Staff Scientist Appointment and Promotion at SLAC

Staff scientists conduct research, develop theories, and devise methods to apply scientific principles, theories and research in areas related to the overall mission of SLAC. Research areas include synchrotron radiation and x-ray FEL research, materials science, accelerator science, chemistry, life sciences, laser research, particle physics and particle astrophysics. Staff scientist jobs are intended to be career appointments at SLAC of individuals who are central to defining and pursuing the forefront scientific mission of the laboratory.

There are five levels in the career path for staff scientists: Associate, Staff Level I and Level II, Senior, and Distinguished Staff Scientist. All levels require a Ph.D. or its equivalent in research skill and subject knowledge in the relevant scientific discipline and each level requires increasing professional achievement. All Staff Scientists are expected to advance the scientific mission of the laboratory and their performance is measured against the priorities and goals set out in SLAC’s and its Directorates’ Strategic Plans and Agendas. Starting at the Staff Scientist Level I, individuals may, with the approval of the responsible Associate Laboratory Director, be a task leader on subtasks of DOE Field Work Proposals overseen by the SLAC Director as Proposal Manager for projects that meet the approval of the responsible ALD and, in some cases, the Laboratory Director. Staff scientists above the Associate Staff Scientist level often have supervisory and management responsibilities.

Staff Scientist Appointment and Promotion

The decision to open a staff scientist position is a Directorate level decision and must be approved by the Associate Laboratory Director responsible for the sponsoring scientific program. Appointments to staff scientist positions are made through the normal requisition process following established Directorate and Human Resources procedures. Typically a broad international search will ensure a diverse pool of candidates of outstanding quality. In special rare cases, a waiver of posting may be requested from the Laboratory Director and if approved the normal search process can be waived in favor of a ‘Target of Opportunity’ approach.
Associate Staff Scientists, Staff Scientists Levels I and II and Senior Staff Scientists are appointed at the Directorate level and advancement at these levels within the career series is guided by the Directorate-level Appointments and Promotions Committees (DAPC). Appointment at, or promotion to, the Senior Staff Scientist levels also requires approval by the Laboratory-wide Appointments and Promotions Committee (LAPC). These individuals are expected to assume positions of scientific and management leadership within a Directorate and, assuming a continuing high level of performance aligned with the ongoing scientific mission of the Directorate, are envisaged to be a major component of the ongoing Directorate scientific program as long as it remains funded at the laboratory.

Distinguished Staff Scientists are appointed by the Laboratory Director and advancement to this level is guided by the LAPC. A significantly higher threshold for advancement to the Distinguished Staff Scientist level is required. Assuming continuing high level of leadership and scientific performance aligned with the ongoing laboratory scientific mission, appointment at the Distinguished Staff Scientist level carries a laboratory-wide long-term employment commitment co-terminus with relevant programmatic funding at SLAC.

**Hiring Staff Scientists**

Before the requisition and the evaluation processes begin, a long-term career path within the sponsoring SLAC scientific Directorate should be identified.

As described above, hiring decisions involve different combinations of SLAC management. The following summarizes the typical staff scientist hiring process.

- Hiring manager initiates requisition with ALD approval
- Requisition is posted (HR)
- Search Committee is selected (Directorate)
- Global search is conducted with appropriate networking and advertising (Directorate & HR)
- Applications are collected by the hiring manager
- Search Committee solicits candidate reference materials needed for the selection process; upon consultation with the DAPC, they may also collect information required for DAPC/LAPC review (e.g. C.V., publications list, noteworthy achievements, letters of reference)
- Initial resume review and dispositioning of less qualified applicants (Search Committee)
- The short-listed candidates will be expected to deliver a seminar on their research and interview widely in the hiring Directorate
- Best qualified candidate(s) are recommended to the hiring manager by the Search Committee
- Based on the recommendation of the Search Committee and the hiring manager, the candidate’s file will be brought to the DAPC for review of qualifications and a recommendation to the Directorate ALD
• Materials will be forwarded to the LAPC if the proposed level is Senior or Distinguished
• The ALD approves the appointment, with Laboratory Director approval as appropriate
• Employment creates the offer (salary consultation with Hiring Manager, ALD and Compensation)
• Offer extended to successful candidate; in some Directorates ALD will also provide a transmittal letter and contact the successful candidate.

Note that staff in fixed term positions outside of Associate Staff Scientists (e.g., Research Associates and Project Scientists) must compete to fill a requisition to enter the Staff Scientist series. Appointments in the Staff Scientist series require that a long-term career path within a sponsoring SLAC scientific Directorate be identified.

In rare cases, a waiver of posting may be sought from the SLAC Director by the cognizant ALD with advice from the DAPC and/or LAPC.

**Promotions within the Staff Scientist Series**

Promotions within the career development path are not subject to the requisition and advertisement requirements of an appointment, but are governed by the procedures described below.

Promotions require ALD approval at all levels, and positive recommendation by the DAPC (for Staff Scientists) and both the DAPC & LAPC for promotions to the Senior Staff Scientist and Distinguished Staff Scientist levels. SLAC management involvement in promotions varies by level. Promotion to Staff Scientist Levels I and Staff Scientist Level II is made by the home Directorate ALD. Promotion to Senior Staff Scientist is made by the home Directorate ALD with the concurrence of the SLAC Director and the recommendation of the LAPC. Promotion to Distinguished Staff Scientist is made by the SLAC Director and with the recommendation of the home Directorate ALD and of the LAPC.

These actions also follow the usual SLAC-wide procedures for reclassification of continuing staff, which is staffed by HR Compensation. At least 6 months prior to the end of the Associate Staff Scientist’s 5-year term limit, the employee’s supervisor will submit a promotion file to the DAPC for consideration. Other level reviews can occur as appropriate.

