

FY 2023

Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers
Questions and Answers Regarding Application

April 2023

Science and Technology Policy Bureau, MEXT

2023 Leading Initiative for Excellent Young Researchers - Questions and Answers Regarding Application

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<1. Project details>

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

○ Requirements for research institutions (Application Guidelines pp. 4 to 6)

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.

Q1103 Is it allowed to present the posts for the public recruitment on the university website and later update the information in order to call for the applications by EYR candidates, once MEXT confirms that the requirements are met? Is there any other necessary notice to give when institutions first present posts on the web to open call?

- A. Please clearly state that the presentation as a post of LEADER may be made in due course. Accordingly, the statement such as, ‘While the conformity with the requirements is currently being checked by MEXT, the application as a post of excellent young researchers (EYRs) for young researchers is scheduled to be open as well when satisfying the aforementioned requirements.’, may be applicable. Besides giving applicants the notifications, please ensure to carry out a fair and transparent recruitment process.

○ Form of employment (Application Guidelines p. 5)

Q1104 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.

Q1105 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]) before starting negotiation among the parties, and to have established the related rules before starting the employment.

Q1106 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 5-10 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.

Q1107 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.

Q1108 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.

Q1109 On the Application Guidelines p.5, it says employment is to be carried out under stable personnel system. On the Q1106, it says it may be recognized to have met the requirements if the employment is secured for about 5-10 years. Do the posts such as in the following satisfy the requirements when they are not under the tenure track system?

- (i) Assistant Professor whose term is 5 years
- (ii) Assistant Professor whose term is 5 years and may later gain a tenured lecturer or a higher faculty appointment

- A. While the program guidelines encourage the stable personnel system such as a tenure track position and an indefinite contract, a post may be approved for publication depending on terms of employment including individual lengths of term and employment status. In other words, the posts (i) and (ii) (particularly when it has a certain degree of probability of indefinite employment) have possibilities to get eligible despite they are not under the contract tenure track system. It is advisable to arrange an appropriate employment condition that would meet the program guidelines. MEXT checks the posts presented by the applicant institutions and notifies the institution when there are concerns over the conformity.

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

Q1110 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.

Q1111 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.

Q1112 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.

Q1113 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)**

Q1114 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 p.15, Research Institutions Form)**

Q1115 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.

Q1116 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.

Q1117 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.

Q1118 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.

Q1119 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)**

Q1120 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.

1-2. Publication of post (Application Guidelines pp.8, 9) [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? When does MEXT carry out checking in such a case?

- A. MEXT primarily checks formal conformance regarding requirements for form of employment and research environment of the posts being offered by research institutions. Checking is carried out when MEXT receives the submission of a post. If it is not possible to judge the conformance to the requirements based on the submitted materials, additional materials may be individually asked for.

Q1202 In reference to the guidance given in p.9 of the Application Guidelines:” The period for offering posts shall be up to Tuesday, December 12, 2023. Post offer is accepted on an as-necessary basis”, is the final deadline for submission of a post advanced when the number of certified EYRs reaches the maximum number planned for selection in FY2023?

A. The final deadline for submission of a post is 17:00 December 12, 2023 as specified in the Application guidelines.

This program receives a submission of a post by institutions that do not apply for funding.

Q1203 Why is a submission of a post allowed till December 12 while the reviews to select EYRs are scheduled in September? The reviews and selections might be finished by then.

A. If, at the time of the review, the 10 candidate quotas allocated for this fiscal year's funding support are not filled, or even if the funding support quotas are filled, those who have completed negotiations with the relevant parties may still be selected as EYRs based on the results of the review, even after September 2023. In addition, since this project also accepts post proposals from institutions that do not wish to receive funding support, we have set the presentation period to December 12, 2023, to allow time for negotiations between EYR candidates and those institutions beyond the review and decision period.

Q1204 How many days will it take for a post presented after the primary deadline to be released to the public afterwards?

A. Publishing is arranged for around one week whenever possible. It may take more time when a submission was made soon after the primary deadline.

Q1205 Could we understand that the timing of the post proposal does not affect the selection of EYRs?

