

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

**GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS**

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## A - WHY BITRECS

The Institut d'Investigacions Biomèdiques August Pi i Sunyer (August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute - IDIBAPS) is a centre for research of excellence that tackles high-prevalence, high-morbidity and high-mortality diseases. Founded in 1996, it is a public consortium whose members are the Catalan Government, the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona, the University of Barcelona's School of Medicine and the CSIC Biomedical Research Institute in Barcelona. This strategic composition is ideal for creating powerful synergies and ensuring that IDIBAPS research is effectively transferred to the patient and featured in the training of new health professionals.

IDIBAPS is a pioneer in clinician-scientist promotion. Clinician-scientists have a true understanding of health problems directly from their clinical practice, dealing directly with patients and diseases. They are also the professionals prepared to perform genuine translational research that bridges the valley of death and transforms biomedical research discoveries into tangible clinical treatments and technologies. Unfortunately, in Europe and beyond, there is a current decrease in the number of these professionals. Their recruitment and retention is becoming more difficult, despite their value. With the purpose to fight against this trend, IDIBAPS has decided to launch **BITRECS "Biomedicine international training research programme for excellent clinician-scientists"**.

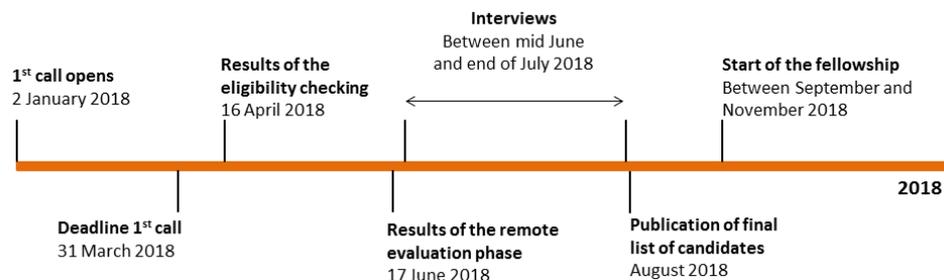
## B - BITRECS FIRST CALL 2018

### **1. Call purpose**

The present international and peer-reviewed call seeks to recruit **the first 5 promising and motivated young postdoctoral clinician-scientists** of the BITRECS training research programme. BITRECS expects these postdoctoral fellows to implement a 36-month research project in the context of an international collaboration, 12-18 months in an outgoing institution and 18-24 months at IDIBAPS, while they are trained to gain new skills and independence to **become clinician-scientist leaders in the future**.

### **2. Timeline 2018**

The tentative schedule of the first call includes a selection process organised into 3 phases (eligibility checking; remote evaluation phase; and, face-to-face interview):



The exact date of incorporation will be agreed with IDIBAPS once the award is granted. The candidates will be invited to join BITRECS **between 1 and 3 months after the publication of the final resolution/evaluation results**. However, if there is any duly justified personal reason, such as visa requirements, this period can be slightly extended.



### 3. How to apply

Applications for the BITRECS programme have to be submitted through the **on-line application tool** available on the BITRECS website (*My application* at [www.bitrecs.idibaps.org](http://www.bitrecs.idibaps.org)). Proposals must be written in English. The deadline for applications is **March, 31<sup>st</sup> 2018**.

#### 3.1 Structure of the on-line application

The application consists of an **on-line form** with the following sections:

1. Personal information.
2. General data of the outgoing and return phases
3. Optional secondment in the non-academic sector
4. Degree
5. Clinical residency training/clinical practice
6. PhD
7. Research experience
8. Motivation and future prospects
9. Attachments
10. 36-month research proposal
11. Last steps

All these sections include instructions to help the candidate go through the application. Also they have a **maximum length of words with spaces included** that have to be respected.

