

**SECTION 40 (Politics, Power, Organization)**  
**EVALUATION CRITERIA**  
**NOVEMBER 2021**

This document defines the general principles that organize the evaluation work of the section regardless of its type (recruitment of researchers, periodic evaluation, grade promotion), and then sets out these principles for each type of assessment. The document is based on the criteria set out in the previous section to ensure continuity in the assessments.

As well as the criteria set out below, you may consult the practical guidance provided by Section 40 which is annexed to this document.

**General remarks on the profession of researcher and how it is evaluated**

The profession of researcher involves multiple activities. The quality of an individual researcher's commitment can take different forms. In their evaluation work, the members of the section are particularly attached to the prime importance of scientific contributions. However they also take the involvement and integration of researchers in their professional environment into account.

For all these aspects, the evaluation concentrates on the nature, extent, quality and impact of the performance of these activities, assessed in their scientific, material and human context as well as the opportunities available to the researcher being assessed. It never simply examines solely quantitative indicators. The evaluation considers the quality and impact of the results obtained by the researcher taking into account the stage of his/her career and his/her career path, the available contextual elements and the elements he or she chooses to present to shed light on this context. It also takes into account the capacity to take part in certain types of activities, the coherence of his/her activities or results obtained during the period under consideration.

**1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE EVALUATION OF RESEARCHERS**

As regards the criteria for evaluating researchers, the following provides a guide and key terms for all stages of the evaluation: individual examination of the applications by the rapporteurs, exchanges between the members of the section, decisions made in plenary meetings, the drafting of evaluation reports.

The section constantly monitors the observation of these criteria in all phases of their work and by all its members.

The members of the section are particularly attached to a number of key principles: the centrality of research activities, the taking into consideration of publications and research products in the evaluation, the meaning attached to the internationalization of research, and the engagement of researchers in their professional environment.

**Centrality of research activities**

The section considers that research activities are the core of the work of researchers. This scientific activity of the researcher must be translated into publications (articles in peer-reviewed journals nationally and internationally, works of research and possibly synthesis, contributions to anthologies). The section considers as research works publications that present

their own results (archive and/or field surveys conducted by the researcher, alone or as a team, exploitation of data produced by the researcher or his or her team, etc.). Multiple other activities are taken into account, which include scientific leadership, team supervision, evaluation, networking, teaching, outreach, consulting, etc.).

### **Taking publications into account**

Scientific production, which in our disciplines mainly takes the form of publications, is an essential element of evaluation. But it is not the only one, and the section emphasizes that the researcher is also evaluated for his/her project, the specific moment of his/her professional career, his/her body of affiliation, his/her situation in his/her research unit and all other professional activities and productions.

In addition, the section states that it does not perform bibliometric evaluation (statistical analysis of the publication activity) and that, instead, it is attentive to the content of the publications. It must nevertheless distinguish between publications. As a result, researchers are expected to devote particular care to the presentation of their publications, which must be classified in explicit categories, at a minimum distinguishing: books (single author or co-written) published by an academic publisher/collection, other books, the editorship of books or journal special issues, articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, chapters in collective books, articles in other journals, books reviews other publications. The section report may reclassify publications from what is proposed by the researcher under evaluation. The section is attentive to the variety of publications produced, while noting that publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals and research books in academic collections is essential.

### **The meaning of internationalization**

Internationalization is an expected dimension of the researcher's activity, modulated according to their respective career stages but also their research objects. It also takes various forms, including relations with colleagues in different countries and the dissemination of research in languages other than French. The section is attentive, in evaluating the international activities of researchers, to the real scientific value of their commitments. It takes into account a range of indices of internationalization: Research residencies, collaborations with research teams, scientific networks, panel or colloquia organisation, participation in conferences, consulting for institutions, publications, etc.