A. No, the timing of the post proposal does not affect the selection of EYRs. EYRs are determined from applicants and candidates whose negotiation completion report is provided by the end of August 2023. (As for the applicants, they must complete negotiations between the relevant parties and be selected as candidates by the MEXT after being reviewed by the Selection Committee.)

If number of EYRs, whose negotiation completion report is submitted with request of funding support, exceeds the scheduled number, MEXT will determine the top candidates found to be more excellent than others as the EYRs supported with Funds, based on the review results. For further details, refer to "II.6. Scheduled number and determination of excellent young researchers" on the Application Guidelines.

Q1206 According to the Application Guidelines, the posts in principle shall be registered on JREC-IN Portal or disclosed on websites of research institutions. When should an institution publish the post information after submission?

A. There is no particular specification regarding which organization should publish first. In the case of publication at JREC-IN Portal, the secretariat arranges the

publication date based on the date when JSPS uploaded the post information on the program website. It is advisable that the post information would be published on the web according to the circumstances of your institution.

In any case, please make sure that the selection process is carried out in a fair and transparent manner.

1-3. Applicants (Young Researchers) (Application Guidelines pp.6 to 8, Researcher Form) [For researchers]

○ Requirements for applicants (Young Researchers) (Application Guidelines pp.6 to 8)

Q1301 In the Application Guidelines, it says “2) As of April 1, 2024, 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 pp.6 to 8 of the Application Guidelines.

Q1302 In the Application Guidelines, it says “2) As of April 1, 2024, 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, 2024, 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, 2024, 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, 2024, 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 2018).” 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 I will be applying for continued eligibility for FY2023. However, because I will be 40 years of age as of April 1, 2024, I will not satisfy the age requirement for the FY2023 Recruitment. 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 15, 2023).

Q1307 Are the applicants who are eligible to continue their EYR candidate status qualified straightaway if they apply?

- A. To be qualified as those who continue the candidate eligibility, applicants should complete the application procedures for FY2023 EYR recruitment as stipulated in p.8, "II-2-c Points to be considered" of the Application Guidelines. Those who continue the candidate eligibility and go through review in this year shall be treated the same. Please make sure to follow the procedures correctly to get an EYR candidate status continued. The application status on the menu for applicants in the electronic application system shows the message "Application being processed by JSPS" when the application was received. Please sign in the electronic application system and check your application status before the deadline. The message "Application being processed by JSPS" is shown when JSPS received your application. A modified message "Application accepted by JSPS" is shown when the application was received after the deadline.

Q1308 The review for candidate selection is scheduled after the deadline (August 31, 2023) of submission of the Form 3 (research institutions) "Negotiation Completion Reports".

Does the lack of completion of negotiation affect negatively on the document review results?

- A. Results of document reviews are given regardless of reaching or not reaching a completion of negotiation among the parties.
Still, in case an applicant is qualified as an EYR candidate by MEXT based on the document review results, selected candidate whose negotiation completion report is submitted before the end of August and found to be more excellent than others is determined as an EYR who is to receive the funding support.

○ **Researcher Form, etc.**

Q1309 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.

Q1310 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).

Q1311 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.

- **Researcher Form, etc (If a person who continues his/her candidate eligibility wishes to update all the application contents to go through the review in the current fiscal year)**

Q1312 Are applicants allowed to change “Field” while processing the Researcher Form 1 on the application system, if research field has been changed since the applicant is selected as an candidate?

- A. Applicants are allowed to change input of “Field” if the applicant wish to change research field as progress of research since the applicant is selected as an candidate. As in Q1309, 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.

Q1313 According to “3. Achievement” on Research Form 2, it requires “3 significant achievements, carrier events, experiences, etc. since 2018” to be describe. Are applicants allowed to describe achievements from FY2016 (candidates in FY2021) or FY 2017 (candidates in FY2022) to align with the year when the applicant was selected as a candidate?

A. Yes, applicants are allowed. While processing Researcher Form1 and Researcher Form 2 for the additional application, applicant may either update forms from previous year or take new forms to process for this year.

Q1314 The candidate applied for both continuation and additional application to go through review in FY2023. In this case, is there any possibility to lose the candidate eligibility based on the review results of additional application?