The documents to be **uploaded** as part of the application in the section “9. Attachments” are:

- Letters of reference (between 1 and 3)
- Letter of support/commitment from the outgoing host institution
- Diplomas (Clinical residency training, PhD and/or English level)
- Certificates (Professional experience in clinical practice)

At the time of the call closing date, the form has to be **submitted**. If the documents to be uploaded are missing, the candidate will be considered ineligible in a provisional way and will be given one week to send the documents.

#### 3.2 Recommendations before presenting the on-line application

Before applying to BITRECS, we invite all potential candidates to:

- Confirm their profile is the one expected for the programme (*see section 1*).
- Check their eligibility to the BITRECS programme (*see section 4.1*).
- Read the evaluation criteria to evaluate their chance of success (*see section 5*).
- Be available to start the fellowship at the dates foreseen in the call tentative schedule (*see section 2*).
- Sign up to the BITRECS [on-line application tool](#) to be able to access the application forms.
- Read carefully in advance the application form (explanations, instructions and maximum length of words) to prepare the candidature in the best way (*see section 3.1*).
- Compile all the documents that should be uploaded as a part of the application (*see section 3.1*).



### 3.3 Recommendations for the preparation of the contents for the on-line application

The fellows should choose freely both the topic and the outgoing institution (**research freedom** principle).

For the preparation of the research proposal, the BITRECS programme recommends the candidates to:

- Read thoroughly the information of the selected research line and contact the IDIBAPS Principle Investigators (PIs) whilst preparing the **36-month research proposal** (see [Research lines](#) on the BITRECS website). The 36-month research proposal has to be both fitted into the selected research line and adequated for the programme.
- Consider that the research proposal has to include a work plan of the international collaboration (outgoing and return phases). The general structure expected for the project's work plan is 12-18 months in an outgoing institution and 18-24 months at IDIBAPS. However, if duly justified, it is also acceptable to propose up to 6 months at IDIBAPS, 12-18 months in an outgoing institution and the remaining 12-18 months at IDIBAPS again (*the mobility eligibility rule is different in each case, see section 4 on eligibility*).
- Be aware of the possibility to include in the proposal a secondment, 1-2 months of stay in an institution of the non-academic sector at any of the phases, if this provides it with an added value.

For the selection of the outgoing institution and PI:

- The outgoing institution could be located in any country in the world with the exception of Spain.
- The outgoing institution is expected to commit with the BITRECS Programme. A letter of support/commitment of this organisation will have to be presented at application stage describing what it offers to the fellow and programme.
- The outgoing PI will have to co-supervise the fellow together with the IDIBAPS supervisor. The fellow should use the lab facilities led by the outgoing PI and be supported to perform the research project. He/she is also expected to provide the fellow with training and networking opportunities.
- BITRECS makes available to the candidates a list of Partner organisations (see [Partner organisations](#) on the BITRECS website) including possible host institutions to perform their outgoing phase. Those candidates interested in these institutions can freely contact them.

## **4. Eligibility**

Candidates **must** meet the BITRECS eligibility criteria at the time of the **call deadline** (see *section 4.1*). 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 if proven career breaks are reported (*see section 4.2*).

If one or more of the eligibility criteria are not fulfilled, the candidate will be declared ineligible and his/her proposal will be withdrawn from any further consideration.



#### 4.1 BITRECS eligibility criteria

- **Mobility rule:** Not having resided or carried out the main activity in the country where the initial outgoing phase takes place for more than 12 months in the last 3 years immediately before the call deadline<sup>1</sup>.

The initial outgoing phase refers to the country in which the outgoing institution is located. However, exceptionally, it will be accepted to initiate the fellowship at IDIBAPS for up to 6 months. In that case, the mobility rule applies to both the country in which the outgoing institution is located and Spain.

