

BITRECS
**Biomedicine international training research programme for excellent
clinician-scientists**

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1. Who are BITRECS clinician-scientists?

They are promising and motivated postdoctoral researchers who have combined research with clinical activity and are interested in improving their research career for the next 3 years. To be selected by the programme they should prove an excellent track record in research. Furthermore, they can come from any background (such as physicians, biologists, pharmacists, physicists, chemists, psychologists among others) but it is mandatory to certify a clinical residency training or experience acquired in a hospital or a healthcare centre contributing directly or indirectly to the patient care. BITRECS is a unique opportunity for these clinician-scientists to boost their scientific career and have as future perspective to become clinician-scientist leaders in the future.

2. Which candidates are eligible to apply?

Candidates fulfilling all eligibility criteria at the time of the call deadline: mobility rule, research and clinical training/experience and research publications. For more details about how to fulfil all these criteria, please check the “eligibility criteria” in the call section of the BITRECS website. In the same section you will find an “auto-check” questionnaire enabling you to check your eligibility before applying to the programme. Also please be aware that a good command of English is required to apply to BITRECS. In fact the candidate must demonstrate a good command in the face-to-face interview of the selection process.

The eligibility has to be proven and demonstrated. The documents to certify the accomplishment of the eligibility should be presented in English or attached to their translation in English.

The eligibility window can be extended in terms of residency training/clinical activity for the relevant number of days up to 1 year in case of leaves/career breaks if they are over 3 months.

3. Which mobility schemes are available in BITRECS?

Two mobility schemes are now available:

1. **Outgoing scheme:** 12-18 month in any country worldwide different from Spain and 18-24 month back at IDIBAPS. In exceptional and well-justified cases, you can also perform your contract initially at IDIBAPS for up to 6 months.
2. **Incoming scheme:** 36-month at IDIBAPS.

4. Could I apply if I am not an EU resident?

Yes. This program is open to experienced researchers living all over the world.

5. Could I apply if I am not a EU national?

Yes. This program is open to experienced researchers from any nationality.

6. Should I be able to prove that I fulfil the mobility rule?

Yes. All candidates must be able to prove their fulfilment of the mobility rule once selected through documents related to their work, studies, residency, etc.

7. Could I apply if I have lived or worked in Spain previously?

Yes, if you have worked in Spain previously for 12 months or more in the last 3 years but plan to perform your outgoing phase initially in a country different from Spain at the date of the call deadline. However, if you choose to spend up to 6 months at IDIBAPS before the outgoing phase or the 36 months at IDIBAPS, then you should not have lived for more than 12 months out of the last 36 months in Spain (reference date is still the date of the call deadline).

8. Could I apply if I defended my thesis but do not have my PhD diploma yet?

Yes. All candidates who are experienced researcher with a PhD must have defended their thesis prior to the call deadline. However some of them who defended it shortly before the call deadline might not have their PhD diploma yet. In that case they should present an official document in which the date of the thesis defence must appear.

9. Could I apply if I am an experienced researcher without a PhD?

Yes. Those candidates who have completed a clinical residency training in the last 10 years prior to the call deadline and do not have a PhD diploma can apply to BITRECS. However they must demonstrate that they are experienced researchers. Thus they must demonstrate 4 years of full-time equivalent research experience through a certificate.

10. As an experienced researcher with a clinical residency training but without PhD, how can I demonstrate the 4 years full-time equivalent of research experience?

BITRECS candidates are expected to enclose a letter or certificate signed by their supervisor/s or any other person entitled to certify that the experience gained in research can identify them as experienced researchers by demonstrating at least:

- Systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of research associated with this field.
- Ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial programme of research with integrity.
- Contribution to their field of study through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, innovation or application.
- Critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
- Capacity to explain the outcome of their research to the research community.
- Ability to take ownership for and to manage own career prospecting setting realistic and achievable career goals, identifying and developing ways to improve employability.

It is also expected for these candidates to have scientific merits that will demonstrate their status as experienced researchers (researchers with a doctoral degree or having at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience). BITRECS is a postdoctoral programme and for this reason the early stage researchers (researchers in the first four years of their research careers and not yet have been awarded a doctoral degree) must avoid applying to the programme.