### **The professional environment**

The section assesses individual situations by situating them in their professional environment, in particular their respective research centre. In particular, it pays attention to the quality of the integration of individual researchers in groups and the material resources from which the researchers benefit (within the framework of their unit as well as contractual financing). This attention is intensified in the case of period evaluations that may appear problematic. In fact these problematic situations can be rooted in the failures of the scientific policy and the supervision of the units. The section undertakes to make detailed observations as soon as problems are identified, to set targets for struggling researchers, to assist them in finding satisfactory solutions, in relation to the scientific direction and human resources sections, and to be involved in post-evaluation follow-up.

## **2. PERIODIC EVALUATION OF RESEARCHERS**

The section considers that the most important criterion for assessing researchers remains the

quality of their scientific activity. This must translate into convincing achievements and a project that is both clear and explicitly linked to the research programme of the unit to which the researcher belongs. The researcher is evaluated on past performance, but also for the future. The activity reports must therefore highlight both the deepening and the accumulation of knowledge in a given field and/or the renewal of the scientific project and themes.

### **Research activities**

The research activities as such are translated into publications but not reduced to them. It is therefore important to report on the field surveys, the periods dedicated to the collection and processing of materials, empirical projects backed or not backed by research contracts.

Scientific activity is also reflected in the formulation of a research project, which can extend previous work, but must involve new research operations or stages of theorising or synthesis. The researchers are encouraged to show how their personal project is part of broader collective dynamics, within teams, laboratories, contracts and networks. In addition, the specific contribution of the researcher to the collective programmes mentioned must appear clearly.

The section recommends that the report on research activities (review and project) should not exceed 5 pages in the case of a mid-term assessment, and 20 pages in the case of a full-term assessment.

### **The diversity of the activities of researchers**

The section recognises the necessary diversity of the activities of the researcher throughout his/her career. Another important activity is the scientific leadership within the research unit of the researcher and beyond. It takes various forms, such as the coordination of collective works, sometimes carried out with colleagues from other structures (working groups, seminars, colloquia, etc.), the search for partners and the setting up of national or international networks (panels/round tables during meetings to participate in ANR, PCRD or other types of projects).

Administration of research is valued, particularly major implications in the UMR, such as management or deputy management of a research unit. Other responsibilities in higher education institutions or research management bodies are also taken into account. These activities must not, however, divert the researcher from the primary mission for too long.

Training in research and the supervision of young researchers and PhDs is also an important activity in the career of researchers.

Participation in teaching is also taken into account, but it must be controlled and the section considers that it be much lower than the teaching volume of academics.

Participation in activities of collective interest is taken into account, whether one-off activities such as the evaluation of projects, articles or works, applications or requests for funding from local, national or international bodies for participation in selection committees, or for the scientific committees of research programmes, or more cumbersome and stable responsibilities such as participation in committees to produce scientific journals or their management.

Scientific activity must also respond to the desire to share knowledge acquired beyond the academic community: the promotion of knowledge, the production of expertise, communication in the media, and all activities contributing to the dissemination of research are taken into account, as an additional criterion, in the evaluation of the researcher.

### **3. RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS**

Each category of competitive examinations corresponds to a different stage of the career, the assessment criteria are modulated, while being included in the framework defined by the previously explained general principles. However for all competitions, the main criteria for assessing candidates are the quality of the work already carried out, the personal contribution of the candidates to the results obtained, the quality of the research project, the ability to integrate into a research team. In all cases, the section pays attention to these components to assess both the scientific potential and the creativity of the candidates, as well as their achievements and experience acquired as a researcher.

#### **CRCN Competition**

With regard to the works produced, the section is particularly attentive to the following elements: Contribution and solidity of the doctoral thesis, quality of publications (media and content), ability to enter into discussions in a research field, particularly at international level, emerging scientific visibility (through publications, but also through the inclusion in relevant research networks), and, where appropriate, experience gained from research since the candidate's thesis defence.

With regard to the research project, the section is particularly attentive to the following elements: differentiation in relation to the work already carried out (in the context of the thesis or in another context), mastery of an innovative problem in the field of research, robustness of the approach (methodological and theoretical), originality of research issues, rationale for the feasibility of the project.

Depending on the research career, the skills of the candidates in terms of cooperation (cooperative projects, whether funded or not, local, national and international), the coordination of the research (taking of collective responsibilities and supervision activities), influence (invitations to make presentations, guest lectures, participation in scientific committees, publications) can also be taken into account.

