

FY 2021

Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers
Questions and Answers Regarding Application

May 2021

Science and Technology Policy Bureau, MEXT

2021 Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers - Questions and Answers Regarding Application

Table of Contents

<1. Project details>.....	3
1-1. Publication of posts by research institutions [For research institutions]	3
1-2. Publication of post (Application Guidelines pp.9, 10) [For research institutions]	8
1-3. Applicants (Young Researchers) (Application Guidelines pp. 7 to 9, Researcher Form) [For researchers].....	8
1-4. Negotiation among the parties (Application Guidelines pp.10 to 12).....	12
1-5. Determination of EYR (Application Guidelines pp. 12, 13) [For research institutions]	15
1-6. Contents of support (Application Guidelines pp. 13 to 16) [For research institutions]..	17
<2. Questions related to the contents to be implemented once EYRs are decided>.....	21

<1. Project details>

1-1. Publication of posts by research institutions [For research institutions]

○ Requirements for research institutions (Application Guidelines pp. 4, 5)

Q1101 Companies or similar entities having corporate status in Japan (including general incorporated associations and general incorporated foundations [including public interest incorporated associations and public interest incorporated foundations that have been authorized by relevant government agencies]; engaged in research and development activities)” How do you judge whether a company is “engaged in research and development activities”?

- A. It is judged based on whether the company has a track record of actually conducting research and development activities, whether it has substantial activities which can offer stable and independent research environment to excellent young researchers (EYR), and so on.

Q1102 Is there an upper limit on the number of posts that can be submitted by one research institution?

- A. There is no upper limit.

○ Form of employment (Application Guidelines p.5)

Q1103 In the Application Guidelines, it says that Tenure Track System requires research institutes “to hire for a certain period of time (approximately 5 years).” Does it always have to be five years?

- A. Regarding the employment contract period of the Tenure Track System, single-year contracts are allowed as long as the contract clearly states that the researcher may be reappointed and that there would be a review for converting the contract to an indefinite-term employment after a certain period of time.

Q1104 Is it alright to apply for employment under the Tenure Track System even if the system is not ready at the time of application?

- A. It is not a problem even if a Tenure Track System is not established at the point of application. However, it is necessary to clearly describe the outline of the tenure review criteria to the candidates (applicants [expected applicants] in case of advance notice) before starting negotiation among the parties (including advance notice), and to have established the related rules before starting the employment.

Q1105 What aspects specifically should be met to realize employment under a fair, transparent, and stable personnel system similar to the Tenure Track System?

- A. It is necessary that 1) a review committee member outside the institution or at least a person from the institution’s headquarters is engaged in the review, and 2)

a certain period of solid employment is ensured and there are future prospects. For this reason, the following employment formats, for example, are considered not meeting the requirements.

- Salaries and other personal expenditures are provided from the funds of a time-bound, competitive research project (for example, a project with a three-year time limit) and the employment contract ends at the end of the concerned project with no prospect of subsequent employment.
- The term of the employment contract is short (for example, one year) and there is a limit on the number of reappointments.
- Conducting research activities in places other than the concerned research institution based on a worker dispatch contract, etc.

Specifically, it is judged individually, based on the actual conditions of each research institution and taking the purpose of this project into account. Even if there is a limit on the term or the number of reappointments, it may be recognized to have met the requirements if the employment at the institution is secured and the research environment, which indicates the future prospects, is secured to the maximum extent (e.g. securing of employment for about 10 years). If it is not possible to judge the conformance to the requirements based on the submitted materials, additional materials may be individually asked for.

Q1106 In the application Guidelines, it says “Furthermore, a research institution that applies a certain fixed-term employment system setting a limitation on the number of reappointment to all higher ranking positions (equivalent to professors) can employ a person in the post according to regulations, etc. formulated/published by research institutions.” What sorts of situations are assumed in the above?

- A. This description assumes the case in which the concerned organization does not have permanent employees due to the regulations of the institution such as a university, where an organization (e.g. faculty) applies a fixed-term system to all faculty members (including higher-ranking positions such as professors) belonging to the concerned organization.

Q1107 Do they always have to be hired under an annual salary system?

- A. The project, in addition to working towards achieving stability in employment of young researchers, aims to explore new career paths for young researchers who have the potential to succeed at research institutions of industry-academia-government all over Japan and to promote mobility of researchers; an annual salary system is required, in principle, to remove obstacles to achieve the aim.

However, this shall not apply, if the application of an annual salary system is difficult due to regulations, etc. of the institution.

○ **Research environment (Application Guidelines pp.5, 6)**

Q1108 What does it mean to build a research environment where EYRs can engage in independent research activities as a principal researcher or young principal researcher?

