
FAQ: Selection, Organization, and Operation of Research Centers and CI Research Groups

(as of Jan 3, 2020)

1. Designated Research Areas

1-1. How do I apply for a director position in a designated research area?

A. The application procedure for a designated research area is the same as the procedure for other research areas. However, applicants should remember to check the box on the application indicating that they are applying for a designated research area. Applications for designated research areas will be given priority for review.

1-2. How many Centers will be selected in the designated research areas?

A. Given the number of new Centers for 2020, up to two Centers will be selected in the designated research areas.

1-3. Is the directorship selection and evaluation process in designated research areas the same as the process in other research areas?

A. Yes. The overall selection and evaluation process is the same, except that the research areas are specified. (Document evaluation → In-depth evaluation → Comprehensive evaluation → Negotiation and appointment) However, Search Committees may be established for some designated research areas to identify suitable candidates and applications received as a result thereof will be reviewed.

1-4. Can the list of designated research areas be modified?

A. Yes. The designated research areas are revised every two years.

1-5. Should research plans include all research details or specific research areas outlined in the announcement of designated research areas?

A. No. It is possible to include either part or all of the information suggested in the announcement.

2. Center Category I: Selection, Organization, and Operation

2-1. Is there an age limit for candidates who are applying for director positions?

- A. No. There is no age limit, but directors must be able to actively commit to IBS research for at least 10 years.

2-2. May I apply for a director position anytime?

- A. Open recruitments are announced at the beginning of the year for two months. For 2020, only applications for HQ Centers are accepted and the application submission deadline is Saturday February 29, 2020 (Korea Standard Time).

2-3. When writing an application for a director position, how should I determine the organizational structure of the Center?

- A. Applicants should take into consideration the research theme and characteristics of their planned research and the number of co-directors and associate directors to decide on the organizational structure of Centers.

2-4. How do applicants estimate a reasonable size of Center budget (① less than KRW 1.5 billion, ② more than KRW 1.5 billion and less than KRW 3 billion, ③ more than KRW 3 billion and less than KRW 5 billion, ④ more than KRW 5 billion and less than KRW 7.5 billion) as well as start-up expenses?

- A. An appropriate size of Center budget should include the five-year average operational costs, such as research conducting costs (labor costs, facilities & equipment/materials costs, facilities & equipment system construction costs) and Center operation support costs, excluding start-up expenses that will be provided for the first two years. Applicants should indicate start-up expenses, which are needed to purchase and construct large-scale facilities and equipment, separately from the required Center budgets. An appropriate size of Center budget is calculated assuming the organization of the Center (including staffing of associate directors' research groups) has been completed. During the evaluation process, the Selection and Evaluation Committee (SEC) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) may offer opinions on the appropriateness of the proposed budgets.

2-5. How will the size of Center budget be determined?

- A. After the completion of the selection process, Center budget will be determined in the negotiation between the director and the IBS President based on the proposed Center budget on the application and be finalized with approval from the IBS Research Review Committee. Every year, directors submit their Research Center Management Plan and their Center budgets for the next year are finalized with approval from the Research Review Committee. The results of Center reviews (the first Center review takes place in the 5th year, then every three years) affect the corresponding Center budgets. The characteristics of IBS Center budgets are different from those of research projects which provide a certain level of research budgets for a certain period.

2-6. What employment status should I expect when becoming a director at a HQ Center?

- A. In principle, IBS should be the only affiliation of HQ Center directors. Nonetheless, if candidates can obtain approval from the heads of their previous affiliations for taking a leave of absence, being temporarily dispatched to IBS, or maintaining concurrent positions at the previous institutions of employment and IBS, they may be appointed as HQ Center directors while retaining their employment status with previous affiliations. However, this transition period must not exceed two years after their appointment dates as IBS directors.

2-7. When selected as a HQ Center director, do I have to commence my research by December 2020?

- A. Yes, you must transfer to IBS HQ to commence your research. Even if you fall under the cases of taking a leave of absence and the like as stated above, you must start your research at IBS by December 2020. The commencement date of your research may be adjusted to by December 2021 under special circumstances with an approval of IBS President.

2-8. What is the retirement age for IBS directors at HQ Centers?

- A. IBS directors at HQ Centers will be employed as tenured researchers whose retirement age is 65.

2-9. How will labor costs (salaries) for directors be determined?

- A. Labor costs (salaries) for IBS directors will be determined in the negotiation between the director and the IBS President taking into account the current labor costs (salaries) after the selection of directors is completed.

2-10. How are Centers staffed?

- A. Center staff may include director(s), associate director(s), research fellows, researchers, student research assistants, and support staff, all of whom are required to collaborate at the same research location. In principle, research staff and support staff will be employed via an open recruitment process in accordance with the internal procedures of IBS. Associate director(s), however, will be appointed after undergoing a separate internal qualification review process.

2-11. How do you define associate directors and their roles?