For the applicants who are preselected on the basis of their application file, the ability to defend and justify their project and their production orally is also an important criterion.

#### **DR2 Competition**

With regard to the works produced, the section is particularly attentive to the following elements: the completion of at least one significant research project that is posterior to the doctoral degree, the importance and quality of the personal publication file (at least two research works or their equivalent in the form of scientific journal articles); the relevance of empirical and theoretical studies; originality of results produces and contribution to renewal of questions in the discipline, national and international recognition of works, capacity to direct collective projects, investment in scientific facilitation and management activities,

involvement in laboratory life and in research administration tasks, teaching and promotion of research.

As regards the research project, the section is particularly attentive to the following elements: Renewal of the research programme, consistency of the medium-term research orientations, originality of the theorisations of the goal or other form of contribution to the production of new knowledge (methods, approaches), involvement in international debates in the field.

#### **4. RESEARCHER GRADE PROMOTION**

The criteria taken into account for grade promotions converge with those applicable to applications for various competitions. They are adjusted to the different bodies and grades. The section will ensure that candidates for promotion comply with the instructions given in the application files, particularly regarding the length of the application file and the reference periods for the various items to be completed. For promotions to the various grades of director of research, the section recommends that the application be completed with two publications selected by the candidates, and attached to the file.

#### **CRHC grade Applications**

The section will attach particular importance to the following elements:

- Conduct of medium-term research programmes and current perspectives. Regular and significant scientific output.
- Participation in scientific communities of reference, through the training of young researchers and students, dissemination of expertise, enrolment in scientific networks, etc.
- Recognition in his or her speciality, including internationally.

#### **Applications for the DR1 grade**

The section will attach particular importance to the following elements:

- Scope, consistency and originality of the research programme.
- International recognition of the work of the researcher (publications, participation in research networks, etc.).
- Publication file structured around several scientific works or articles in major scientific journals.
- Significant contribution to the renewal of problems in areas of speciality.
- Regular responsibilities in coordinating research (organisation of events, network coordination, project management, editorial responsibilities, etc.).
- Responsibilities in the administration of research (within the unit, the reporting establishment or other bodies).
- Regular contribution to the training and supervision of doctoral research.

#### **Applications for the DRCE Grade**

In addition to the elements relevant for the rank of DR1, the following elements:

- Strong contribution to the development and structuring of research in the discipline and/or speciality.
- Exceptional scientific productions showing remarkable scientific input.
- Leading recognition at the national and international level.

## **5. DELEGATIONS TO THE CNRS**

In line with the guidelines already explained, the criteria for examining requests for delegation to the CNRS are: Qualitative assessment of past scientific activities (in all their dimensions: research, teaching, investment in collective tasks), solidity and originality of the research project, link with the programme of the requested research unit.

## APPENDIX SECTION 40

### PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE CNRS RESEARCHERS COMPETITION

The members of Section 40 would first like to draw the attention of candidates to the highly selective nature of CNRS research competitions as shown by the following figures for the 'CRCN' competitions for normal class researchers (*chargé•e de recherché* or CR):

2021: 191 candidates for 3 CR posts put up for competition

2020: 201 candidates for 4 CR posts put up for competition

2019: 193 candidates for 4 CR posts put up for competition

2018: 207 candidates for 5 CR posts put up for competition

2017: 230 candidates for 5 CR posts put up for competition

The members of Section 40 give certain practical recommendations below for candidates for the CRCN and DR2 competitions to help them prepare their applications.

Candidates can also consult the regularly updated Guide for Candidates for researchers' competitions on the CNRS website in the "competitions" section.

#### **The CRCN Competition**

##### **Format of the research project**

There is no official standard for the format of the research proposal submitted in the framework of an application to CRCN competitions. However, Section 40 recommends that applicants should provide a research project proposal of between 30,000 and 40,000 characters maximum (including spaces, excluding bibliography). As well as a presentation of the research object and the project's subject, it should include a section detailing the operationalisation of the project to specify field(s) and methodology(ies) involved. A review of the literature used is required but must remain relatively brief and must not replace the presentation of the project subject chosen by the candidate. It must also be in line with national and international debates on the subject.

