

RIKEN is Japan's premier scientific research institute with a globally recognized standard of comprehensive scope. With research centers located throughout Japan, we are conducting research in a wide range of fields, including physics, engineering, chemistry, mathematical and information sciences, computational science, biology, medical science and more.

In order to ensure continuous advancement in basic sciences research, the most fundamental consideration is to train junior researchers to take on this task. RIKEN has consistently fostered researchers' careers at all levels, whether they be undergraduate students, graduate students, post-docs, or junior principal investigators. RIKEN has newly established the RIKEN Early Career Leaders Program to support junior Principal Investigators and started accepting applications in mid-April, 2023.

The RIKEN ECL Program offers opportunities for exceptionally talented junior researchers to promote their research independently as a Principal Investigator. To offer flexible support for their career stages and research plans, this program offers two types of positions: Team Leader and Unit Leader. Research areas are not specific, and cover a wide range of fields, including natural and mathematical sciences, as well as areas bordering on the humanities and social sciences. In principle, no fixed standard amount will be set for start-up expenses, and a sufficient amount will be provided to ensure maximum performance, depending on the content of the research proposal and characteristics of its field. A variety of career paths are available, including applying for fixed-term PI and indefinite-term PI positions within RIKEN, or moving to other institutions.

We will move on to explain each position that is currently open for applications. First is the RIKEN ECL Research Team Leader. For junior researchers who are willing to take on ambitious research with high scientific and social impact, this program offers the opportunity to become an independent PI and lead their own team to advance their research. The number of openings is up to two, the term is seven years, and the salary, research budget, and lab space are shown here.

Next is the RIKEN ECL Research Unit Leader. For talented junior researchers who are willing to take on their own unique research, this program offers the opportunity to become an independent PI and develop their research. In particular, to promote employment of promising young researchers, a flexible research environment will be provided at a research center or equivalent with which they will be affiliated. The number of openings is up to two, the term is five years, and the salary and research budget are shown here.

RIKEN ECL Research Unit Leaders are asked to select a host center to apply. Here is a list of research centers that applicants can select as a host. Please also check our website.

RIKEN has a program called the "Sechi Kato Program," which aims to develop talented female researchers into world-class research leaders. This program is extended to the RIKEN ECL Program to offer Team Leader and Unit Leader positions specifically for female researchers. The maximum number of people hired in the Sechi Kato

Program is one team leader and two unit leaders. This program provides research expenses up to 10 million yen annually to the RIKEN ECL Team and Unit Leaders in addition to the regular research expenses granted through the RIKEN ECL Program.

This table summarizes the four types of positions. Additional 10 million yen in research budget will be provided from the Diversity Promotion Fund to female Team and Unit Leaders in the first year.

Now, we explain the qualifications for application. The first is to be a talented researcher who is able to engage in research at RIKEN on a full-time basis and manage their laboratories as PIs. Secondly, the applicant must have a doctoral degree or equivalent competence. The Sechi Kato Program is for women, so only female researchers can apply.

Next, we would like to explain about the concurrent application process. Applicants can apply for both the RIKEN ECL Team Leader and the Unit Leader positions. In addition to that, female researchers can apply for the RIKEN ECL Research Team Leader and Unit Leader positions in the Sechi Kato Program, so up to four concurrent applications are possible.

Here is a summary of the process from application to appointment.

The deadline for the application is June 26. After that, applicants for Team Leader, including Sechi Kato Program Team Leader, will undergo a document screening, while Unit Leader applicants will undergo a preliminary screening by the host center. The interview screenings for each position will be held in October, and the results notified in early November.

This is the application schedule. Please note that the method of submitting application documents is different for RIKEN ECL Team Leaders and Unit Leaders. Applications for Team Leaders are accepted through an online system. The deadline to register for this system is June 19, and the deadline to submit application documents is June 26, at 3:00 p.m. Japan time. Unit Leader application documents should be submitted to the folder provided in the call for applications. The deadline is June 26 at 3:00 p.m. Japan time.

No new applications or updates to current applications will be accepted after the deadline. Please ask your references for recommendation letters well in advance. Refer to our website for details.

If you have any questions about the program or the application process, please contact us at this email address. We will share the answers to your questions on the application website, taking care not to disclose any personal information.