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

1. Research Centers

1-1. 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 conduct IBS research for at least 10 years.

1-2. May I apply for a director position anytime?

- A. Open hiring is announced at the beginning of each year and the application is open for about two months. For 2025, application submission deadline is Monday, 24 February 2025 noon (12:00, Korea Standard Time).

1-3. When writing an application for a director position, how should I determine the organizational structure of the Center?

- A. Applicants should take into consideration research themes, research characteristics and the number of co-directors and associate directors in determining the organizational structure of Centers.

1-4. How can 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)?

- A. An appropriate size of Center budget 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 Center's budget is determined through a separate process after the completion of director selection.

1-5. How is the size of Center budget determined?

A. After the completion of director selection, Center budget is determined through negotiation with the IBS President based on the proposed Center budget on the application and is finalized with approval from the Research Review Committee. Every year, directors submit their Research Center Management Plans and Center budget proposals for the next year, which 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 funds for a certain period. In 2024, experimental Center’s average budget is about 5.7 billion KRW and theoretical Center’s budget is about 2.5 billion KRW.

1-6. Who can apply for the directorship of Campus Centers?

A. ① Faculty members and researchers of universities specialized in science and technology (KAIST, DGIST, UNIST, POSTECH and GIST*), and those to be appointed to such positions.

- * KAIST: Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
- DGIST: Daegu Gyeongbuk Institute of Science and Technology
- UNIST: Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology
- POSTECH: Pohang University of Science and Technology
- GIST: Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology

② Researchers and those to be appointed as researchers of government-funded research institutes located in Daedeok Innopolis.

Note that official written approval issued by their current employers must be submitted before the research commencement.

1-7. What employment status should I expect when becoming a director?

A. Directors are employed as follows in accordance with their Center type:

Center type	Employment type
HQ Center	○ Will be appointed as a distinguished research fellow of IBS (tenured)
Campus & Extramural Center	○ Will maintain the employment status with the current employer (host institution) while entering into a separate employment contract with IBS

1-8. When selected as a director, when do I have to commence research?

- A. After going through the evaluation process in 2025, final director candidate will begin negotiation with IBS and is expected commence research in 2026. However, if unavoidable, you may postpone research commencement date with approval from the IBS President. In addition, depending on the availability of institutional budget, research commencement date may be postponed.

1-9. What is the retirement age for directors?

- A. The retirement age is 65. However, directors of outstanding Centers will be provided with support up to the age of 70.

1-10. How are labor costs (salaries) for directors determined?

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

1-11. How are Centers composed?

- A. Center staff can be comprised of research staff, including director(s), associate director(s) 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. Associate director(s), however, are appointed after undergoing separate internal qualification reviews.

1-12. How does IBS 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 funds through negotiation with directors.

1-13. When is the hiring season of associate directors and what is the selection procedure?

- A. Openings for associate directors are announced as requested by Centers. The announcements are made on the websites of major academic societies and international journals. The selection procedure for associate directors

is carried out as strictly as the procedure for directors. Evaluations proceed as follows: Document evaluation → In-depth evaluation → Comprehensive evaluation. Typically, the procedure takes seven months.

1-14. How are labor costs (salaries) for associate directors determined?

A. Associate directors negotiate their labor costs (salaries) with their directors once selected. Then, approval from the IBS President is required to finalize the figures.

1-15. Are research staff, including directors and associate directors, required to work full-time?

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

1-16. Can research personnel such as Directors, Associate directors, or CIs engage in for-profit activities?

- A. No, research personnel such as Directors or CIs should be dedicated to the research of the Center. They cannot engage the activities below if such engagements lower work efficiency, affect work duties, allow the employees to benefit against the interest of IBS, or damage the reputation of IBS:
- a) It is evident that employees own and obtain private gain via for-profit activities including commercial, manufacturing or financial businesses;
 - b) Employees are general partners, managers or incorporators who work as directors or auditors, or executives of for-profit private companies in the fields of commerce, manufacturing or finance;
 - c) Employees invest in corporations owned by people that are related to their work duties; or
 - d) Employees engage in the business that seek to continuously create their wealth.

1-17. How are Center budgets managed?

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

1-18. How are Center reviews conducted?

A. Center reviews take place every three years. Newly-established Centers 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 Center reviews every three years. In other words, 5th year review, 8th year review, 11th year review and so forth take place. A Center may be subject to phasing out according to the results of its 8th year review or later reviews.

1-19. Are there any limits on a Center's operational lifetime?

A. Whether to continue IBS' support for Centers is 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.

1-20. Who 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.

1-21. What happens to Centers if directors are unable to perform their duties due to special circumstances?

A. In principle, when directors are rendered unable to perform duties due to special circumstances (e.g., vacancy or incapacity), the concerned Centers should close down. However, if necessary, the IBS President may organize an advisory committee to determine whether the Centers should be continued or closed.

2. Chief Investigator (CI) Research Groups

2-1. How are PRCs different from existing IBS Centers?

- A. Pioneer Research Centers (PRC) 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.

2-2. 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.

2-3. 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.

2-4. 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.

2-5. 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.

2-6. 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.

2-7. When selected as a CI, when do I have to commence research?

- A. After going through the evaluation process in 2024, final CI candidate will begin negotiation with IBS and is expected commence research in 2025.

However, if unavoidable, you may postpone research commencement date with approval from the IBS President. In addition, depending on the availability of institutional budget, research commencement date may be postponed.

2-8. What is the retirement age for CIs who are granted tenure?

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

2-9. 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.

2-10. 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.

2-11. How are CI group budgets managed?

A. IBS is in charge of managing research budgets.

2-12. 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.

2-13. 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.

2-14. 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.

2-15. 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).