

Staff Scientist Townhall Questions

- 1. What do we do if we're not being paid the minimum? It has gone up quite a bit based on Cost of Living and salaries may not have adjusted accordingly.**

If you believe your pay is set below the minimum, please discuss with your supervisor based on the following information. The minimum salary for Staff Scientist 1, Title 42(g), is the locality equivalent for GS-13/Step 1 (i.e. \$117,962 for the DC area in 2024). Title 42(g) employees received a comparability increase in 2024 equivalent to those granted to GS employees, which varies by locality area. The minimum salary for Staff Scientist 2, Title 42 (f), in 2024 is \$190,901 and is adjusted annually.

- 2. Can you confirm that if you get a promotion from SS1 tier 1 to tier 2, you don't get a salary increase automatically to that band level? I've been told it just make you eligible to move into that band.**

If you are in Tier 1, your pay is capped at the maximum for that Tier until you meet the requirements for Tier 2. However, your base pay will not increase automatically just because you meet the requirements for Tier 2. With your supervisor's approval, you may receive an increase either via a Spring annual or Quadrennial, provided the criteria is met.

- 3. Is there an official process when moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 and what does it involve?**

Yes, see the [Title 42 Pay Model](#) section on Staff Scientist 1 Tier 2 requirements (page 31). If you believe you meet the requirements for Tier 2, please discuss with your supervisor.

- 4. Are spring increases based on performance on top of adjustments for inflation?**

Spring Increases are based on performance (most recent PMAP rating must have been Level 3, AE, or above). ICs also consider other factors such as budgets and pay equity.

- 5. Are there any standard adjustments for inflation under Title 42?**

Title 42(g) scientists receive a comparability increase equivalent to those granted to GS employees, which varies by locality area. Title 42(f) scientists are not eligible for comparability increases because HHS requires that all pay adjustments are performance-based.

- 6. What is the difference between 42g and 42f?**

They are both authorities used to hire and pay specific scientific positions at NIH. All Title 42 (g) appointments must be time-limited. Title 42(f) appointments may be either time-limited or indefinite.

- 7. Does the NIH budget affect the % of increase of Quad. Increase?**

ICs consider their budgets, pay equity, and other factors when determining possible pay increases for employees.

- 8. How many Staff Scientist 1's are typically promoted to Staff Scientist 2 per year? (Versus external people being recruited into Staff Scientist 2 positions)**

We do not have a full picture of how positions are filled since we only see requests that require approval outside of an ICs purview – those that go to the NCC committee for review.

9. Does the top of the tier increase each year with the COLA increase?

When a comparability increase is granted, Title 42(g) bands and tiers are adjusted to account for the comparability increase.

10. Why do we have to go through two different processes for the promotion of the pay scale and the title? Can we tie SS1 T2 to Associate Scientist and SS2 to Senior Associate Scientist?

An appointment or promotion to the IPD of Staff Scientist, is a different process than the nomination of a Staff Scientist to receive the honorific title of Associate Scientist or Senior Associate Scientist to professionally recognize individuals who are functioning at a more senior level. However, Associate Scientists/Senior Associate Scientists continue to function under the Intramural Professional Designation (IPD) of Staff Scientist. Further, it should be noted that these are honorary titles and are not in themselves a commitment for an associated pay increase or sole justification for a pay increase.

11. Why are the promotion titles in an academic setting different from administrative settings?

Per OIR, the designations of Associate Scientist and Senior Associate Scientist are equivalent to Research Associate Professor and Research Professor, respectively, in most U.S. medical school departments. See OIR's [Explanation of Staff Scientist Position and Titles to Academic Colleagues](#) for additional information.