##### **Format of the work report**

The dossier also includes a "work report" in which the candidate describes his or her career, presents his or her past scientific activities and collaborative work, gives information on the content and conditions of his or her work, etc. The section recommends that it should not exceed 30,000 characters, including spaces.

##### **Format of the list of publications**

The application file should also include a list of publications broken down into publication categories. Candidates are recommended to list scientific publications in the central areas of the disciplines covered by the section (peer-reviewed journals, research works in academic collections) and publications in other media (collective works, specialised scientific journals on a particular area or theme, etc.). The list of publications must be classified in explicit categories that distinguish at the least between: books (written alone or co-authored) with an academic publisher or in a collection, other works by the author, books or journal issues that were directed, articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, chapters in books, articles in other journals, book reviews and other publications. For this list of publications, it is recommended that candidates provide a certificate from the publisher or journal for books, chapters or

articles which have yet to be published. A publication will not be taken into account without such documents. These supporting documents must be sent to the '*Service Central des Concours*' and may be presented on the day of the audition if necessary. If the printed articles are not yet available, candidates are encouraged to submit a PDF version of their accepted article(s), chapter(s) or book(s).

### **PhD defence report**

Candidates who obtained their PhD in a French university are strongly recommended to attach a duly signed copy of the full report of their PhD defence to their application file. The section invites candidates who defended their PhD in a foreign university to send this report, if such exists, preferably in French or in a recognized international language that enables it to be easily read.

### **Choice of CNRS research centres**

Candidates are invited to indicate one or more research centres (a CNRS research unit and most often a joint research unit or 'UMR') suitable for their work. These choices have no bearing on the section's deliberations.

### **Competition procedures and stages**

Candidates may not seek help from members of Section 40 in preparing their application at any stage of the competition.

Candidates' applications are first examined during a pre-selection phase which takes place at the beginning of the calendar year. This serves to establish the list of the eligible candidates who will be invited to take part in the audition.

In this first stage, candidates are selected on the basis of their application files. The section pays particular attention to the quality of the research project (a central element of the file), publications, the scientific career path and work carried out (including the thesis) and the forms of internationalisation of scientific activities. The section also examines the suitability of the project and the career path as regards the section's scientific scope as well as the candidate's integration in the academic field covered by the section (publications, scientific communications, etc.). The evaluation of each application is collectively made by several *rapporteurs*, with the aim of consolidating the selection of candidates.

During the second stage of the competitions, the selected candidates are interviewed by the section's jury. The interviews are organised to allow for an in-depth scientific discussion with the jury. Candidates are told the exact duration of the interview when they receive their invitation.

At the end of the interviews, the jury deliberates and then establishes a ranking of the eligible candidates. These results can be consulted on the CNRS website. The admissions jury then meets and communicates the final results of the competitions.

### **DR2 competitions**

Candidates may not request assistance from members of Section 40 in the preparation of their application at any stage of the competition.

### **Application file**

The application file should include the following: a work report (30,000 to 40,000 characters), a research project proposal (30,000 to 40,000 characters), a ranked list of publications and a selection of the publications they consider to be the most significant.

If applicable, Section 40 also recommends that candidates for the DR2 competition provide

their HDR (Authorisation to Supervise Research) defence report (and their main HDR thesis) when they register for the competition.

### **Format of the list of publications**

The list of publications must be classified in explicit categories that distinguish at the least between: books (written alone or co-authored) with an academic publisher or in a collection, other works by the author, books or journal issues that were directed, articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, chapters in books, articles in other journals, book reviews and other publications.

### **Supporting documents**

For this list of publications, candidates are requested to provide a certificate from the publisher or journal for books, chapters or articles which have yet to be published. A publication will not be taken into account without such documents. If the printed articles are not yet available, candidates are encouraged to submit a pdf version of their accepted article(s), chapter(s) or book(s).