Staff Scientists and Staff Clinicians at NCI

Congratulations on becoming a Staff Scientist/ Clinician (SS/SC) at the National Institutes of Health. You are considered to be an important force behind successful research at NIH.

In brief, you are likely to

1- have a doctorate degree and evidence of scientific expertise as demonstrated by publications in peer-reviewed journals.

2- be capable of designing experiments and working independently.

3- have sophisticated skills and knowledge essential to the work of the laboratory, branch or department.

4- undertake mentoring of junior members of the laboratory.

5- be appointed under Title 42 at salaries in Pay Band II. This band is generally equivalent to a GS13-15 position in the civil service. (MANY SS ARE APPOINTED AT THE GS-13/1 LEVEL, BUT THE BAND EXTENDS UP TO $173k, WHICH IS ACTUALLY ABOUT $20K ABOVE A GS-15/10)

6- be reviewed every four years by a NCI promotional committee.

7- Make note of your "not to exceed date" so that you can assist in your appointment renewal and quad review packages. Your "not to exceed date" is in your SF-50 file. Contact your clerical staff 4 months prior to your "not to exceed date" to ensure a timely renewal.

You are not likely to

1- be on a "pre-tenure track" to be a Principal Investigator at the NIH.

2- submit grants to support independent research within the laboratory of the Principal Investigator.

Who is a Staff Scientist?

A Staff Scientist usually has a doctoral degree and is **selected by the IC to support the long-term research of a Principal Investigator.**

NIH Staff Scientists often are highly specialized and demonstrate scientific skills and expertise. They **perform a critical function as key members of a team of researchers** whose project goals are defined by a Principal Investigator.

T**he appointment of a Staff Scientist is based on consideration of the strength of the research program in the Laboratory/Branch**. The research program must be (and remain) very strong scientifically, and the candidate must have demonstrated an exceptional ability to be highly productive within this research program.

Who is a Staff Clinician?

The Staff Clinician is an NIH **physician or dentist who spends a majority of his/her time providing critical patient care services**, and may also be the principal investigator on clinical

protocols under the supervision of an Principal Investigator or Senior Scientist.

How do these positions differ from those of tenured or tenure-track investigators?

The SS/SC does not have independent resources. However, these specialists often work independently and have sophisticated skills and knowledge essential to the work of the laboratory. In addition, they may appear as associated PI on grant applications and therefore contribute to increases in the PI's budget. (For a list of awards and grants available to **SS/SCs** visit
 https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/display/CCRSSSCArchive/Practical+Information). A Staff Scientist's research is initiated by the PI, but conducted independently by the Staff Scientist. **With approval of the PI, a SS/SC may devote up to 20% of his/her time to conduct independent, self-initiated research.** It is essential that both PI and SS/SC set clear expectations and come to a mutual agreement on the extent of independent research the SS/SC will be allowed to perform since resources for the Staff Scientist's/ Staff Clinician's independent research will come from the PI's budget.

What appointment mechanism is used for Staff Scientists and Staff Clinicians?

The Office of Intramural Research (OIR) Sourcebook provides information on appointment, review and promotion of Staff Scientists and Staff Clinicians at NIH. **At NCI CCR, they are hired on a time-limited, renewable appointment (Title 42).** By exception, SS/SCs may be permanent Title 5 (the traditional government service (GS) employee position) or Commissioned Corps appointments.

How is Pay Determined?

Setting of base and supplemental pay depends on the appointment mechanism. **For Title 42 appointments, the salary level is negotiated between the employee, PI, and a representative from the Administrative Resource Center (ARC) in concert with the Office of the Scientific Director (SD).** The starting pay at time of appointment depends on the qualifications and experience of the individual as well as the employment market forces (For information about the Title 42 model visit
https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/display/CCRSSSCArchive/Practical+Information). The constraints of Title 42 salaries are not nearly as regimented as traditional GS (Title 5) salaries. With fewer limitations on exact salary values, there is more flexibility in choosing an appropriate salary level. Title 42 Pay model is updated periodically, usually every year. Title 42 appointees normally receive the same annual cost-of-living increase (COLA) mandated by Congress for all Federal Employees.

