responsibilities of a role's requirements as determined by the school and to show distinctions between each grade.

Please note: the case studies are provided as examples only, as role requirements within schools will vary. It is important to consider all responsibilities and skills in consultation with the employee.

Please refer to the work matrix, and if you require assistance with grading a role seek employment advice. It is important to remember that grade placement is based on the highest level of skill, demand and responsibility required for competent performance of the role. Not all tasks in a grade need to be undertaken for the role to be placed in a higher grade.

Please note:

- » in the case studies below some key descriptor words have been **bolded** to demonstrate the connection to the work matrix and the increasing levels of autonomy, responsibility and complexity you may see at each grade
- » although these examples refer to placing a new employee, the same process and considerations are followed when:
 - considering whether an employee's responsibilities have changed
 - checking that the grade of an employee is correct
 - confirming that an employee has been placed in the right grade following automatic translation; or
 - making regrading funding applications after automatic translation.

How to interpret the grade matrix case studies

Case study 1

Grade 1: School A has an opening in the science laboratories for a laboratory assistant. The laboratory assistant will **work under the supervision** and direction of the senior science technician. The role will require the successful candidate to **follow set procedures** to assist with mixing up solutions and making up class sets for practical activities and experiments. The laboratory assistant will be required to **clean and store equipment** appropriately. There are also simple **admin tasks** associated with the role.

These role requirements place the work in Grade A.

Assigning a step within a grade

Helen was the successful candidate and is a school leaver with experience as a student helper in the laboratory. She has been placed at Step 1 of Grade 1 to recognise that training and building of experience is required.



Examples of situations where the grade may change with the employee's agreement:

- » *If the role changed and now requires the employee to maintain the inventory system by keeping it up to date, including routinely checking the condition of equipment and availability of chemicals as an ongoing part of the role, the role would be placed at Grade 2.*
- » *If the role now required use of specialist equipment such as water baths or hydroponic kits to prepare experiments and activities as an ongoing part of the role, the role would be placed at Grade 2.*
- » *If the role required the employee to regularly purchase and procure resources for the science department required for class activities and experiments as an ongoing part of the role, the role would be placed at Grade 2.*

Case study 2

Grade 2: School B has an opening position for a new science technician. School B has reviewed the requirements for the role and the new science technician will be required to **manage resources and equipment** for science experiments and practical activities. They will create all experiments and practical class sets requested by science teachers and deliver the materials to the class before the start of the lesson. The new science technician will be required to **help with the induction** of new science teachers.

These role requirements place the work in Grade 2.

Assigning a step within a grade

Peter was the successful candidate, and due to his previous experience as a laboratory technician working for a hospital he has been placed at Step 5 of Grade 2 to recognise this.

Example of situations where the grade may change with the employee's agreement:

- » *If the role had a requirement to identify, develop and implement new policies such as the storage, labelling and disposal of hazardous substances, as an ongoing part of the role, the role would be placed at Grade 3.*
- » *If the role required the employee to hold the designated laboratory manager/ taiwhanga kaiwhakahaere health and safety role for the science department, the role would be placed at Grade 3. Please note the following about this role:*
 - *The designated laboratory manager/taiwhanga kaiwhakahaere may not necessarily be the same person that holds the position as laboratory manager at the school. There are specific requirements of this role as outlined under clause 18.12 of the [Health and Safety at Work \(Hazardous Substances\) Regulations 2017](#).*
 - *For further information about the responsibilities of this role see pages [28 and 29](#).*



Case study 3

Grade 3: School C is hiring for a new laboratory manager. The school has reviewed the requirements for the role and updated the job description to reflect that the successful candidate will be formally **managing two staff and providing ongoing training**. They will be required to **develop and be responsible for an annual budget** for the entire science department in discussion with the head of science or the budget holder. The laboratory manager does not need any approval for purchasing and procurement. They will also be required to collaborate with the science head of subjects **to design exam material** to assess student learning in line with external exams. When asked, the laboratory manager will also assist teachers with their **lesson planning** to ensure the curriculum is being fully covered.

Note: The designated laboratory manager/taiwhanga kaiwhakahaere health and safety role is not part of the requirements of this role and is currently held by the science Head of Department.

These role requirements place the work in Grade 3.

Assigning a step within a grade

Kim has conducted similar duties in a previous role at another smaller school and has the skills School C are looking for. She is the successful candidate and is placed on Step 4 of Grade 3. Kim was placed on this step as the gap in employment between her role at her last school and this one was less than 12 months, and the work belongs in the same grade. Kim had to be placed on at least the last step held.



Who to contact for further advice

- » Ministry of Education – Ohumahi Support Team, email ohumahi.support@education.govt.nz
log an enquiry on your Taku portal at education.govt.nz/taku or call **0800 114 117**
- » NZSTA (for schools and kura), email eradvice@nzsta.org.nz or call **0800 782 435** (option #2)
- » NZEI Te Riu Roa (for NZEI members), email nzei@nzei.org.nz or call **0800 693 443**
- » Citizens Advice Bureau, call **0800 367 222**
- » Employment advocate of your choice.



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