- A. We expect the following in concrete terms. Nevertheless, institutions are expected to take necessary measures for excellent young researchers from the perspective of nurturing and promoting success of young researchers reflecting the characteristics of each institution and post.
- Securing sufficient research space
 - Taking appropriate measures for research funds
 - Improve the research support system (e.g. appoint mentors and research assistants)
 - Distributing shared equipment (experimental devices, etc.)
 - At Universities, improving personal support such as appointing graduate students to own research laboratory by an EYR as a chief advisor, and support for nurturing principal investigators
 - Pledging 50% or more of efforts to be spent on research activities (within the range of 50 % or more, it is acceptable to set this to 70% or 80% depending on features of a research institution.)

See “Questions and Answers Regarding Execution of Funds for the Development of Human Resources in Science and Technology (Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers)” for handling of costs of building research environment of Funds for the Development of Human Resources in Science and Technology provided by this project.

Q1109 If a research institution hires an EYR, does it have to make the researcher carry out the research plan described at the time of application as it is?

- A. The research plan described at the time of application is used for review by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (hereinafter, “JSPS”) and it is not meant to guarantee the implementation of the research plan when the research institution hires the EYR.

Based on the objectives of this project, it is important that the EYR himself or herself can set forth a certain research theme by building a stable and independent research environment, and the applicant (young researcher) or EYR candidate and the research institution are to discuss and formulate a plan for the research conducted after the appointment in negotiations among the parties

(including advance notice).

Q1110 Is it necessary for the research institution to prepare regulations and ensure 50% or more of efforts to be spent on research activities? Or is it acceptable that a research institution can show that 50% or more of overall work time is spent on research activities?

- A. Regarding the EYRs' efforts on research activities, while research institutions are not required to ensure it with their regulations, etc., we will request a report on the proportion of efforts when reporting the results of research activities for which funds are offered by this project.

Q1111 Utilization of the cross appointment system is recommended. What do you think are the advantages of using this system in the Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers?

- A. In addition to the general advantages of the cross appointment system, we believe that it would contribute to the improvement of researcher mobility beyond the sectors of industry, academia, and government, especially when utilizing the cross appointment system between different types of institutions and a researcher who until then was only interested in universities gets more opportunities to pay attention to companies.
MEXT also would like to actively disseminate the favorable examples of the utilization of the cross appointment system.

○ **Points to be considered (Application Guidelines p. 6,7)**

Q1112 The Application Guidelines states "A company can set tenures, job titles/duties, etc. based on characteristics of the business for requirements in b. and c. above." What kind of tenures, job titles, duties, etc. can be set?

- A. While it does not have to be an individual research or necessarily require setting up an independent laboratory, it is necessary to offer a post that enables an EYR to decide on a certain research theme and excel as the leading figure of the group.

○ **Offering posts in industry-academia collaboration activity (Application Guidelines pp.16, Research Institutions Form)**

Q1113 Does the counterpart of joint research or commissioned research have to be finalized?

- A. It does not necessarily have to be finalized when publishing a post.

Q1114 Is it possible to change the content described in Research Institution Form 2 "theme and contents of collaborative research or commissioned research" after the

appointment depending on the situation at the counterpart institution or of the EYR?

- A. It is possible to change the content of joint research or commissioned research depending on the situation of the research plan after hiring or the counterpart institution upon discussion between the EYR and research institution.

Q1115 One of the conditions require a hired EYR to participate in joint research or commissioned research. What is the extent of the role sought?

- A. An EYR is required to decide the research content, policy, etc. on his or her own and carry out the research. If a joint research is carried out by multiple researchers, it is necessary that the EYR is involved in the decision of the research content, policy, etc. and carries out a research relevant to his or her own research theme on his or her own initiative. In commissioned research, it is necessary that the EYR decides the research content, policy, etc. on his or her own and carries out the research on his or her own initiative by participating in research at the university entrusted with the research.

Q1116 Is it possible to offer a post in which an EYR joins half-way in a joint research or commissioned research that is already being carried out at the time of offering the post?

- A. It will be judged by taking into consideration each situation, so please consult with MEXT and JSPS.

Q1117 When inviting multiple researchers to one joint or commissioned research project and the “role required for EYR in collaborative research or commissioned research” to be described in Research Institution Form 2 differs for each post, is it necessary to offer each post separately?

- A. It will be judged by taking into consideration each situation, so please consult with MEXT and JSPS.

○ **Offering a post for internship programs (Research Institutions Form)**

Q1118 Is conducting internship programs is mandatory for the ‘post’ stipulated in the Research Institutions Form 2 “About an internship program” as the post that is to be assigned such programs? Are there any rules in terms of durations and program contents?

- A. Carrying out internship programs is not an application requirement for a grant decision. Further, there are no regulations concerning durations and program contents. It is advisable that each institute organizes internship programs and discusses with EYR candidates/applicants who want to have internship

opportunities, when necessary.