- A. Associate directors are high-potential senior-level researchers who lead their own research groups in collaboration with directors within Centers. Associate directors are granted a certain level of research budgets based on the negotiation results with directors.

2-12. When is the recruitment season of associate directors, and what is the selection procedure?

- A. Openings for associate directors will be announced as requested by relevant Centers. The announcements will be made on the websites of major academic societies and international journals. The selection procedure for associate directors will be carried out as strictly as the procedure for directors. Evaluations will proceed as follows: Document evaluation → In-depth evaluation → Comprehensive evaluation. Typically, the procedure takes seven months.

2-13. How will labor costs (salaries) for associate directors be determined?

- A. Associate directors will discuss their labor costs (salaries) with their directors once selected. Then, it requires approval from the IBS President to finalize the figures.

2-14. Are directors, associate directors, research fellows, and researchers required to work full-time?

- A. Yes, in principle, full-time employment is required. However, directors or associate directors who will switch their affiliations from their previous institutions of employment may be granted a transition period of up to two years during which they are allowed to retain their employment status with the previous affiliations by taking a leave of absence, being temporarily dispatched to IBS, or maintaining concurrent positions. However, exceptions may be made for associate directors whose affiliations signed a separate agreement with IBS.

2-15. Are directors and associate directors permitted to undertake non-IBS projects while participating in IBS research?

- A. Directors and associate directors are, in principle, expected to make a full-time commitment to IBS research. However, they may conduct non-IBS projects after obtaining approval from the IBS Research Review Committee in exceptional cases, such as international collaborative research. Newly-appointed directors and associate directors should wrap up their other ongoing research projects within a period set by the IBS President.

2-16. Can researchers who are currently involved in Basic Science Research Programs commissioned by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Korea apply for IBS director or associate director positions?

- A. Yes, they can. However, their research commencement date may be adjusted to after the completion of their ongoing Basic Science Research Programs (or phases thereof).

2-17. How are Center budgets managed?

- A. IBS is in charge of managing research budgets of HQ Centers.

2-18. How are Center performance reviews conducted?

- A. Center reviews take place every three years. Newly-established Centers will have an interim assessment (similar to that of a consultation, which should not be considered as a review) two years after their opening, then undergo a Center review on a three-year basis. In other words, 5th year review, 8th year review, 11th year review, and the like will take place. A

Center may be subject to termination according to the results of its 8th year review or later reviews.

2-19. Are there any limits on a Center's operational lifetime?

- A. Whether to continue IBS support for Centers will be decided upon the results of Center reviews. The IBS President may decide to close a research group or a Center if the review results are not up to standard.

2-20. Who will own research papers and intellectual property rights that are produced as results of Centers' research?

- A. In principle, the ownership of tangible and non-tangible research outcomes, such as papers and intellectual property rights that are produced as results of HQ Centers' research projects, belong to IBS. In the case of papers, if authors of papers have affiliations other than IBS, such affiliations may be indicated along with IBS.

2-21. What happens to Centers if directors are unable to perform their duties due to special circumstances (accident, dismissal, etc.)?

- A. In principle, when directors are rendered unable to perform duties due to special circumstances (accident, dismissal, etc.), the concerned Centers should close down. However, if necessary, the IBS President may establish an advisory committee to determine whether the Centers should be continued or closed.

3. Center Category II: Selection, Organization, and Operation

3-1. Does IBS have any plan to select new Pioneer Research Centers (PRCs) in 2020?

- A. IBS will not select new PRCs in 2020. Only the selection of CIs for the existing PRCs or the PRC scheduled to launch (PRC for Mathematical and Computational Sciences, PRC for Biomolecular and Cellular Structure, and (tentatively named) PRC for Quantum Information Science) will take place.

3-2. How are PRCs different from existing IBS Centers (Center Category I)?

- A. PRCs are a type of Centers that are newly introduced at IBS HQ in 2018 to nurture young principal investigators. Unlike other existing Centers, PRCs will focus on recruiting emerging researchers with great potential to pioneer new areas in basic science and supporting their challenging, independent research.

3-3. What is the organization of PRCs like?

- A. Each PRC will be comprised of research groups led by up to five CIs. Each CI holds the authority over his or her research group's staffing, research details, and budget allocations. CIs are allowed to freely staff their research groups with research fellows, researchers, student research assistants, and support staff. Important matters of PRCs' operation will be decided by negotiations among CIs. Managing CIs may attend the Directors Council Meeting representing their PRCs. CIs may rotate to assume the managing CI position.

3-4. Are CI positions only available at PRCs?

- A. Yes. PRCs will be established and operated only as HQ Centers. CI positions will be taken only by emerging scholars who will conduct challenging, independent research at a PRC.

3-5. Is the CI selection and evaluation process the same as the process for director positions?

- A. Yes. However, the evaluation criteria may be different as to fulfill the goal of nurturing young principal investigators.