Performance Reviews

Generally, except for core facility directors, SS/SC are **not reviewed by the Board of Scientific Counselors** (BSC) (see below). Although SS/SC do not present their work directly for review by BSC, **their work is reviewed along with that of the investigator by whom they support**. **The quality of the Senior Investigator's laboratory is reviewed by the BSC, including the resources for support of SS/SC who are assigned to the Senior Investigator.**

SS/SC appointed to Title 42 are evaluated according to their achievements, both annually and every four years (Quadrennial Review). The annual review is based on achievements spelled out in an **Annual Performance Plan**. This plan contains elements that are important to the mission of the Department of Health and Human Services, the NIH, NCI, and the individual

job responsibilities. Achievements deemed to be important in the role of a SS/SC might include publications, collaborative studies, presentations at meetings and membership of societies (For additional information about the quadrennial review process visit: https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/display/CCRSSSCArchive/Quadrennial+Review).

The annual performance plan (PMAP) is established every January, and reviewed the following January, at which time the SS/SC is evaluated and given one of four ratings: Exceptional, Fully Successful, Minimally Successful or Unacceptable. **Ratings of Exceptional and Fully Successful may result in a performance bonus (no greater than 2%), while the other two may lead to remediation, which, if not successful, can lead to dismissal.**

The **periodic Quadrennial Review of SS/SCs** is described in the NIH Intramural Source Book as follows:

"Reviews of a Staff Scientist's/Clinician's work are conducted **at least every 4 years** by the IC. A CV and bibliography, a letter of evaluation from the supervisor, and two letters of evaluation from collaborators or other scientists in a position to review the Staff Scientist's/Clinician's work should be provided. Performance is measured against the following elements: **interactions with other scientists/clinicians, scientific productivity, other achievements, and evidence of being up-to-date scientifically and technically** as outlined by the employee and confirmed in letters of reference. Measures of performance include **collaborations, awards, presented lectures, course work, mentoring/teaching, participation in Special Interest Groups**, etc. The function of this review is to look at continuation/placement of the Staff Scientist/Clinician, possible salary adjustment, and to enable the Scientific Director to report to the BSC on allocation of these personnel resources".

The Review process usually involves the following steps:

1-ARC notifies the PI that a review is needed for a certain SS/SC who may be eligible for a quadrennial salary adjustment. The quadrennial date is based in part on the start date of the appointment as a SS/SC. Package preparation begins in November or December.

2-The PI confers with the SS/SC and directs him to obtain two letters of evaluation from collaborators or other scientists in a position to review their work.

3-The PI writes a letter of evaluation of the SS/SC performance over the past 4 years. In the memo the following issues should be addressed:

    a. Candidate Information

    b. Performance Review, possibly addressing the elements outlined above. However, given the variety of functions/tasks that SS/SCs perform in different laboratories, the criteria for evaluation may be quite different. Since the people involved in the evaluation process are not necessarily familiar with the particular laboratory, it is a good idea that the PI addresses in his review how the SS/SC's performance has met the specific programmatic needs of the laboratory.

    c. An updated CV, including bibliography, of the SS/SC, and the most recent BSC evaluation report of the PI's laboratory should be attached to the memo (Staff Scientists and Staff Clinicians quadrennial review checklists, may be downloaded from:

https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/display/CCRSSSCArchive/Practical+Information)

4-After review by the CCR Staff Scientist Quad Review Panel a performance review report should be emailed to the SS by the CCR OD. Five ranks are possible - Outstanding, Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. This report usually is available in April or May.

5-If ranked in Outstanding or Excellent, a salary adjustment **may** occur during the Title 42 pay adjustment period, **the SS/SC receives a notification the change was made in his/her Electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF)**, which can be accessed by the individual online (https://eopf.nbc.gov/hhs/).

Core Facility Directors maybe periodically reviewed by the Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC). The BSCs are constituted of scientists from outside NIH who themselves have outstanding scientific credentials and who are committed to providing rigorous, objective reviews. BSCs were established to assist the Scientific Directors in evaluating the quality of the intramural research programs for which they are responsible. NIH Manual Chapter 3005 establishes policy governing BSC reviews.

Appointment Renewals

Title 42 SS/SC appointments and **renewals are typically based on Board of Scientific Counselor (BSC) reviews of the PI**. In principle, the results of these reviews determine the amount and type of resources that will be provided to the reviewed PI. When the BSC and Scientific Director agree that the PI continues to be productive, and that the SS/SC continues to be an important component to that productivity, the SS/SC's appointment is likely to be renewed.