In addition, while it is stated in the Application Guideline that “Among those who satisfy the age requirement of the LEADER and wish to have a stable and independent research environment in a company, those who are recognized by MEXT to have acquired transferable skills, etc. i.e., those who completed the Strategic Professional Development Program for Young Researchers, those experienced with Research Fellowship for Young Scientists PD and/or DC, and those who completed the WISE Program [Doctoral Program for World-leading Innovative & Smart Education]) shall be treated as those considered to have the research ability equivalent to that of those who continue their candidate eligibility. If such persons have participated in an internship in the post offered by a company for the LEADER and completed the negotiation among the parties, they shall be treated as being eligible in the same manner as those who continue their EYR candidate eligibility”, carrying out internship programs is required in such a case.

1-2. Publication of post (Application Guidelines pp.9,10) [For research institutions]

Q1201 In the application Guidelines, it says, “MEXT checks the post(s), from the viewpoint of conformance with requirements shown in 1. above.” What does “from the viewpoint of conformance” mean?

A. MEXT primarily checks formal conformance regarding requirements for form of employment and research environment of the posts being offered by research institutions.

If it is not possible to judge the conformance to the requirements based on the submitted materials, additional materials may be individually asked for.

1-3.Applicants (Young Researchers) (Application Guidelines pp. 7to 9, Researcher Form) [For researchers]

○ Requirements for applicants (Young Researchers) (Application Guidelines p. 7)

Q1301 In the Application Guidelines, it says “2) As of April 1, 2022, those who are below 40 years of age (those below 43 years of age are accepted if they were enrolled in a medical field which requires clinical training).” Can exceptions be made if there are personal reasons such as having discontinued research for sick leave, etc.?

A. No, it is not acceptable. It is as described in “Requirements for applicants (young researchers)” on page 7 of the Application Guidelines.

Q1302 In the application Guidelines, it says “2) As of April 1, 2022, those who are below 40 years of age (those below 43 years of age are accepted if they were enrolled in a medical field which requires clinical training).” If the researcher was in clinical

training as a resident before 2004, when clinical training was not mandatory in Japan, does it still fall under “medical field, which requires clinical training”?

- A. The cases in which researchers underwent clinical training in the clinical training system before 2004 are also deemed as falling under “medical field which requires clinical training” described in the Application Guidelines.

Q1303 In the application Guidelines, it says “2) As of April 1, 2022, those who are below 40 years of age (those below 43 years of age are accepted if they were enrolled in a medical field which requires clinical training).” What is its relationship with the Employment Measures Act?

- A. With the Act on Comprehensive Promotion of Labor Policies, Stability of Employment of Workers and Enhancement of Occupational Life (the former Employment Measures Act), it became no longer acceptable to set age limits upon recruitment and hiring of workers from October 1, 2007 (Article 9 of the Act on Comprehensive Promotion of Labor Policies, Stability of Employment of Workers and Enhancement of Occupational Life).

On the other hand, this project is a measure being taken by the country aimed at promoting stable employment of young researchers and falls under Item (iii)-(d), Paragraph 1, Article 1-3 of the Enforcement Rules for the Act on Comprehensive Promotion of Labor Policies, Stability of Employment of Workers and Enhancement of Occupational Life, which exempts this project from the application of Article 9 of the Employment Measures Act.

Q1304 In the application Guidelines, it says “For those who have stopped research for a total of 3 months or more due to childbirth or childcare (regardless of sex), we will consider the age requirement by about 1 to 2 years according to individual circumstances.” In such a case, what is the meaning of giving consideration to the age requirement? How will you give consideration?

- A. In the “Sixth Science, Technology and Innovation Basic Plan (endorsed by a Cabinet decision on March 26, 2021)”, it is stipulated that “Japan is encouraging workplace environmental improvements and support system for both male and female researchers in order to ensure that they are able to balance their research and childcare or nursing” in conformity with the general consensus in which “Japan is increasing the number of potential leaders by further promoting the activities of female researchers, including those in leadership positions, to ensure diversity in research and create gendered innovation, and by breaking through the low rate of women entering doctoral programs in the natural sciences.”

Taking into consideration these government policy and requests by researchers, the project started giving a certain level of consideration from onwards regarding age

requirement to those who stopped research for a certain period of time due to childbirth or child care, regardless of sex.

Specifically, for example, if a researcher stopped research activities for three months or longer in total for giving birth to and rearing one child, we assume to change the age requirement irrespective of the sex of the researcher. Nevertheless, it is not limited to such cases, and we will judge it taking each individual situation into account regarding research interruption due to childbirth or child care.

E.g.