3-6. When applying for a CI position at a PRC, how should I determine the organizational structure of a research group and its budget size?

- A. CI applicants should take into consideration the research theme and characteristics of their planned research to propose budgets for their own research groups accordingly. During the evaluation process, the Selection and Evaluation Committee (SEC) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) may offer opinions on the appropriateness of the proposed budgets. CI research groups' annual budgets will be finalized, within the budgets proposed when submitting applications, through deliberation and approval by the Research Review Committee.

3-7. How do CI applicants estimate a reasonable size of budget (① less than KRW 1 billion, ② more than KRW 1 billion and less than KRW 1.5 billion) as well as start-up expenses?

- A. An appropriate budget size of CI research group should include the five-year average operational costs, such as research conducting costs (labor costs, facilities & equipment/materials costs, facilities & equipment system construction costs) and Center operation support costs, excluding start-up expenses that will be provided for the first two years. Budget of each CI research group must not exceed KRW 1.5 billion, which is calculated assuming the organization of a CI group has been completed, excluding start-up expenses. Applicants should indicate start-up expenses, which are needed to purchase and construct large-scale facilities and equipment, separately from the required CI group budgets. Such facilities and equipment will be constructed as core facilities of IBS HQ and may be shared with other CIs.

3-8. What employment status should I expect at IBS HQ when becoming a CI?

- A. You as a CI may be appointed either as a tenure-track researcher or a tenured researcher at IBS HQ based on your selection and evaluation results.
- ① If appointed as a tenure-track researcher, you may retain your employment status with the previous affiliations for up to five years upon the approval by the affiliations, even after their appointment at IBS, by taking a leave of absence from the previous institutions of employment. You may undergo tenure reviews to be appointed as a tenured researcher

in the 5th year after their initial appointment in conjunction with your performance review.

② If appointed as tenure-track research fellows, you must transfer to IBS HQ to commence your research. Nonetheless, with the approval from the heads of your previous affiliations maintaining concurrent position at the previous institution of employment and IBS, you may be appointed as an IBS CI while retaining your employment status with previous affiliations. However, this transition period must not exceed two years after the appointment dates as an IBS CI.

3-9. When selected as a CI, do I have to commence my research by December 2020?

A. Yes, you must start your research at IBS by December 2020. The commencement date of your research may be adjusted to by December 2021 under special circumstances with an approval of IBS President.

3-10. What is the retirement age for CIs who are given tenured positions?

A. The retirement age is 65, same as directors at HQ Centers.

3-11. How will labor costs (salaries) for CIs be determined?

A. Labor costs (salaries) for IBS CIs will be determined in the negotiation between the CI and the IBS President taking into account the current labor costs (salaries) after the selection of CIs is completed.

3-12. How are CI research groups staffed?

A. CI research group staff may include a CI, research fellows, researchers, student research assistants, and support staff, all of whom are required to collaborate at the same research location. In principle, research staff and support staff will be employed via an open recruitment process in accordance with the internal procedures of IBS.

3-13. Are CIs permitted to undertake non-IBS projects?

A. CIs are, in principle, expected to make a full-time commitment to IBS research. However, they may conduct non-IBS projects after obtaining approval from the Research Review Committee in exceptional cases, such as international collaborative research. Newly-appointed CIs should wrap up their other ongoing research projects within a period set by the IBS President.

3-14. Can researchers who are currently involved in Basic Science Research Programs commissioned by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Korea apply for an IBS CI position?

- A. Yes, they can. However, their research commencement date may be adjusted to after the completion of their ongoing Basic Science Research Programs (or phases thereof).

3-15. How are CI research group budgets managed?

- A. IBS is in charge of managing research budgets.

3-16. How are performance reviews of CI research groups conducted?

- A. PRC reviews will be conducted on each CI research group and CI group reviews will take place every three years. Newly-established CI groups will have an interim assessment (similar to that of a consultation, which should not be considered as a review) two years after their opening, then undergo reviews on a three-year basis.

3-17. Are there any limits on a PRC's operational lifetime?

- A. Whether to continue IBS support for PRCs will be decided upon the results of their CI reviews in the same manner as other Centers. PRC reviews will be conducted on each CI research group and the IBS President may close CI group(s) if the review results are not up to standard.

3-18. Who will own research papers and intellectual property rights that are produced as results of CI groups' research?

- A. In principle, same as other HQ Centers, the ownership of tangible and non-tangible research outcomes, such as papers and intellectual property rights that are produced as results of CI groups' research projects, belong to IBS. In the case of papers, if authors of papers have affiliations other than IBS, such affiliations may be indicated along with IBS.

3-19. What happens to CI research groups if CIs are unable to perform their duties due to special circumstances (accident, dismissal, etc.)?

- A. In principle, the concerned research groups should close down, same as the case when directors at other HQ Centers are rendered unable to perform duties due to special circumstances.