A. Going through the review for the current fiscal year does not result in losing the candidate eligibility, if applying for continuation of the candidate eligibility as described in the Application Guidelines IV.1. is completed. Further terms of schedule for continuation of eligibility is explained in the Application Guidelines.

○ **Selection of EYR candidates, etc. (Application Guidelines p.9, Review Guidelines)**
[For researchers]

Q1315 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.9 to 11)

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. Researchers shall check the application acceptance period set for each post and contact research institutions before the application deadline.

Q1402 In the Application Guidelines, it says “Research 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?

- 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 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 15, 2023) 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 and start employment right away, if it is after the application deadline (June 15, 2023) 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 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 “II-1-e Points to be considered” on page 6 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 15, 2023)” 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 which the negotiation should begin prior to the determination of candidates, 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**

Q1411 If a researcher applies for the “continuation of candidate eligibility” described in “II-2-c Points to be considered” on page 8 of the Application Guidelines, how would negotiation among the parties be carried out?

A. Similarly to the researchers undergoing FY2023 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 negotiation among the parties before the decision of EYR candidates within the period set forth by the research institution.

Q1412 Is it acceptable for a research institution to have negotiation among the parties by targeting researchers with continued candidate eligibility alone or FY2023 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 FY2023 applicants alone.

Q1413 When negotiation among the parties is completed with a candidate who submitted an additional application , there are two receipt numbers , one when applicant is selected as a candidate and other is from the additional application. Which receipt number is appropriate for “2. Post information, Researcher information” on the Form 3 “Negotiation Completion Reports”?

A. If the negotiation among the parties is completed, receipt number (202390xxx) from the additional application needs to be input on the Form 3 “Negotiation Completion Reports”.

1-5. Determination of EYR (Application Guidelines pp.11 to 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-(2)” on pp.11,12 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 14 of the Application Guidelines, the upper limit of the additional support is “the number of EYRs that are hired in FY2022 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 of the Application Guidelines: “From FY2021, in cases where a company (excluding research institutions of non-private companies) that offers a post on the JREC-IN portal, but does not offer a post in the LEADER, hires a new applicant or a person who continues his/her candidate eligibility, as long as MEXT judges that the post meets the requirements for the post in the LEADER specified in 1 above, the post will be considered equivalent to the position offered by 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 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. (New applicants must first be assessed by the Selection Committee and then decided on as candidates by the MEXT.) ”, 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

Q1506 Could an institution cancel an internal employment decision about the candidate if s/he was not qualified as an EYR candidate and was not certified as an EYR although the negotiation among the parties had been concluded?

- A. Please refer to rules and regulation of your institution and national laws to verify that the cancellation or other decision concerning employment has been made in compliance with them.

Q1507 Considering that the quota is allocated to one applicant per one post, there are possibilities such as below;

- a new applicant may not be qualified as an EYR candidate despite the negotiation among the parties was concluded.
- If negotiation completion reports are submitted in excess of the scheduled number of EYRs by the end of August 2022, the candidate may not be determined as the EYR supported with Funds depending on the review results in FY2022

When applying for a candidacy, could an institution that received several applicants submit Research Institutions Form 3 their “Negotiation Completion Reports” while making a list of the applicants who concluded the negotiation among the parties in the order of selection priority?

In such a case, is there a formal procedure for reporting the selected EYR candidate whom the institution has decided to employ?

- A. Please observe rules and regulation of your institution and national laws when the selection process takes place. It is not required to give priorities over the candidates when the Form 3 “Negotiation Completion Reports” is prepared for submission. It is required to be amended and resubmitted when any changes takes place in the information given to the form after the EYR candidate selection decision was made.

Q1508 In reference to the guidance given in p. 11 of the Application Guidelines:” if no funding support is desired, or if the determination as an EYR is desired despite being ineligible for support with Funds, such candidate may be selected as an EYR even in excess of the scheduled number of EYRs.”, is the purpose of application determined by the candidate, or by the institution or by both of them? Are there any procedures to follow?