- One child: As of April 1, 2021, those who are below 41 years of age (those below 44 years of age are accepted if they were enrolled in the medical field which requires clinical training)
- Two children or more: As of April 1, 2021, those who are below 42 years (those below 45 years if they were enrolled in the medical field, which requires clinical training)

Q1305 In the application Guidelines, it says “3) Those who have research achievements (a doctoral dissertation can be added for a person who received a Ph. D.) in the past five years (since 2015).” What kind of research achievements are expected?

- A. Examples of research achievements include, but are not limited to, papers, books, industrial property rights (patents, etc.), invited lectures and awards.

Q1306 The Application Guidelines states “Those who are selected as EYR candidates in the FY2020 applications and whose negotiation among the parties with the research institution offering a post did not complete within that fiscal year can continue their candidate eligibility through FY2022 at the longest”.
I may not satisfy the age requirement for the FY 2021 Recruitment because I will be 40 years of age as of April 1, 2022. Could I continue holding an EYR candidate eligibility in such case?

- A. You are still entitled to hold an EYR candidate eligibility as the age requirement does not apply to the applicants who want to continue holding a candidate eligibility. The said persons shall apply for the continuation of their candidate eligibility by the applicants’ deadline for applications (17:00, Thursday, June 10, 2021).

Q1307 In reference to the Application Guidelines: “Among those who satisfy the age requirement of the LEADER and wish to have a stable and independent research environment in a company, those who are recognized by MEXT to have acquired transferable skills, etc. i.e., those who completed the Strategic Professional

Development Program for Young Researchers, those experienced with Research Fellowship for Young Scientists PD and/or DC, and those who completed the WISE Program [Doctoral Program for World-leading Innovative & Smart Education]) shall be treated as those considered to have the research ability equivalent to that of those who continue their candidate eligibility. If such persons have participated in an internship in the post offered by a company for the LEADER and completed the negotiation among the parties, they shall be treated as being eligible in the same manner as those who continue their EYR candidate eligibility.” from FY 2021, are they eligible if they are younger than 40 years of age as of April 1, 2022 and have completed the aforementioned programs?

- A. They are eligible. For example, a person who completed the programs described above and is younger than 40 years of age as of April 1, 2022 may be admitted as an EYR if s/he has been employed following the completion of internship programs through the appointment of the post offered by his/her employer based on the negotiation between parties.

○ Researcher Form, etc.

Q1308 Does the “Field” in Researcher Form 1 of the application form have to be consistent with the research field of “1) Research theme you want to address as an EYR” (research purpose/contents, etc.) in Researcher Form 2?

- A. In the review by the EYR Selection Committee, committee members (two or more) assigned based on the “field (research field, research content [medium-sized section], and research content [basic section])” entered by the applicant (young researcher) using the electronic application system review the application documents (Researcher Form 1 [including the attachment] and Researcher Form 2). Applicants are expected to select the field and prepare the application documents by taking the above into consideration.

Q1309 There is no period specified for the research plan set in “1) Research theme you want to address as an EYR” of Researcher Form 2. What sort of time period should we have in mind?

- A. We do not lay down any specific time period for the research plan so that applicants (young researchers) can flexibly describe the idea regarding research including setting of research agenda and awareness of issues taking into account the characteristics of each field without limiting it to the period for which funds to the EYRs from this project are provided (five years).

Q1310 If progress is made in the information (research purpose/contents, etc.) in the application documents that have been submitted to institutions offering posts

after EYR candidates have been decided or at the time of application, is it possible to update the application information referred to by the institutions?

A. The application documents cannot be replaced even if progress has been made in the content provided at the time of application after EYR candidates are decided.

○ **Selection of EYR candidates, etc. (Application Guidelines p.10, Review Guidelines)**
[For researchers]

Q1311 If a researcher did not become an EYR candidate as a result of the review, will the details of the review (contents of the review of each applicant, reason why the applicant had not been selected as an EYR candidate, etc.) notified to the researcher in addition to the result?

A. We do not plan to inform the details of the review to the applicants. We will not respond to inquiries regarding the content, course, etc. of review, as it is described in the Review Guidelines.

1-4. Negotiation among the parties (Application Guidelines pp.10 to 12)

Q1401 What is the “negotiation among the parties”?

A. In this project, the “negotiation among the parties” means that a research institution that has offered a post and the researcher freely contact each other. Owing to the circumstances of the hiring schedule of each institution, this project allows institutions to contact the researchers before the EYR candidates are decided and to go ahead with the informal selection of appointees, and the posts with such a schedule is called a post requiring advance notice in this project. The post information to be publicized will show the necessity of advance notice so that researchers who are applying for such posts will know that they are required to take actions towards negotiation among the parties ahead of the decision of EYR candidate.

Q1402 In the Application Guidelines, it says “Institutions shall use a fair and highly transparent selection process.” What process do we need to go through?

A. For example, upon selection by each institution, we believe that it is necessary for the organization (laboratory, faculty, etc.) to which the post belongs as well as the headquarters of the institution to participate in the judgment of the selection. After applying to this project, posts for which an EYR has already been appointed at the point of publicizing posts are considered as not satisfying fairness standards.

