



# Scientist Administrator FAQ's



Scientist Administrators (SA's) are a critical component to meet the mission of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). SA's at NIH are made up of Health Scientist Administrators (HSA's) and Social and Behavioral Scientist Administrators (SBSA's). This document answers frequently asked questions in the following areas: SA position descriptions, position requirements, compensation, and application requirements.

---

## SA Position Descriptions

### 1. Which is the right position announcement for me?

At NIH, the SA position announcements encompass a wide variety of activities. The announcement covers the following positions:

- **Program Officer (PO):** Supports extramural grants, contracts, and training with the goal of improving national health. Program Officer duties include:
  - Advise grant applicants/grantees
  - Make funding recommendations
  - Foster specific science through initiatives and meetings
  - Attend scientific review meetings
  - Monitor awarded grants
  - Engage the public/scientific communities
  - Maintain own area of scientific expertise
- **Scientific Review Officer (SRO):** Works in partnership with the scientific community to ensure that the scientific review groups (study sections) identify the most meritorious science for funding by NIH Institutes and Centers. Key functions carried out by the SRO include:
  - Refer and review applications
  - Identify and recruit reviewers
  - Convene study section meetings and ensure policies are followed
  - Order review based on grant mechanism
  - Record scores and produce summary statements
  - Attend Council meetings and handle appeals

---

## Position Requirements

### 2. What are the degree requirements for NIH SA's?

To be an HSA at NIH, you must have a bachelor's or graduate/higher level degree with major study in an academic field related to the medical field, health sciences or allied sciences appropriate to the work of the position.

To be an SBSA at NIH, you must have a bachelor's or graduate/higher level degree in the behavioral or social sciences, or related disciplines appropriate to this position *OR* have a combination of education and experience that provided you with the knowledge of one or more of the behavioral or social sciences equivalent to a major in the field *OR* have four years of appropriate experience demonstrating that you have acquired knowledge of one or more of the behavioral or social sciences equivalent to a major in the field.

Note: Degrees must be from an educational program from an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education at the time the degree was obtained.

### **3. Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to serve as a SA at NIH?**

Yes. SA positions are only open to U.S. citizens.

---

## SA Compensation

### **4. How are SA's compensated?**

SA positions are compensated according to the GS pay scale. View the current Pay scale table at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>.

---

## Application Process

### **5. How do I apply?**

You must apply using the website [USAJobs.gov](https://USAJobs.gov). Complete the application by uploading your resume and all required documents and answering all questions before the close of the announcement period. USA Jobs is the U.S. government's official one-stop source for federal jobs and employment information.

### **6. What should I do if my application status in USA Jobs is "incomplete"?**

The USA Jobs system requires all uploaded documents to pass through security scans to protect against computer virus. Your application status may be recorded as "Incomplete" pending the completion of the scan which can take up to 24 hours. If, after 24 hours, your application is still showing as "Incomplete," you may contact the responsible HR Specialist listed at the bottom of the USA Jobs announcement.

### **7. May I specify the area I am interested in working in?**

Yes. The application process allows you to identify your area of scientific expertise and specific areas of interest. If you wish to note interest in a particular NIH institute or research area, you may submit a cover letter with your resume/CV.

### **8. What are tips on building a Federal resume?**

To demonstrate specialized experience, there must be sufficient detailed information submitted by the candidate regarding your professional experiences, duties, and responsibilities. Make sure to list detailed accomplishments directly under each job title that align with language in the vacancy announcement. Include day/month/year for each job and hours worked per week. You can preview the application questions, questionnaire, before applying by clicking the link at the bottom of the announcement. Substantiate your answers under the appropriate job titles in your resume. Therefore, it is recommended that you develop a detailed resume/CV for submission. For more information, see these [federal resume tips](#). and <https://jobs.nih.gov/jobsearch/FederalResume.htm> .

### **9. How can I tailor my resume/CV for this application?**

The HR Specialist will match your skills and experience as stated in your resume/CV with the qualification standards listed for the position.

For optimal results, provide your research experience, grants received/reviewed, publications, and presentations. It is important to detail the duties, tasks, and assignments you performed in each position held. For the GS-14 level or above, be sure to highlight your experience with varied responsibilities for providing leadership in a scientific area.

Your resume/CV is a critical part of your application, so provide enough information for the HR Specialist to determine your qualifications.

### **10. What happens after I submit my application?**

A HR specialist will review each application. A cover letter is optional; if you submit a cover letter, it will be reviewed by Selecting Officials. Expect three emails from USA Jobs: confirmation of submitted application, preliminary eligibility based on your self-assessment, and a final email indicating whether your application got referred to NIH hiring managers.

---

## Important Links

11. [Salary \(GS Pay Scale\)](#)
12. [Federal Resume Tips](#)