Policy on Displaced Staff Scientists/Clinicians

In agreement with the recommendation from the NIH Office of the Director, (http://sourcebook.od.nih.gov/irp-policy/displaced_ss-sc.htm), **it is the policy of NCI that SS/SC whose Laboratory or Branch is closing be allowed to find another Laboratory or Branch within NCI, or, failing that, allowed to be detailed to other branches of the NIH**. Title 42 SS/SC will have up to a year to accomplish this transition before their appointment is terminated.

Salary Adjustment

Unless hired under Title 5 (i.e. GS schedule), SS/SC do not have step increases. Annual merit adjustments are generally requested and processed in the spring of each year. For SS/SC, a merit increase of up to 2% can be requested. However, the average of all the increases cannot exceed 1%. : Rather, a 3-Tier mechanism is used for Title 42 employees to establish initial salary (http://hr.od.nih.gov/pay/default.htm). The criteria for Staff Scientists are listed below. For Staff Clinicians, please reference the Title 42 Pay Model at the link listed above.

T1 is based on the expectation that the individual will function as a SS/SC with minimal supervision and, in addition, will work effectively with others, including trainees, technicians, colleagues, and supervisors. Such individuals will promote their supervisor's research program by independently informing themselves of new approaches, technological or otherwise, and by being knowledgeable about scientific resources (both human and material) at the NIH and elsewhere. These positions are equivalent to non-tenure track, research positions in a university setting, e.g., Research Associate, Research Assistant Professor. Following initial appointment as a SS/SC, T1 level is appropriate for at least 5-10 years.

T2 level indicates that the individual made major contributions as evidenced by co-authorship on a reasonable number of peer-reviewed publications in journals generally acknowledged to be of high quality. Other evidence that the individual is held in high regard by peers includes being consulted by others at the NIH or elsewhere for advice and/or assistance, as documented by at least three letters of reference. Outstanding grasp of subject material should be evidenced in a seminar presented to the IC Promotion Committee. Given these criteria, advancement of SS/SC to T2 will be infrequent. Following elevation to T2, this level is generally appropriate for at least 5-10 years.

T3 level reflects exceptional achievement or other contributions that significantly promote the mission of the individual's own IC and/or other ICs. Such individuals will have exceeded considerably the criteria for T2, including evidence of an extraordinary grasp of subject material in the presentation of a seminar to the IC Promotion Committee. As distinguished from the T2 level, the individual at T3 may be required to supervise doctoral-level or senior staff if the laboratory or the facility in which they work is large. Individuals at T3 will make presentations at scientific meetings and participate in the work of IC and/or NIH committees**.** Further, the individual must have developed a record of high achievement for a substantial number of years, documented by at least three letters from referees who are not recent collaborators; and/or the individual must have made significant methodological or other contributions to the scientific literature. Given these criteria, advancement of SS/SC to T3 will be rare.

Movement of a SS/SC to higher level Tier, may occur as a result of one or more adjustments in salary, but does not reflect advancement in their professional designation.

New NCI CCR Designations for Staff Scientists

NCI Associate Scientists are individuals who, having been employed as SS/SC or for at least 5 years (regardless of current salary or Title 42 tier level) and have consistently performed at a level significantly higher than their expected duties.

NCI Senior Associate Scientists/Clinicians are individuals who having been employed as SS/SC for at least 10 years and have consistently performed at a level significantly higher than their expected duties may advance to this title.

These internal NCI designations will be reserved for the top 10% of SS/SCs.

Given the diversity of functions and roles that SS/SCs play in the NCI, evidence of a significantly higher level of performance will vary, depending on the individual's job description, including (but not limited to):

Publication record - Authorship of publications, especially first and last authorship, and publications that result from research ideas/activities of the individual rather than the PI.

Recognition by peers- Letters of recommendation that support crucial contributions by the SS/SC in research, collaborative efforts, or outstanding mentoring.

Service to the NCI community- Letters of recommendation from NCI members, in addition to the PI, or by documented and consistent engagement in committees, groups, etc. whose activities are for the benefit of all or a significant part of the NCI community.

Innovation- Significantly higher level of performance is evidenced by development of technical tools and/or methodologies novel to the NCI, especially unique ones, that can be distributed freely to the scientific community, as resources via the web, or licensed/patented.