Q1403 Is it acceptable for an EYR candidate or applicant to simultaneously hold

negotiations with multiple institutions in negotiation among the parties (including advance notice)?

- A. Like the regular application process, it is possible to carry out negotiations simultaneously with multiple institutions in negotiation among the parties.

Q1404 Is it acceptable for an EYR candidate or applicant to carry out negotiation among the parties (including advance notice) for posts in fields other than the research field described in the application form?

- A. The research field described in the application form is the research field for which the applicant seeks review. There also are cases in which a research institution invites researchers to apply for posts without specifying a field. For this reason, researchers can freely carry out negotiation among the parties regarding posts in fields other than the research field described in the application form so as to find opportunities to excel in research widely for posts where a researcher can leverage his or her past research experience.

Q1405 Does a research institution, which offered a publicized post, always have to select and hire a researcher from among the EYR candidates?

- A. Even if a research institution has publicized a post, the project does not prohibit the institution to hire researchers other than EYR candidates/applicants through its own hiring process, when negotiation among the parties with EYR candidates, etc. does not go well or there was no candidate, etc. applying for the post. However, as described in “e. Points to be considered” on page 6 of the Application Guidelines, research institutions are requested to take due care not to informally decide employment until the application deadline (June 10, 2021) for applicants (young researchers).

Q1406 Is it acceptable to change the job type that was indicated in the publicized post and hire the researcher for another job type in the light of the ability of the EYR candidate or the applicant to be hired?

- A. We do not interfere with an institution hiring a EYR candidate or applicant in accordance with its rules by taking into account the researcher’s ability, experience, etc., but research institutions are requested to give consideration to the applicants through measures such as clearly stating that the job type is subject to change as part of a detailed information of the post.

Q1407 Is it acceptable to informally decide to hire a researcher with whom a research institution held negotiation among the parties (including advance notice) and start employment right away, if it is after the application deadline (April 23,

2020) for applicants (young researchers)?

- A. There is no special restriction on the timing of hiring, and it is possible for a research institute to start employment before the decision on EYR candidate in the publicized post.

Nevertheless, if research institutes are deciding on a researcher to hire early on, give due consideration to make it an especially fair and highly transparent selection process so as to avoid being misunderstood that the researcher to be hired was decided before starting negotiation among the parties (including advance notice) for each post.

Further, an institution that is considering to apply for funding support in this project should pay attention to the flow that the funding support can be used after the finalization of EYRs and the decision on granting of funding support.

Q1408 Is it acceptable to end the application period before the deadline for application and start selection, if the number of applicants is more than expected and although an institution had set forth the application period for negotiation among the parties (or advance notice), it became necessary to start the selection schedule ahead of the initial plan?

- A. A change that might possibly cause disadvantage to the applicants or EYRs is not acceptable, in principle. If the schedule is brought forward, there is a possibility that researchers who were planning to apply to the post within the deadline are not accepted, so please do not bring forward a schedule which has been announced once.

Q1409 In negotiation among the parties, can the documents to be submitted by an EYR candidate/applicant to a desired research institution be the same as the documents the EYR candidate /applicant submits to MEXT for the Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers?

- A. Documents submitted by EYRs/applicants are left to the judgement of each institution, and we believe it is desirable to give consideration to the burden on researchers who are applying. Since the offering of posts in FY2018, this project no longer requires an Evaluation Form in the Researcher Form and institutions should take notice of this point.

Q1410 Is it possible to offer same posts in two ways of one that says “Yes” for “(12) Advance notice” in Research institution Form 2 and another that says “No”?

- A. Offering of posts in a way described in the question is not acceptable.

Q1411 “II-1-e Points to be considered” on page 6,7 of the Application Guidelines

says that each research institution “should be careful not to decide employment informally before the end of the application deadline (17:00, Thursday, June 10, 2021)” for applicants (young researchers). Why shouldn’t we informally decide employment?

A. Research institutions are reminded that they should not informally decide employment, etc. during the application period even if it is a post requiring advance notice, as it may be disadvantageous for researchers planning to apply for the post if the researcher to be hired for the post has already been decided while considering on applying for the project.

○ **Researchers with continued EYR candidate eligibility and negotiation among the parties**

Q1412 If a researcher applies for the “continuation of candidate eligibility” described in “II-2-c Points to be considered” on page 8,9 of the Application Guidelines, how would negotiation among the parties be carried out?

A. Similarly to the researchers undergoing FY2021 application, negotiation among the parties shall be held in accordance with the selection process and schedule announced by each research institution offering posts. For this reason, for example, it is necessary to contact a research institution for a post that requires advance notice before the decision of EYR candidates within the period set forth by the research institution.

