



TO: Research Scientists, Associate Scientists and Administrative Associates
CC: CIRES Fellows, Supervisors and Science Advisors
FROM: CIRES Human Resources
DATE: September 16, 2025
SUBJECT: 2026 CIRES Career Track Promotion Process

The annual Career Track promotion season is upon us once again. Career Track promotions recognize career growth and are considered once a year through the Career Track Promotion process. Consideration for promotion should be informally initiated by you or your CIRES Supervisor (and Science Advisor, if appropriate). If you and your supervisor concur that you are ready for promotion, now is the time to consider putting together your promotion materials. Promotion packets are due to CIRES HR by Sunday, January 4, 2026.

The criteria for promotion vary with each track and level within a track. Refer to <https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/tracks> for information, this year's schedule, and to initiate a promotion package.

The website information includes a checklist form for each promotion level to help you gather all necessary materials for the Career Track Committee's review.

CAREER TRACK INFORMATION SESSION: Monday, November 3, 2025 at 2-3pm

Please join Waleed Abdalati, CIRES Director, and Professor Kristy Tiampo, Career Track Committee Lead, as they discuss the Career Track promotion process, give guidance on the promotion package preparation, and touch on the promotion from Research Scientist III to Senior Research Scientist. A Q&A session will follow the presentation. This session is geared toward Associate Scientists and Research Scientists. [Download the calendar event for the information session at this link.](#)

SUB-TRACKS INFORMATION

In 2021, CIRES instituted sub-tracks to the Career Track Promotion Program. Sub-tracks were introduced to both the Research Scientist and Associate Scientist primary tracks. These sub-tracks are detailed on the CIRES website linked above and will be used primarily for promotion reviews, but can also be used to help define positions and responsibilities (<https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/tracks>).

Within the Research Scientist Track, CIRES has three sub-tracks:

- Science
- Engineering and Applications
- Management

Within the Associate Scientist Track, CIRES has four sub-tracks:

- Science
- Engineering and Applications
- Computer Science

- Management

Since many employees are engaged in activities that span more than one sub-track, a primary and secondary track may be chosen to represent the employee's roles and responsibilities. Career track applicants will have the opportunity to select their sub-track(s) when submitting their application. Sub-tracks should be discussed in advance with - and supported by - the CIRES supervisor. The development of these sub-tracks allows for better recognition of the work occurring at CIRES and establishes a clearer career and promotion path for our Associate and Research Scientists.

YEARS OF SERVICE REMINDER

The years of service are calculated using a beginning date of either the notification date of the last promotion or the candidate's appointment start date. In all cases, the ending date will be the day each year that promotions are formally announced. If, for example, you were promoted May 1, 2022, and your promotion to the next level requires four years of service, those four years will be satisfied May 1, 2026. For this year, that person is eligible to apply for promotion in this current cycle.

Years of service is a technical requirement that must be met to be eligible for promotion; however, it is far from the most important criterion. Much more important is your career progress as defined in the guidelines. There is nothing automatic about promotions. You and your supervisor need to agree that you are ready for promotion. It is very helpful if your science advisor concurs. Exceptional cases for early promotion may be considered, but are not commonplace and typically only happen if the years in a position are close to the time criteria and the nominee and the letters of support provide ample justification for this extraordinary circumstance; therefore, it is required to confer in advance with the CIRES Career Track Committee Lead, Professor Kristy Tiampo (Kristy.Tiampo@colorado.edu), and CIRES HR (cireshr@colorado.edu), prior to applying for an early promotion. The request to submit an early application must be submitted by the supervisor.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCIENCE ADVISOR INPUT

The promotion process requires the participation of CIRES Supervisors. Supervisors have a responsibility to identify those employees who are at a point in their CIRES careers where they are ready for a promotion to a higher level. An employee may also initiate a request for a promotion. In either case, the Supervisor must review the employee's work against the Career Track descriptions and promotion guidelines to determine if that employee is ready for promotion to the next level.

If a supervisor identifies potential for promotion, then they should discuss this opportunity with the employee. Each Career Track promotion packet should contain a strong letter of recommendation from the employee's supervisor. If a supervisor does not fully endorse a promotion at this time, they must outline, to the employee, the steps to be taken for consideration of a future promotion. Promotion packets should not be submitted without supervisor support. If an employee has concerns regarding the supervisor lack of support after discussing their reasons for this, you can reach out to CIRES HR (cireshr@colorado.edu) to discuss.

Science advisor support letters are not required for the submission of a Career Track Promotion Application but are beneficial. After discussion with your science advisor, you can use the online app to request that optional letter of support. Joint support letters from the supervisor and science advisor are not acceptable; the two letters must be separate to respect the delineation of responsibilities between CIRES and non-CU/CIRES employees.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Review the Career Track descriptions and promotion guidelines to determine if you might be considered for a promotion. If you feel that there is an opportunity for promotion, please discuss this with your supervisor to determine if there is support.



Employees must complete the online application and upload all required documents. CIRES will contact and request letters from directly the supervisor and science advisor (when applicable) when their information is entered into and saved in the Career Track application. A strong letter of recommendation from the employee's supervisor is required. If a supervisor does not fully endorse a promotion at this time, please ask them to outline the steps to take to be considered for a future promotion. Supervisor and science advisor letters will be due at the same time as any other required support letters on Sunday, January 25, 2026.

If you and your supervisor agree to request a promotion, then you will be responsible for ensuring that a complete promotion packet is submitted to CIRES by January 4, 2026.

Employees whose promotion requires additional and/or external support letters must include contact information for referees in the online application. CIRES will contact these referees directly when their promotion packet is fully submitted. The deadline for receipt of referee letters is Sunday, January 25, 2026. CIRES will select and request letters from referees, but it is up to the applicant to ensure that these letters are submitted on time.

If you have any questions concerning the Career Track promotion process this year, please contact CIRES HR at cireshr@colorado.edu.

CIRES Career Track Promotion Process – 2026 Schedule

Due date for individual promotion package submissions (must click Verify and Submit to complete the package).	Sun, 01/04/2026
All requested letters of reference are due - including supervisors, science advisors (if applicable), and external references (if applicable).	Sun, 01/25/2026
HR to review submitted application packages are complete and meet eligibility requirements.	Fri, 01/30/2026
Review of completed promotion packages begins.	Week of 02/02/2026
Promotion recommendations forwarded from Career Track Committee and Associate Division Directors to CIRES Director.	Mid to Late March 2026
Candidates notified of promotion decisions.	Early May 2026
Salary increases effective for 2026 promotions.	May 1, 2026