Promotion to Senior Associate Scientist/Clinician level will be considered after proper action is initiated in the form of a personnel package (inclusive of a memorandum from the SS/SC's direct supervisor addressed to the Scientific Director (SD) addressing the factors listed above, 3 reference letters and CV/Bibliography). The package will be reviewed by the THE SENIOR STAFF OF THE CCR AS A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE PRP, whose recommendation will be sent to the SD for final approval.

Promotion to a new level does not involve change in appointment status or Intramural Professional Designation (IPD) nor salary or Tier adjustment, which will still be addressed during the Quadrennial Review.

Mentoring

SS/SC **may be directed by their PIs to participate in supervising, training or hiring personnel**, including pre- and postdoctoral fellows. In such cases, mentoring is expected to be a critical activity for the SS/SCs, and will be considered as an element included in performance review. Outstanding SS/SCs mentors may be awarded with an Outstanding Mentor Award, which is assigned annually by the NCI Office of Education/Fellows Committee.

For Further Information

The **Office of Intramural Research (OIR) Sourcebook** provides information on appointment, review, and promotion of SS/SC Scientists/Clinicians at NIH ((http://www1.od.nih.gov/oir/sourcebook/))

The **NIH Staff Scientist/Staff Clinician organization** meets periodically to discuss issues pertinent to SS/SCs throughout the NIH. The NIH SS/SC Organization was conceived in 2004 to represent more than one thousand SS/SC at the NIH, irrespective of hiring mechanisms (e.g. GS-level, Commissioned Corps, Title 42, or Contractor). Every NIH SS/SC Scientist and Staff Clinician is therefore represented by this organization. The vision of the NIH SS/SC Organization is to:

a. represent all of the NIH Staff Scientists/Staff Clinicians to The NIH Senior Administrative Staff located in the Administrative building (Bldg.1).

b. promote networking and inter-institute collaborations.

c. create a repository of resources and expertise of SS/SC.

d. organize seminars/workshops on cutting edge or emerging technologies.

e. foster career development through seminars/workshops on management, mentoring, lab organization, databases, visa regulations for foreign scientists, etc.

For more information, please visit the organization web site at: http://sigs.nih.gov/NIH_SSSC/Pages/default.aspxand join the NIH-wide listserv at https://list.nih.gov/archives/staffscientist-l.html

Professional Development

NIH Resources
NCI Office of Workforce Development

http://mynci.cancer.gov/workforce/careerdev
nciowd-r@mail.nih.gov
Ms. Sandra Thomas 301-435-8524
An extensive professional development program is available though OWD. Except for the 5-day Human Element Program most of their programs are offered at no cost. OWD offers numerous 4-hour workshops as part of their Professional Toolkit Program. These are designed to improve personal effectiveness and include topics such as emotional intelligence, effective communication, trust building and team management. They also have a "Brown Bag" seminar series offered during lunch and one-day workshops in "Managing Up", "In the Middle" and other topics.

OWD also has several excellent long-term programs. Some of the popular programs are as follows:

> Executive and Leadership Coaching (12 weeks)
> LEAP: Leadership Education and Action Program (6 months)
> Knowledge Management Mentoring Program (1 year)

The NCI Office of Workforce Development also has web links to other NIH programs.

Office of Intramural Training and Education
https://www.training.nih.gov/
SS/SC Scientists are now eligible for career services available through OITE. These services were once only available for post-docs, post-bacs and graduate students. Appointments can be made to discuss career options, review your c.v. or resume, prepare for interviews and plan job searches. To schedule an appointment please email Dr. Sharon Milgram at milgrams@od.nih.gov and write SS/SC CAREER COUNSELING in the subject line. To receive notices about courses offered by OITE make sure you are on the NIH-SSSC LIST. which can be accessed via the NIH LIST SERVE.

The NCI Center for Cancer Training
http://www.cancer.gov/researchandfunding/cancertraining
The NCI Center for Cancer Training provides research training and career development through the coordination of three programs. Of these, the most relevant for SS/SC is the NCI CCR Office of Training and Education, which is directed by Dr. Jonathan S. Wiest (http://ccr.nci.nih.gov/careers/OfficeEducation.aspx). The NCI CCR Office of Training and Education offers courses in grant writing, statistical analysis and scientific management. It also sponsors the Lectures on Translational Research in Clinical Oncology (TRACO). A complete course list can be found at http://ccr.nci.nih.gov/careers/courses_and_workshops.asp. The most popular of these is the K Grant Working Group Class taught by Dr. Terry Moody, which meets weekly for 2 hours for several weeks until the grant deadline. SS/SC who are considering the transition from the NIH to academia may want to consider the K22 Transition Career Development Award (http://www.cancer.gov/researchandfunding/cancertraining/outsidenci/newfaculty.
K22 grant is a transitional grant designed for candidates ready to move into an independent position. Applicants do not need an institutional sponsor to apply. Awardees have 12 months to accept an appropriate position and activate the K22 award. The 3-year award includes salary,

benefits and research support. The program announcement can be found at
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-09-089.html.