Q1413 Is it acceptable for a research institution to have negotiation among the parties by targeting researchers with continued candidate eligibility alone or FY2021 applicants?

A. To ensure a fair and highly transparent selection process pertaining to the negotiation among the parties at research institutions, please be careful not to adopt a selection process that targets researchers with continued candidate eligibility alone or FY2021 applicants alone.

1-5. Determination of EYR (Application Guidelines pp. 12, 13) [For research institutions]

Q1501 Is it necessary for a research institution to sign an employment contract with an EYR candidate/applicant before submitting Research Institution Form 3 “The Negotiation completion report” to MEXT? Is it acceptable if the date of completion of negotiation among the parties and the date of starting employment differ?

A. There is no need for having signed an employment contract at the stage where a research institution submits “Completion Report of the Negotiation Among the

Parties” with each individual EYR candidate/applicant, and it is also acceptable to have different dates for the completion of negotiation among the parties and for the start of employment. However, an employment contract needs to be signed by the time the candidate starts research activities as an EYR at the institution at latest. While starting employment is acceptable before an applicant researcher is selected for an EYR candidate, note that the grant is delivered only after s/he was selected as an EYR.

Q1502 “6-(1)” on page 12 of the Application Guidelines says “In principle, those who are selected as EYRs should carry out research at a laboratory other than the Alma Mater's Laboratory and the Current Laboratory except for the unavoidable reasons stated below.” Does “the case where a researcher currently belongs to the department of the post being offered but in a different research group” fall under this?

- A. As described in the Application Guidelines, MEXT makes decisions regarding EYRs, and it decides on individual cases regarding whether it would fall under Alma Mater's Laboratory or the Current Laboratory.

Q1503 If a research institution hires a young researcher who is not an EYR candidate for a publicized post as described in 7-[A]-b-3) on page 15 of the Application Guidelines, the upper limit of the additional support is “the number of EYRs that are hired in FY2021 and belong to the institution in each fiscal year (in the first fiscal year, the number of EYRs selected in that fiscal year).” If a research institution hires a number of young researchers larger than the number of EYRs, is it enough to select young researchers equal to the upper limit of the institution, and submit Research Institutions Form 7 “Young Researcher Confirmation Slip” for them?

- A. Research institutions are requested to enter Research Institution Form 3 “Completion Report of the Negotiation Among the Parties” and submit Research Institution Form 7 “Young Researcher Confirmation Slip” for all young researchers, even if the number of hired young researchers other than candidates exceeds the number of EYRs. Nevertheless, the upper limit of funding support is decided based on the number of EYRs hired in the concerned fiscal year as described in the Application Guidelines.

Q1504 In reference to the guidance given in p.12,13 of the Application Guidelines: “In cases where a company offering a post on JREC-IN Portal from FY2021 (although not offering a post in the LEADER) hires a new applicant or a person who continues his/her candidate eligibility, the post shall be treated as being equivalent to the post offered by the LEADER only if MEXT judges that the post satisfies the post

requirement for the LEADER”, which companies are referred to in this context?

- A. It refers to the companies or similar entities having corporate status in Japan. Besides, it is required that they are undertaking activities such as research and development.

Q1505 In reference to the guidance given in p.12.13 of the Application Guidelines: “Please note that a company hiring a new applicant or a person who continues his/her candidate eligibility and wishing for determination as an EYR needs to contact MEXT and ask for confirmation of whether the subject post satisfies the requirements for posts in the LEADER”, whom should I contact?

- A. Companies that have employed new EYR applicants or applicants who hold his/her EYR candidate eligibility should email to the following contact after negotiations between parties were concluded if they want to receive the decisions on their applicants’ selections as EYRs. Please note that applying for grant delivery is not allowed if an applicant is not admitted as an EYR as a result of reviewing.

Human Resources Policy Promotion Office, Human Resources Policy Division,
Science and Technology Policy Bureau, MEXT
E-Mail : takuetsu@mext.go.jp

1-6. Contents of support (Application Guidelines pp. 13 to 16) [For research institutions]

Q1601 On page 12 of the Application Guidelines, it says, “as for the posts publicized in FY2021, Candidates whose negotiation completed between September 2021 to the end of March 2022 and the candidates whose hiring starts in FY2022 as a result of the negotiation are to be determined as EYRs and they may be eligible for support with subsidies.” Based on what criteria is the target of funding support decided? Are all who fall under it eligible for the support?

- A. It depends on the status of decision of EYRs in FY2021 and the status of the budget pertaining to this project in FY2022 onwards.

Q1602 Page 14 of the Application Guidelines says “For the first 1–2 fiscal years after determination of EYRs (or 2–3 fiscal years if hiring starts in the following fiscal year and EYRs become eligible for support by Funds), up to 12 million yen per EYR is provided during the two years to support research expenditures required to start the research activity.” If the hiring starts in the following fiscal year, would costs of building research environment be provided for five years from the second fiscal year?

