
FAQ: Selection, Organization and Operation of CI Research Groups

1. How are PRCs different from existing IBS Centers?

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

2. What is the organization of PRCs like?

A. Each PRC is comprised of research groups led by up to five Chief Investigators (CIs). Each CI holds the authority over his or her research group's staffing, research details and budget allocations. CIs are allowed to freely organize their research groups with senior research fellows, researchers, student research assistants and support staff. Important matters on PRCs' operation are decided through consultations among CIs. PRC directors may attend the Directors Council Meeting representing their PRCs. CIs may rotate to assume the PRC director position.

3. 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.

4. How can 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)?

A. An appropriate budget size of a CI group should be the first five-year average operational costs, including labor costs, facilities & equipment system construction costs, facilities & equipment/materials costs, research activities costs, research allowances, incidental expenses and research outsourcing costs. During the evaluation process, the Selection and Evaluation Committee (SEC) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) may

offer feedback on the appropriateness of the proposed budgets. A CI group's budget is determined through a separate process after the completion of CI selection.

5. How is the budget size of a CI group determined?

A. After the completion of CI selection, CI group's budget is determined through negotiation with the IBS President based on the proposed group budget on the application and is finalized with approval from the Research Review Committee. Every year, CIs submit their Research Group Management Plans and budget proposals for the next year, which are finalized with approval from the Research Review Committee. The results of research group reviews affect the corresponding group budgets. The characteristics of IBS group budgets are different from those of research projects which provide a certain level of research funds for a certain period.

6. What employment status should I expect at IBS HQ when becoming a CI?

A. CIs may be appointed as visiting senior research fellows, senior research fellows or distinguished research fellows (tenured) based on their selection and evaluation results.

- ① When appointed as visiting senior research fellows, CIs may maintain their employment status with their current employers for up to five years by taking a leave of absence or other means. They can apply for a tenure review in connection with their research group reviews which take place in the 5th year. If CIs are granted tenure, they must transfer to IBS.
- ② When appointed as senior research fellows, CIs are required to transfer to IBS in principle. However, they may maintain their current employment status for up to two years through joint employment or other means with approval from their current employers. They can apply for a tenure review in connection with their research group reviews which take place in the 5th year.
- ③ When appointed as distinguished research fellows (tenured), CIs are required to transfer to IBS in principle. However, they may maintain their current employment status for up to two years through joint employment or other means with approval from their current employers.

7. When selected as a CI, do I have to commence research by October 2024?

A. Yes, you must begin your research at IBS by October 2024. However, if unavoidable, you may postpone research commencement to October 2025 with approval from the IBS President.

8. What is the retirement age for CIs who are granted tenure?

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

9. How are labor costs (salaries) for CIs determined?

A. Labor costs (salaries) for CIs are determined through negotiation with the IBS President taking into account the current labor costs (salaries) after the completion of CI selection.

10. How are CI research groups composed?

A. A CI research group can be comprised of research staff, including the CI and researchers, and support staff, all of whom are required to collaborate at the same research location. In principle, research staff and support staff are employed via open hiring in accordance with the internal procedures of IBS.

11. Are CIs permitted to undertake projects other than IBS projects?

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

12. Can researchers who are currently involved in Basic Science Research Programs commissioned by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Korea apply for CI 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).

13. How are CI group budgets managed?

A. IBS is in charge of managing research budgets.

14. How are reviews of CI research groups conducted?

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

15. Are there any limits on a PRC's operational lifetime?

A. Whether to continue IBS' support for PRCs is decided upon the results of their CI group reviews in the same manner as other Centers. PRC reviews are conducted on each CI research group and the IBS President may decide to close a CI group if the review results are not up to standard.

16. Who 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.

17. What happens to CI groups if CIs are unable to perform their duties due to special circumstances?

A. In principle, the concerned research groups should close down, same as the case when directors of other HQ Centers are rendered unable to perform duties due to special circumstances (e.g., vacancy or incapacity).