NIH Training Center Catalog
http://trainingcenter.nih.gov/default.asp
The training center offers courses in management, supervision, leadership and
professional development. These courses may be expensive and require supervisor approval
before they are charged to your center number.

The NIH training center also offers coaching and participates in the NIH-HHS Mentoring
Program. The mentoring program is a one-year trans-HHS initiative that matches mentors and
mentees to help the mentees develop their knowledge, skills and abilities needed to improve the
mentee's performance.
http://trainingcenter.nih.gov/hhs_mentoring.html

Courses Outside the NIH

FAES Graduate School at NIH
http://faes.org/grad
The FAES Graduate School is certified by the Maryland Higher Education Commission
and offers over 200 graduate and undergraduate courses in science, business, and languages. It
offers the Bio-Trac Program, a 3 to 5 day hands-on laboratory course on various topics. It also
offers certificate programs in Technology Transfer and Public Health.

SAIC Professional Development Courses
http://home.ncifcrf.gov/SAICFTraining/
Government employees at NCI-Frederick are eligible to take many of the professional
development courses offered by SAIC. These include topics such as communication, conflict
resolution, time management and workplace relationships.

Montgomery College Workforce Development and Continuing Education
http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/
Chief Science Officer Program MGT361 CRN#35813
This is a 12-week, 36-hour boot camp for individuals with a scientific Ph.D. to develop
management skills. This noncredit course covers modules in leadership and management skills,
negotiation, project management, first line supervision and finance. Other management and
professional development courses are available as well.

Outside Activities

Before engaging in any outside activity, it is prudent to consult with the NCI Ethics Office to
determine if it necessary to file HHS-520 Form: Request for Approval of Outside Activity.
Information is available at http://ethics.od.nih.gov/forms.htm . Our current Deputy Ethics
Counselor is Eric Hale 301-496-1148.

Volunteer Opportunities

NIH Office of Science Education
http://science.education.nih.gov/home2.nsf/feature/index.htm
The NIH Office of Science Education coordinates outreach programs for elementary, secondary and college students. It also offers education programs for teachers and the general public. The NIH Ethics Office has approved the NIH Office of Science Education as an official duty activity. Some of the outreach programs are listed below.

Lifeworks Speakers Bureau
http://science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorksSpeakersBureau.nsf/Login.xsp
The speakers bureau is a public science effort, which provides opportunities for you to speak about your career and related biomedical topics.

LifeWorks E-mentoring
http://science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorksEmentoringHome.nsf/MentorIntro.htm
This program provides on opportunity to e-mentor interested high school and college students looking for career guidance and role models in the biomedical sciences.

Science Fair Judges
You can volunteer to be a Science Fair Judge by using the following URL
http://science.education.nih.gov/ScienceFairVolunteers.nsf/ForVolunteers.htm .
The coordinator for DC, Montgomery County, and Prince Georges County Schools is Cheryl Moore MooreC@od.nih.gov . The Coordinator for Frederick County School is Julie Hartman Hartmanjb@mail.nih.gov.

Frederick County Elementary Outreach Program
Julie Hartman hartmanjb@mail.nih.gov
http://web.ncifcrf.gov/campus/outreach/eop/
This program provides supplemental hands-on experiences in the classroom and is coordinated by the FCPS curriculum.

Reset Program for DC, Maryland and Virginia Schools
http://s39953.gridserver.com/reset-story/the-reset-program
Volunteers spend 6 hours enhancing the teaching of science to inner city schools though classroom exercises and hands-on experiments. A visit to a science museum is also included in the program.

Some Teaching Opportunities

FAES Graduate School at the NIH
Dean: Dr. Constance Tom Noguchi cnoguchi@helix.nih.gov

Hood College Adjunct Professors

Contacts
Dr. Kathy Falkenstein falkenstein@hood.edu

Dr. Craig Laufer laufer@hood.edu