The choice of appointment at the Staff Scientist Level I or II and promotion from Level I to II are managed within the Directorate by the ALD in consultation with the cognizant DAPC. New appointments at both levels of Staff Scientist require the normal evaluation process with the choice of which level made by the ALD. Promotion from Level I to Level II does not require external evaluation and documentation and is made by the ALD in consultation with the DAPC.

The DAPC will conduct a periodic review of Directorate Staff Scientists (Levels I and II) for possible consideration of promotion to Senior Staff Scientist. Employee supervisors may also submit a promotion file to the DAPC for consideration. The DAPC will solicit letters of recommendation, review accomplishments and research progress, and make a recommendation of the employee’s appropriateness for promotion to the Directorate ALD. The
candidate’s file, along with the DAPC recommendation, will be brought to the LAPC for review and recommendation to the SLAC Director and the home Directorate ALD.

Promotion cases can be considered outside the normal cycle by the DAPC or LAPC.

The following summarizes the typical staff scientist promotion process.

- Directorate responds to requests by a supervisor for review as well as DAPC-identified candidates for review
- The DAPC will solicit letters of recommendation, review accomplishments and research progress
- DAPC completes evaluation and makes a recommendation of the employee’s readiness for promotion to the Directorate ALD
- If the promotion is to Senior Staff Scientist or Distinguished Staff Scientist, DAPC makes a recommendation and forwards all materials including the recommendation to the ALD for review who brings the promotion file to the LAPC for review and recommendation
- If the ALD receives positive recommendations from the review committee(s) and supports the promotion, the ALD sends approval and supporting documents including Committee recommendations to HR Compensation; Directorate & HR agree on salary and effective date. [Note that a Senior Staff Scientist requires recommendation from both committees; the Distinguish Staff Scientist requires approval from the Laboratory Director as well.]
- HR receives documentation from the ALD and forwards to Records
- Approved promotion is implemented in HR Records
- Directorate provides communication to the employee and the supervisor on the outcome of the promotional review. Depending upon the outcome and the preferences of the ALD, communication process may vary

**Directorate Appointments and Promotions Committees (DAPC)**

Standing Directorate Appointments and Promotions Committees (DAPC) will consist of SLAC Senior Staff Scientists and/or Distinguished Staff Scientists and faculty members chosen by the Directorate ALD. DAPC members normally serve for a minimum two-year period. Senior Scientists are recused from Distinguished Scientist reviews.

The role of the DAPC is to:

a) Make and document recommendations to the ALD concerning appointments to Associate Staff Scientist, Staff Scientist (Level I and II), Senior Staff Scientist, and Distinguished Staff Scientist levels;

b) Make documented recommendations to the ALD regarding the promotion of Associate Staff, Staff Scientists (Level I and II), and Senior Staff Scientists
Laboratory Appointments and Promotions Committee (LAPC)

A standing Laboratory Appointments and Promotions Committees (LAPC) will be appointed by the SLAC Director, who will consider recommendations from the ALDs in selecting one committee member from each of the mission Directorates. The candidates will be Senior Staff Scientists and/or Distinguished Staff Scientists and faculty members. In many cases, the chair of the DAPC may be the Directorate representative on the LAPC. The SLAC Director may appoint three additional members chosen at large from the SLAC Senior Staff Scientists and/or Distinguished Staff Scientists and faculty members, and two members from outside SLAC. LAPC members are appointed for up to a three-year period and may be considered for reappointment. Senior Scientists are recused from Distinguished Scientist reviews.

The role of the LAPC is to:

a) Advise the SLAC Director on matters concerning laboratory-wide consistency in the quality of the staff scientists and on Directorate procedures for selection and appointment;
b) Review the numerical balance of Distinguished and Senior Staff Scientists across the Directorates in terms of SLAC needs and resources;
c) Make documented recommendations to the SLAC Director and the cognizant Directorate ALD concerning appointments and promotions to Senior Staff Scientist; and
d) Make documented recommendations to the SLAC Director concerning appointments and promotions to Distinguished Staff Scientist

Promotion Review Documentation

Scientists under consideration for appointment or promotion shall provide to the following to their supervisor or other appropriate individual as designated by the cognizant ALD:

1. Curriculum vitae including a list of publications;
2. A short description of the most important research, and, where relevant, copies of the most important publications underlying the work; and
3. The names of suggested references, according to the requirements below for the number of external referees (not required for promotion from Staff Scientist Level I to Level II).

The candidate’s supervisor or other designated individual will provide an employee evaluation including:

4. Review of employee’s main research goals and progress; and
5. Assessment and statement of recommendation

The DAPC will solicit letters of recommendation, according to the requirements below. The referees may be chosen from the list provided by the candidate, but in the case of Staff Scientist and above additional references should be selected by the DAPC. In addition, the referees should be asked to rank the candidate against a suggested comparison list of peers for promotions to the rank of Senior or Distinguished Staff Scientist. In the case of promotion from Staff Scientist Level I to Level II, external documentation is not required (item 3 above) and the recommendation is informed by items 1, 2, 4 and 5 (above).
The DAPC will provide:

1. Written analysis of the candidate’s qualifications for appointment or promotion; and
2. Statement of recommendation for or against promotion

**Table 1.** Recommended number of letters of recommendation by staff scientist level. External letters are not required for the promotion of Staff Scientist Level I to Level II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Promotion to Classification</th>
<th>External (minimum)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Staff Scientist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Scientist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Staff Scientist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Staff Scientist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>