

World Premier International Research Center Initiative (WPI)
—Procedures for Performing the Interim Evaluation of WPI Centers—

February 2, 2011
WPI Program Committee

The interim evaluation of WPI centers is carried out in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

1. Purpose of Evaluation

This interim evaluation is meant to contribute to the creation of “highly visible research centers” by assessing the progress that the WPI centers selected in FY 2007 are making toward that goal.

2. Reviewers

The WPI Program Committee carries out the interim evaluation in close cooperation with a program director, program officers, and the working groups established to evaluate each WPI center. The working groups conduct site visits and compile the results in a Site Visit Report, which is used by the Program Committee along with the results of a hearing on each center to prepare the final interim evaluation.

3. Evaluation Procedure, Items, and Overall Evaluation Criteria

The reviewers are to conduct their evaluations using the following evaluation procedure and items.

(1) Evaluation procedure

The members of each working group go to their respective WPI center to conduct a site visit. Based on their observations and exchange of views with the center’s researchers, they evaluate the items stipulated below and compile their findings in a draft report along with comments and recommendations. The program director and officers will provide the WPI centers with the contents of these draft reports before the Program Committee convenes. If the centers respond to the draft reports, the program director and officers will discuss the content of the responses and will decide the report for each center.

The Program Committee will decide the final assessment results. They will base their decisions upon a report compiled from the reports of the program director and officers and the hearings held on each center, and upon an overall assessment of each center that reflects the below-stipulated evaluation items and takes into account the results of a questionnaire survey on the degree to which the centers are recognized within the scientific community. At this point, the Program Committee will determine what points of improvement to issue to each center.

(2) Evaluation items and points

The interim evaluation is to cover the following items, using as reference the midterm goals to be achieved set by each center at the time of their establishment.

1) Science level

- Is the center making the quality of progress that gives it a top world-level research standard?
- Is the center seeking to resolve world-level scientific issues? Is their achievement expected to exert an impact on society?
- Is the center generating new knowledge or does it have especially noteworthy research accomplishments?
- Are the equipment and facilities appropriate for a top world-level research center? Is that environment functioning effectively?
- Is the center securing a sufficient amount of research funding from external and other sources?

2) Interdisciplinary research activities

- Is some special effort being made to fuse multiple fields?
- What research advances are being made by fusing fields?

3) Globalization of the institution

Researchers at the center

- Have a number of frontline researchers been assembled from around the world?
- Have postdocs and other young researchers been effectively secured through open international solicitations?

Research environment

- Are measures taken to ensure that the overseas researchers can comfortably devote themselves to their research at the center?
- If the center is collaborating with overseas organizations, is its framework for conducting such international collaboration functioning effectively?

4) Organizational reform

- Is effective progress being made in creating an operational framework under the strong leadership of the center director?
- Are administrative personnel appointed who can use English to facilitate the work process, and are they functioning effectively?
- Has a system been established to innovate and reform the operational and administrative organization, and is it functioning effectively?
- Is the support received from the host institution sufficient for the center to achieve its project objectives, and is this support being used effectively?

5) Future prospects of the centers' projects

- Will the center's future program, including policy and plans, enable the achievement of its objectives?

- Will the host institution be able to sustain the center as a top world-level research center after project funding has ended, or is it carrying out such a forward-looking program?

(3) Overall Rankings and Criteria

Rankings	Criteria
S	Progress being made in establishing the center exceeds its initial goals. Even greater progress in developing itself as a “top world-level research center” is anticipated.
A	It should be possible for the center to achieve its initial goals by continuing its current efforts.
B	More effort will be needed to achieve the center’s goals, including consideration given to the Committee’s advice.
C	Under the current state, it is deemed difficult for the center to achieve its initial goals. It will, therefore, need to effectively amend its plan, taking into consideration the Committee’s advice.
D	Given the state of progress to date, it is deemed difficult for the center to achieve its initial goals even if further effort is made to do so. Therefore, the center project should be terminated.

4. Others

(1) Reflecting the Evaluation Results

In the evaluation, the Program Committee may state stringent recommendations to the WPI centers so as to render strong guidance for their project. These may include the following changes with regard to the WPI centers: center director, make-up of principal investigators, some targeted fields, some research objectives, and center status (e.g., termination).

(2) Disclosure and dissemination of information

So as to ensure the sound implementation of the evaluation, neither the evaluation process nor the materials used in it are to be publically disclosed.

The evaluation results will be posted on the WPI website and related information widely disseminated after the evaluation process is completed.

(3) Conflicts of interest

If any of the below-listed elements are applicable to a Program Committee member, program director, program officer, or working group member, s/he will not be eligible to participate in this evaluation process.

- a) If s/he is a full- or part-time employee of the host institution (or is scheduled to become one), or if s/he has been employed by the host institution within the past three years
- b) If s/he is a participant in the center project, or has been in the past three years

- c) If s/he has a relationship with the center's chief entire-project officer, center director, or chief center-project officer in either of the following two cases:
 - (1) Is a relative or has a similarly close personal relationship with them
 - (2) Has a close mentor relationship with them
- d) If s/he is a member of an evaluation committee established within the subject center, or scheduled to become one
- e) If s/he is closely engaged in joint research with a person who is participating in the subject center
- f) If s/he would stand to gain something from the activities of the subject center, or is in a position of opposition or competition vis-à-vis the center
- g) If s/he has any other reason that would make it difficult to conduct a neutral and fair evaluation.

(4) Confidentiality

Program Committee members, the program director, program officers, and working group members are prohibited from disclosing any personal information or evaluation-related information learned during their participation in the evaluation process. To maintain good stewardship over garnered information and data, including reports and documents, they should be kept securely, separated from other materials.

(5) Other

Other information on carrying out this evaluation is contained in separate documents. When deemed necessary, these documents may be sent to all the centers being reviewed.