- A. As stated on page 19 of the Application Guidelines, each time when the negotiation among the parties is completed between the research institution and an EYR candidate or applicant in the period from September 2023 through the end of March 2024 and determination to an EYR is desired regardless of whether supported with Funds, please fill out the necessary information in the document (Research Institution Form 3) and submit it. The institution and the candidate may need to confirm the purpose of application respectively while working on to reach an agreement between them since the submission of negotiation completion report is required.

Q1509 Could an institution that offer a post to applicants know the submission status of Research Institutions Form 3 “Negotiation Completion Report” by other institutions as well as the updated EYR selection results?

- A. Regarding the submission status of "Negotiation Completion Reports," if the

number of applications exceeds the quota of researchers to be supported by the grant before the report submission deadline, this may be disclosed.

The status of EYR selection will be announced on the MEXT website when all EYRs eligible for funding support have been selected.

Q1510 In reference to the guidance given in p.11 of the Application Guidelines:” if the determination as an EYR is desired despite being ineligible for support with Funds, such candidate may be selected as an EYR even in excess of the scheduled number of EYRs.”, is a certification-only EYR still not funded for the next five-year term after obtaining certification as EYR in such case?

A. Funding is not provided for certification-only EYRs.

Q1511 JREC-IN Portal publishes the open recruitment information posted by intermediary companies. On the other hand, it seems that each company is uploading the same recruitment notice on its website and directly accept applications without mediation. Is the post, which was applied via a company website, i.e., apart from JREC-IN Portal, equivalently considered as to the post published on the LEADER program website?

A. The following elements are necessary to be considered equivalently. First of all, the post published on JREC-IN Portal must satisfy the requirements for the LEADER post. Moreover, the posts should basically be published on JREC-IN Portal. In summary, every selected EYR candidate, who applied via a company’s website, must take up the post that exactly matches with the one posted on JREC-IN Portal. Additionally, the company must contact MEXT to confirm the conformity of EYR candidate-employee’s post with the requirements.

1-6. Contents of support (Application Guidelines pp.13 to 15) [For research institutions]

Q1601 Page 13 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).

Q1602 7-[A]-b-1) on page 14 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 15, 2023. 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.

Q1603 On pages 14 and 15 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.” 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.

Q1604 On pages 14 and 15 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.” 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.

Q1605 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.

Q1606 “7-[B] Industry-academia collaboration activity expenditures” on page 15 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.

Q1607 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 13 to 15 of the Application Guidelines depending on the fiscal year?

- A. As described in Q1606, 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].

Q1608 On the Application Guidelines p.11, “if no funding support is desired, or if the determination as an EYR is desired despite being ineligible for support with Funds, such candidate may be selected as an EYR even in excess of the scheduled number of EYRs”. May the candidate-employee who is ineligible for support with Funds be selected as EYR if the Form 3 is amended, stating that his/her institution will not seek for funding support despite the initial application for financial assistance, and resubmitted?

- A. Each institution is responsible for the employment decision about both funded and non-funded EYR candidates. When the institution decides to employ the EYR candidate who is ineligible for support with Funds, s/he may be selected as EYR if the Form 3 “Negotiation Completion Reports” is amended, stating that his/her institution will not seek for funding support, and resubmitted.

<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 pages 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 FY2023 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 “2023L0123,” please enter 8 digits excluding L (20230123 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 JPMXS0320230123 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 JPMXS0320230123.

EYRs who were selected before FY2019 are not required to enter their grant number (JPMXS032023~) .

Q2007 If an applicant is selected as an EYR who is not eligible for funding, is he/she required to submit a Project Plan, which is required at the time of application for funding, or an Achievement Report, which is required upon completion of the grant project?
Is he/she also required to complete the "Survey and questionnaire survey" on pages 20 and 25 of the Guidelines?

- A. EYRs who are not eligible for funding support are not required to submit a Project Plan and Achievement Report. If there are EYRs eligible for funding support and EYRs not eligible within the same institution, the number of EYRs not eligible for funding support will be included in the number of EYRs at the institution. However, only the EYRs that are eligible for funding support should be included in the Project Plan and Achievement Report, while descriptions of EYRs that are not eligible for funding support should not be included. Please note that the EYRs who are not eligible for funding support are requested to complete the Survey and Questionnaire. We appreciate your cooperation.