- A. Costs of building research environment are provided in the first to fifth fiscal years following the finalization of EYR. If research expenditures for EYR are provided in the second to third fiscal year, the costs of building research environment are provided for five years including the year in which the researcher was selected as an EYR (in this case, the fiscal year prior to the year in which the hiring starts).

Q1603 “7-(1) Expenses to be subsidized” on page 13,14 of the Application Guidelines says “the upper limit of the total Funds concerning EYR, which starts the support in FY2021, is set at 100 million yen per research institution.” Is it the upper limit of total funding support per research institution for EYRs, which begins in FY2021, and does not include the funding support for EYRs, which started between FY 2016 and 2020 or will start from FY2022 onwards? In such a case, is the upper limit of the total funding support for EYRs that a research institution starts supporting from FY2021 onwards similarly going to be 100 million yen?

- A. The total funding support whose upper limit is set in the Application Guidelines for FY2021 is the upper limit of the total funding support for FY2021 pertaining to EYRs hired in FY2021 and does not include funding support for EYRs which it started supporting from FY2016 to 2020.

Q1604 7-[A]-b-1) on page 14,15 of the Application Guidelines says that as much as 3 million yen in funding support would be offered if a research institution hires an EYR who belonged to a research institution outside Japan for the past year or longer as of the application deadline (Thursday, June 10, 2021. The same date as for those who are applying for continuation of the candidate eligibility). What are the research institutions outside Japan referred to here? Do EYRs in the above case also include foreigners?

- A. We are referring to universities and companies outside Japan. Those who engaged in research activities outside Japan without belonging to a research institution in or outside Japan are also included. Moreover, it refers to researchers who the address of the research institution where the researcher is working is outside of Japan. Therefore, even if a researcher belongs to a Japanese research institution, he or she will fall under this category if the address of the research facility where he or she is actually working is outside Japan.

The “for the past year or longer” means that the address of the research facility where the researcher works needs to be continuously outside Japan, and it does not apply if the researcher is frequently going back and forth between Japan and abroad for a joint research, etc.

If the above conditions are met, foreign researchers belonging to research institutions outside Japan are also eligible.

Q1605 On pages 15 and 16 of the Application Guidelines, it says that if an EYR (and young researcher) transfers from the post for which he or she was hired, “the above support will not be provided from the following fiscal year.” If an EYR, etc. is transferred in the middle of the fiscal year in which the supported project is being implemented, how will the funding support during the concerned fiscal year be handled?

- A. If an EYR (or young researcher) is to transfer in the middle of a fiscal year and the number based on which the amount of funding support upon deciding granting of the fund for the concerned fiscal year changes, the research institution needs to go through the procedure to cancel the project or to change the content of the project, and return the funds that have not been spent at the time of transfer.

Q1606 On pages 15 and 16 of the Application Guidelines, it says that if an EYR (and young researcher) transfers from the post for which he or she was hired, “the above support will not be provided from the following fiscal year.” Would the funding support be also cancelled from the following fiscal year, if an EYR, etc. is transferred to another post within the research institution where he or she was hired?

- A. Even if it is a transfer within the research institution, if an EYR (and young researcher) transfers to another post with working conditions, etc. differing from the post for which he or she was determined as EYR (it does not allow the EYR to focus 50% of efforts on the research, it is not a publicized post, etc.), the funding support will be discontinued as in the case with transferring to another institution. However, if the tenure review is implemented ahead of the schedule and it can be confirmed that the researcher takes up a tenure position early on and it does not deviate from the initial post to which he or she was hired (research environment, etc.), it may be subject to continued support. If there is a plan of transfer, the research institution must contact MEXT and JSPS immediately.

Q1607 On pages 15 and 16 of the Application Guidelines, it says that if an EYR transfers from the initial research institute, the funding support will not be provided for the following fiscal year, but it also says “when an EYR transfers to a newly published post in and after FY2022, the above-mentioned support may be continued” for the transfer destination research institution from the following fiscal year. In this case, if “an EYR transfers to a newly publicized post,” are the funding support for the costs of building research environment provided to the transfer destination research institution as support for the first fiscal year?

- A. Costs of building research environment are provided for at most five years

counting from the fiscal year when the decision was made to make the researcher an EYR. If an EYR of FY2021 transfers to a post publicized in FY2022 within the same fiscal year, the support for FY2023 will be treated as support for the third year.

Q1608 Joint research expenses and commissioned research expenses are included in the types of expenses for which the industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures of Appended Table-3 on page 43 of the Application Guidelines. How much of the execution breakdown of these expenditures at the university, etc. should the company grasp and how much of the breakdown should it report when applying for the funding support or when reporting the result of the supported project?

