

Associate Scientist
Senior Associate Scientist
Center for Cancer Research, NCI
June 4, 2008

The Center for Cancer Research has adopted the following policy regarding Associate Scientists and Senior Associate Scientists. This policy supersedes previous policies on the subject.

Associate Scientists and Senior Associate Scientists (AS/SAS) are Staff Scientists who play a variety of critical roles within the CCR. They are not on a tenure track. These scientists have substantial expertise in their field of endeavor. For example, these individuals would have stature such that they are called upon as experts by outside institutions, are invited to give seminars at research institutions and national meetings, and/or serve on grant study sections. Individuals performing in a strict service capacity will not be considered for this rank.

Resources. The availability of resources will depend on the nature of the research that is being performed by the AS/SAS. Designation as Associate Scientist or Senior Associate Scientist does not confer independent resources.

- If the AS/SAS is pursuing a line of research that is a subset of a broader research program being led by a Senior Investigator, the resources provided to the AS/SAS will be at the discretion of the Senior Investigator.
- For AS/SAS who are performing collaborative work across the intramural program (for example, in leading a Core facility), an appropriate budget will be provided at the discretion of the Scientific Director. Acting as a facility head is not sufficient in itself for conferring AS status.

Service to the CCR, NCI and NIH. While Associate Scientists and Senior Associate Scientists will be expected to engage in active research, they will also be expected to devote upwards of 10% of their time to service to NCI/CCR, bringing their scientific expertise to a number of different areas. These activities may include committee membership and participation (e.g. animal care, IRB, ad hoc committees), teaching/lecturing in CCR-sponsored courses and tours, hosting speakers in the CCR seminar series, attending and participating in the PI retreat, participating in Centers of Excellence, Working Groups, and Faculty activities, representing CCR at on- and off- campus meetings as necessary, and performing any other activities at the request of the SD.

Criteria for Appointment.

The following is required to be considered for Associate Scientist status:

1. Has a substantial record of achievement;
2. Plays a major support role within a quality research program;
3. Has made major contributions to peer-reviewed publications as evidenced by co-authorship on a reasonable number of publications in journals generally acknowledged to be of high quality;

4. Other evidence of being held in high regard by peers, such as being consulted by others at the NIH or elsewhere for advice and/or assistance.
5. Received an “Outstanding” rating by the CCR Quadrennial Review Panel for Staff Scientists. This criterion may be waived by the SD in exceptional circumstances, including appointment of an outside candidate or conversion from a PI intramural professional designation.

Given these criteria, it is expected that designation as an Associate Scientist will be infrequent.

In addition to the criteria for Associate Scientist, to be considered for Senior Associate Scientist status, a candidate must meet the following criteria:

1. Has made contributions that significantly promote the mission of the NCI or other IC's.
2. Makes presentations at scientific meetings and participate in the work of NCI or NIH committees.
3. Has made significant methodological or other contributions to the scientific literature.
4. May be required to supervise doctoral-level staff.
5. Received an “Outstanding” rating by the CCR Quadrennial Review Panel for Staff Scientists in consecutive reviews. This criterion may be waived by the SD in exceptional circumstances, including appointment of an outside candidate or conversion from a PI intramural professional designation.

Given these criteria, it is expected that designation as Senior Associate Scientist will be rare.

Conferral of Status. Candidates must be nominated for Associate Scientist or Senior Associate Scientist status by a CCR Lab/Branch Chief. To be considered, the Lab/Branch Chief must submit a memo, through the assigned Deputy, to the Scientific Director formally nominating for AS/SAS status. An updated CV must be included as well as three letters of reference from individuals who are not recent collaborators, including at least two letters from outside NCI-CCR and at least one letter from outside the NIH.

The nomination will be reviewed by a committee comprised of the senior staff of the CCR, chaired by the SD for CCR. The assigned Deputy will present the nomination. The Deputy Directors for CCR, the SD for Clinical Research, and the SD for CCR will vote on the nomination. A majority of the votes cast will be required to approve the nomination. At least three voting members must be present for a quorum.

Designation as Associate or Senior Associate Scientist must be specifically approved by the SD for the CCR. Without specific approval of this status, it is not conferred. Possessing a salary level or grade commonly associated with Associate Scientists or Senior Associate Scientists does not automatically confer this status.

Compensation. Generally, Associate Scientists/Senior Associate Scientists will be appointed under the T42(g) authority. If a current T5 employee is approved for Associate Scientist/Senior Associate Scientist status, they will be supported for promotion up to the GS-15 grade as appropriate. Note, OHR/NIH retains final classification approval of these promotions. Support for promotion does not guarantee OHR will approve.

For those appointed under T42, the criteria for Associate Scientist/Senior Associate Scientist status aligns very closely with those for the second and third tiers of the T42 pay model for Band II respectively. Individuals approved for Associate Scientist status will be supported for a pay adjustment bringing their salary at least to the minimum of the second tier of the pay model (\$110,239 - \$140,880 in 2007). Individuals approved for Senior Associate Scientist status will be supported for a pay adjustment bringing their salary at least to the minimum of the third tier of the pay model (\$140,881 - \$162,371 in 2007). Note that NCC review and NIH Director approval may be required for such pay adjustments.

Scientific Review. In rare cases, Associate Scientists or Senior Associate Scientists may be reviewed by site-visit teams and BSC. Review is at the discretion of the SD, generally reflecting the extent of the resources they oversee on behalf of the supervising PI. If not reviewed by the BSC, the AS/SAS will be reviewed by the CCR Quadrennial Review Panel every four years, and their research will be reviewed by the BSC as part of the program of their supervisory PI. Continuation of AS/SAS status will be dependent on positive reviews.