

RIKEN Early Career Leaders (ECL) Program FAQs

➤ Target fields

Q: What are the target fields of the program? Do you accept applicants to conduct research in the field of social sciences?

A: The research fields include all natural and mathematical sciences, as well as the boundary areas between the humanities and social sciences. Researchers in the fields of social sciences can also apply for the program. After a comprehensive review of your research theme, research plan, and research achievements, the committee will decide whether you will be considered for a RIKEN ECL Team/Unit Leader to conduct research at RIKEN.

➤ Application eligibility

Q: An Age requirement of applicants is not given in the call for applications. Are there any age restrictions?

A: Although the program is targeted to junior researchers, there is no age limit and no restriction on the number of years since obtaining the PhD.

Q: What are the differences between the Team Leader and Unit Leader positions in the RIKEN ECL Program? For each of the positions, about how many years after obtaining a PhD will researchers be eligible? What kinds of careers do eligible applicants have?

A: For the Team Leader and Unit Leader positions, the terms (length of research period), and scale of the budget and labs are different, but there are no specific restrictions on the number of years since obtaining a PhD, nor on career. Unit Leaders conduct their research in a laid-back, highly flexible environment with support from their host Centers. On the other hand, because Team Leaders have a larger-scale research budget and a longer term, it is expected that their labs will comprise more staff than Unit Leaders'. Please choose which position you would like to apply for in accordance with your own research plans. The question of what you would like to do, how you want to do it, and how far you want to take it is one of the criteria for screening.

➤ Working conditions

Q: After I have been hired as a RIKEN ECL Team/Unit Leader, may I also work at another organization?

A: As RIKEN ECL Team/Unit Leaders have full time positions at RIKEN, in principle, you cannot be hired by another organization or to run a business. The RIKEN ECL Team/Unit Leaders may take on side work provided it does not hinder their duties. Side work refers to any work other than RIKEN work, such as work for another organization for which you are not employed, or lecturing.

Q: Are end-of-term bonus, commuting allowance, and housing allowance provided?

A: End-of-term bonuses will not be provided. Commuting allowance and housing allowance will be provided to qualified individuals.

Q: Are relocation expenses provided?

A: Yes, they will be provided in accordance with RIKEN's regulations.

Q: Would I be entitled to childcare leave? Also, what happens to my term of employment if I take childcare leave?

A: You are entitled to childcare leave. You can add the period taken for childbirth or childcare leave to your term of employment.

Q: I would like to be involved in educational activities for my academic career. Is that possible?

A: You may be able to do side work such as being a lecturer at university if you follow the prescribed procedures.

➤ Research budget

Q: How is the amount of budget decided?

A: Research budget will be decided by the RIKEN ECL Program subcommittee for managing RIKEN ECL Program based on your research plan and proposal progress.

Q: What should be included in the research budget?

A. Please include personnel expenses for lab staff, equipment, etc., in your budget plan, but not your own salary. However, depending on the field and research project, there may be a large initial cost when the lab is set up. If so, please indicate this in your application.

Q: Approximately how much are personnel costs for staff at RIKEN? Typically, the number would be higher than the expenses needed for hiring the staff in question, but what is the specific cost to be included in the total calculation?

A: Please estimate personnel costs for staff by calculating 1.3 times the salary amount, including social insurance, etc.

Salary for fixed-term research staff at RIKEN is an annual salary based on experience, ability, and performance, and consists of a base salary and a variable salary. The variable salary will be determined each fiscal year based on experience, ability, and performance. For example, as of April 1, 2023, the monthly base salary of Research Scientists is 350,300 JPY, and that of Postdoctoral Researchers is 295,100 JPY, though the monthly base salary and variable salary are subject to change due to amendments to RIKEN regulations.

Please refer to the salary estimates listed on the open calls on RIKEN's Job Openings page.

<https://www.riken.jp/en/careers/openings/index.html>

Q: If I am hired, would there be a limit on applying for competitive funds?

A: It will depend on the application conditions, but we encourage you to actively seek competitive funds.

➤ Selection method

Q: When evaluating the applicant's research ability and research experience in the screening, would having many published research papers be considered an advantage? Specifically, which criteria are evaluated highly?

A: Screening is conducted through documents submitted and interviews are by the RIKEN ECL Program Selection Committee composed of experts. You will not only be evaluated on specific performance criteria such as the number of research papers you have written but will be screened comprehensively from the perspective of the relevance to society of the research topic and your ability to carrying out the proposed research.

➤ Concurrent application

Q: If I apply to both Team Leader and Unit Leader positions and make it through to the interview screening for both, will I have an interview for each position?

A: If applicants who apply for both TL and UL are selected for both interviews, we will consider combining the Unit Leader selection with the Team Leader screening schedule, which will be announced when we notify the applicants of the document screening results after they are finalized.

Q: There is no significant difference between the application documents submitted for Team Leader and Unit Leader positions, but is it possible to be selected as a Unit Leader even if I was not selected for the Team Leader position?

A: If you apply for both the RIKEN ECL Team Leader and Unit Leader positions, you may be selected as a Unit Leader even if you are not selected as a Team Leader.

Q: Which positions can a female researcher apply for concurrently?

A: In addition to RIKEN ECL Team Leaders and Unit Leaders, female researchers may apply for Team/Unit Leader positions in the Sechi Kato Program, for up to four positions.

➤ Application methods

Q: Should the application and recommendation forms be written in English, or Japanese?

Q: All application documents including recommendation letter should be prepared in English.

Q: Is there a format for research proposals and other application documents?

A: There is no format for the application and recommendation letters, as long as they are in pdf format.

Q: How many host centers can I select when applying for the RIKEN ECL Unit Leader position?

A: Please select one center where you wish to work and indicate that on your application form.

Q: I found some mistakes in the proposal I uploaded. Is it possible to change it?

A: You may upload it once more if it is before the deadline. In that case your previous proposal uploaded earlier will be deleted.

Q: I found mistakes in the basic information that I registered for the RIKEN ECL Team Leader. Is it possible to make amendments?

A: Yes, it is possible to make amendments before the deadline.

➤ Application deadline

Q: Is the application deadline Japan time?

A: Yes. It is Japan time.

Q: The application deadline has passed. Will the application still be accepted?

A: No, we do not accept any applications after the deadline.