- A. When applying, state the breakdown that can be estimated based on the contract of joint research or commissioned research (hereinafter, the “joint research, etc.”). When reporting the result, the amount actually spent based on the contract of joint research, etc. should be reported as joint research expenses or commissioned research expenses. There is no need to report an execution breakdown at the university, etc., but it should be confirmed and grasped to the extent possible from the result report, achievement report, etc. based on the contract of joint research, etc.

Q1609 “7-[B] Industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures” on pages 16 of the Application Guidelines says “as much as a half of the industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures shouldered by a company based on the contract regarding the joint research, etc., with the upper limit of 10 million yen per fiscal year, will be provided for the first through fifth fiscal years following the appointment as an EYR.” Does it mean that if the joint research or commissioned research supported by the industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures doesn’t continue for five years, there will be no funding support for the remaining period after the contract ends?

- A. After a contract ends, it is possible to switch to the support for [A] research expenditures for EYRs and costs of building research environment from the following fiscal year. Contact MEXT, if you wish to switch. However, it is not possible to switch it back to [B] industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures once again after switching. The period for which the funding support after switching is granted is, like in the case where [A] was chosen from the beginning, for two years for research expenditures starting from the first fiscal year in which EYRs were determined and five years for costs of building research environment. It is not possible to switch from [B] to [A] in the middle of a fiscal

year. If a contract ends in the middle of a fiscal year, the period for the funding support for the concerned fiscal year ends as of the last day of the contract.

Q1610 Is it possible to switch between [A] research expenditures and costs of building research environment and [B] industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures of “7-(1) Expenses to be subsidized” on pages 14 to 16 of the Application Guidelines depending on the fiscal year?

- A. As described in Q1609, it is possible to switch from support of [B] industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures to [A] research expenditures and costs of building research environment, but not possible to switch from [A] to [B].

<2. Questions related to the contents to be implemented once EYRs are decided>

Q2001 It is required that 50% or more of EYR’s efforts should be secured for research activities. Does this securing of 50% or more include research activities based on external funds the EYR was granted?

- A. In addition to research activities using the funding support from this project, it also includes research activities using external funds such as Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research that the EYR has obtained, etc.

Q2002 Is it acceptable to have an EYR teach lectures, give guidance to students in research and writing papers, engage in operations such as academic and educational affairs, etc.?

- A. All of them are acceptable but 50% or more of the EYR’s efforts has to be spent on research activities. If guiding students in research and writing papers is part of the research activities, they can be included in the scope of research efforts. On the other hand, operations related to academic or educational affairs such as teaching a lecture, are not included in research activities and should be done outside the efforts on research activities.

Q2003 “c. Research environment” on page 5, 6 of the Application Guidelines seeks an EYR to spend 50% or more of efforts on research activities as a requirement for the post of EYR. Is the requirement still the same for the fiscal years, in which the funding support for research expenditures of EYRs is not available?

- A. Even if the granting of funding support for research expenditures from the project is not available, it is still necessary to comply with the requirement in the funding project period, as the requirement regarding research environment of the post for EYRs is to enable an EYR to spend 50% or more of efforts on research activities.

Q2004 If 50% or more of efforts for EYR's research activities is not secured, will the funding support of research expenditures be reduced?

- A. In such a case, we will request institutes to submit improvement measures for securing 50% or more efforts for research activities, and subsequently if there is no improvement, the support may be reduced.

Q2005 How long does the validity of being determined as an EYR last? Further, how long can an EYR address oneself as an EYR?

- A. The validity of an appointment as an EYR primarily is that one can receive support for research expenditures, etc. from the government for a certain period of time through the research institution which hired the researcher, and this is five years at the most (two years for research expenditures). Addressing oneself as EYR with the fiscal year of appointment, such as FY2021 EYR, indicates that the researcher was determined as EYR in a certain fiscal year and this does not decide the term. However, the judgment of whether or not the researcher is appropriate as a tenure researcher is made by the respective research institutions that hire the EYRs, and a medium- to long-term esteem of an EYR as a researcher should be built in the researcher community.

Q2006 When announcing research achievement of this project, what should be the description of acknowledgement?

- A. Examples of how to describe acknowledgement of the support from the Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers are as follows. From FY2020, when a researcher is determined as an EYR, the EYR number will be assigned individually. If the EYR number is "2021L0123," please enter 8 digits excluding L (20210123 in the case, for instance) after 'JPMXS03'.

(Japanese)

謝辞：本研究は、文部科学省の卓越研究員事業 JPMXS0320210123 の支援を受けたものです。

(English)

Acknowledgement: This work was supported by MEXT Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers, MEXT, Japan Grant Number JPMXS0320210123.

EYRs who were selected before FY2019 are not required to enter their grant number (JPMXS032021~) .