11. I have not yet obtained my PhD. How is the four years of full-time equivalent research experience calculated?

Only postgraduate research experience is relevant. It is taken into account the date when the candidate obtained the degree which would formally entitle him or her to embark on a doctorate.

12. Could I apply if I did not perform any clinical residency training?

Yes, BITRECS is also open to those researchers who can prove at least 3 years of clinical practice equivalent to the experience acquired in clinical residency training (certificate/s of professional activity required) in the last 10 years prior to the call deadline. Indeed, IDIBAPS is aware that some countries

offer clinical residency training to professionals of different disciplines (in Spain, for example it is open to medical doctors, pharmacists, biologists, psychologists among others) whereas in other countries (EU countries or not), this chance is only offered to physicians. This way BITRECS offers genuinely equal opportunities to clinician-scientists with different backgrounds.

13. Which experience is accepted in BITRECS if I did not perform any official clinical residency training?

It is accepted to demonstrate experience acquired in a hospital or healthcare centre equivalent to the expertise acquired during an official clinical residency training. This experience acquired in offices, facilities or labs located in either hospitals or healthcare centres should be equivalent to the expertise acquired in a clinical residency training. This means that during this/these experience/s the candidates must have issued documentation or have made decisions for the patient care, having the total responsibility or at least part of it, in any of the following activities: clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, care, prognosis and/or rehabilitation.

14. Could I perform patient care or other activities during my BITRECS fellowship?

BITRECS Programme offers full-time research only placements. If you find the opportunity to perform additional activity during the fellowship, not being part of your research project with the purpose of increasing your employability in the future or maintaining the contact with the healthcare environment, it is mandatory for you to apply for consent to the BITRECS Programme manager. Your case will be consulted to the European Commission. If you are allowed to perform this activity, it cannot be a cause for not accomplishing with the obligations linked to the BITRECS fellowship.

15. Which is the minimum scientific publication record to apply for BITRECS?

To be eligible, you must be the main author (first, senior or corresponding) of at least one original article in journals with a JCR impact factor ranked in the first quartile (Q1) for a specific subject category.

Only Web of Science Journal Citation Reports (JCR) impact factor rankings for the corresponding year of publication or 2017 (if the 2018 impact factor is not available yet) will be considered (<https://jcr.incites.thomsonreuters.com>).

16. How do I apply?

Applications need to be presented through the BITRECS online application system accessible from the BITRECS website through “**My application**”. It is mandatory to register yourself to have a login and a password. You should read carefully the guide for applicants and check your eligibility before submitting your candidacy.

17. How many applications can be submitted?

One application per call and per person can be submitted.

18. What type of research can I propose?

The programme is aligned to the research freedom principle. This means the fellow can choose freely the topic of the research proposal but fitting it into one of the BITRECS research lines available in the website for the call. The research acceptable for BITRECS can be basic, translational or clinical (this research can lead to have direct contact with patients).

19. How do I design my research project?

You freely choose your research project. But you should:

- Fit this research into one of the proposed BITRECS research lines
- Get in touch with the corresponding PI so he/she can help you with the design of your proposal. This is not mandatory but we strongly recommend you to do so
- In case you are interested in the outgoing scheme, find an institution outside Spain to perform the outgoing phase and an outgoing PI. They should provide you with a letter of support/commitment to present as a part of your application.

20. Which foreign institution can I choose in the outgoing scheme?

You freely choose the outgoing institution in which the outgoing PI is working. It can be at any location worldwide. At application stage, it is mandatory to present a letter of support/commitment to your application signed by the responsible of this institution. The candidate should be duly hosted and supported during the 12-18 months of the outgoing phase. Additionally, the fellow will receive co-supervision of the outgoing PI, who will be coordinated with the IDIBAPS PI, along the whole fellowship.

21. Who can help me with the design of my research project?

The IDIBAPS PI responsible for the research line that I choose can help me with the design of my research project. Also, in case of choosing the outgoing scheme, the PI from the outgoing institution can assess me on this matter.

22. How can I contact with the IDIBAPS PI?

In the application section of the BITRECS website, you will find the research lines. All of them include the email of the PI who will be in charge of supervising the fellow in case he/she is selected. At application stage, this person will be available to help you with the design of the research project.

23. Is it possible to update my application after the call deadline?

No, modifications concerning the information included in the forms will not be accepted after the call deadline.

24. Is it possible to submit additional material after the call deadline?

Yes, if some of the required documents are missing at the time of the call closing date, you will be considered as ineligible in a provisional way. In that case, you will be given one week to provide us with the missing documents through email. Once these documents are validated, if correct, you will be considered eligible.

25. Which communications will I receive along the selection process?

After the eligibility checking the candidates will be informed if they accomplish with the criteria. After the remote phase they will be informed if they move to the next step. After the face-to-face interview they will be informed if they are being offered a fellowship. Moreover, all eligible candidates evaluated will receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) with the results of the evaluation either after the remote phase or after the face-to-face interview.

26. When and how the results of the calls will be communicated?

The final decision for those of you who are selected will be made at the beginning of January 2019 (approximately) for the 2nd call by e-mail. Additionally, the resolutions of the calls will be published in the BITRECS website.

27. Which is the timeline of the process for accepting the fellowship?

Candidates being offered the grant should actively accept the offer within 15 working days. Otherwise, reserve list candidates may be contacted. It is expected the candidate to start within 1-3 months, although exceptions may be considered (if justified).

28. How many fellowships are available?

The program will fund a total of 10 fellowships.

29. What is the duration of the fellowship?

The program proposes a 3-year duration full-time contract.

30. In case of choosing the outgoing scheme, can I start my fellowship at IDIBAPS?

Yes, in case you duly justify it. You may perform up to 6 months at IDIBAPS at the beginning of the contract. In this case, you should not have been living in both the location of the outgoing phase and Spain for more than 12 months in the next 3 years before the call deadline to be eligible (Marie S. Curie mobility rule). However, the general scheme foresees that all candidates should start with the outgoing phase at an institution different from IDIBAPS (any other country than Spain) during 12-18 months and then perform the return phase during 18-24 months at IDIBAPS. In that case the MSCA mobility rule only applies for the country of the outgoing phase.

31. Could I perform a secondment during my fellowship?

Yes. A secondment in the non-academic sector can be foreseen but it should be mentioned at the application stage and explained in the 36-month research proposal. It can be proposed for 1-2 months at any of the phases, either outgoing or return phases.

32. When should the fellowship start?

The exact date of incorporation will be agreed with IDIBAPS once the fellowship is granted. Once you are granted, you can start immediately the preparation of formal issues (work permits, visa etc.). You will be invited to join BITRECS as soon as possible after the publication of the final resolution/evaluation results. Nevertheless you may join BITRECS later if a personal reason justifies it. It will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

33. Which are the conditions?

BITRECS fellows will be placed within the host group chosen during the application process. The working contract will be between IDIBAPS and the fellow whereas the specific working conditions of IDIBAPS, outgoing institution (if the fellow chooses the outgoing scheme) and the MSCA-COFUND program apply.

IDIBAPS covers the Spanish Social Security contributions, as well as, the **annual gross salary** per fellow that could be:

- 50.800€ for the fellows choosing the incoming mobility scheme (36 months at IDIBAPS).
- 53.200€ for the fellows selection the outgoing mobility scheme (12-18 month outgoing phase and 18-24 month phase at IDIBAPS).

34. Are reference letters mandatory?

Yes. Minimum one and maximum three letters of reference should be uploaded.

35. Can the BITRECS fellowship be prolonged?

Yes. Despite BITRECS offers a fixed-term fellowship of 36 months a parental leave or special leave over 3 months can arise during the fellowship. In those cases, an extension may be added at the end of the contract for the relevant number of days.

36. How do I know about the state of my application?

Applicants will be informed on the progress at all stages of the process by the BITRECS Programme Manager. The candidates being assessed in the remote evaluation phase and the face-to-face interview phase will receive e-mail communications informing about their status in the process. They can ask more details at any stage through writing an e-mail to bitrecs@idibaps.org.

37. Which follow-up will provide BITRECS to the fellow?

At initial stage a kick-off meeting will be organized at IDIBAPS to welcome all the fellows. Moreover, once a year they will be invited to the yearly assessment meetings. These meetings will monitor the progress in a formal setting. Before these meetings, the fellows and the supervisors will be asked to prepare some documentation.



IDIBAPS will be responsible to organise these meetings and cover the fellow's expenses to attend them.