- **Research experience:** Having obtained the PhD in the last 5 years prior to the call deadline (reference: thesis defence date).
- **Clinical training/experience:** Having experience in clinical practice in the last 5 years prior to the call deadline demonstrated through either:
  - a) proof of the clinical residency training (reference: ending date of the clinical residency training); or,
  - b) certificate/s proving at least 3 years of clinical practice activity issued by the institution(s) where this activity was performed. This experience, acquired in a hospital or healthcare centre, should be equivalent to the expertise acquired in a clinical residency training. Some eligible activities are patient clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, care, prognosis and/or rehabilitation. Besides, it is also eligible to certify experience acquired in a lab contributing to the patient care.

These two options (a and b) are accepted owing to the existence of different regulations at national level in terms of clinical residency training. This programme is directed to physicians but also to other professional backgrounds such as pharmacists, biologists, psychologists, medical physicists and nursing staff. All these professionals are invited to apply for BITRECS.

- **English language:** Having at least B2 level or equivalent (official diploma).
- **Research publications:** The candidate must be at least the main author (first, senior or corresponding author) in:
  - One original article in a journal with a JCR impact factor ranked in the first decile (D1) for a specific subject category; or
  - Two original articles 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 will be considered.

#### 4.2 Career break policy

The eligibility window can be extended in terms of PhD and residency training/clinical activity for the relevant number of days up to 1 year in the following cases of leaves if they are over 3 months: maternity or paternity leave (according to the Social Security General Regime

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<sup>1</sup> Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

regulations); illness or serious accident leading to medical leave; and, care of dependents according to Spanish Law 39/2006.

In case of any doubt concerning the eligibility criteria and prior to the submission of the application, please contact the BITRECS Programme Manager at [bitrecs@idibaps.org](mailto:bitrecs@idibaps.org).

### 5. Selection process and evaluation criteria

The evaluation process is based on excellence only. After this open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, BITRECS will be able to invite the final selected candidates.

The selection process is organised into the 3 phases described as follows: eligibility checking (this part determines whether a candidate fulfils the eligibility criteria); remote evaluation phase (this part of the selection process will select the best eligible candidates in terms of excellence); and, face-to-face interview (this part will help to judge the potential of each candidate to reach maturity to be future independent and outstanding European research leaders in the future).

Interviews will be face-to-face. IDIBAPS will be responsible for the organisation and costs of the attendance of the fellows to the interview. Alternative options will be proposed if administrative issues threaten to delay the whole selection process.

Evaluation criteria during the remote phase:

Candidate		Weight 60%
Track record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Publications, especially those as first or senior author</li> <li>✓ Impact in the scientific field (citations, journal impact factor)</li> </ul>	60%
Other scientific merits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Participation in funded research projects</li> <li>✓ Patents (pending or granted) and commercialization status</li> <li>✓ International exposure</li> <li>✓ International conferences</li> </ul>	30%
Adequacy and motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Adequacy of the candidate to the IDIBAPS research group</li> <li>✓ Motivation to enrol the programme</li> </ul>	10%
Research proposal		Weight 40%
Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Quality and credibility of the hypotheses, specific aims, methods and data analysis</li> <li>✓ Expected value of the predicted transfer of knowledge</li> <li>✓ Innovation capacity of the proposal in terms of biomedical research as well as of transferability of results</li> </ul>	50%
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Quality and credibility of the research in terms of career enhancement</li> <li>✓ Quality and credibility of the impacts to society</li> <li>✓ Potential future benefits for the clinical practice</li> </ul>	30%
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coherence and effectiveness of the tasks and activities of the work plan during the outgoing and return phase</li> <li>✓ Appropriateness of the institutional environments to implement the project</li> <li>✓ Appropriateness of the contingency measures</li> <li>✓ Attractiveness of the proposed research topic and feasibility to implement it at IDIBAPS</li> </ul>	20%



In the remote evaluation, it is mandatory for the candidates to reach a minimum level of excellence to be finally selected. Thus, the research proposal will only be evaluated if they reach for the part of the candidate a minimum threshold of 60%.

Evaluation criteria during the face-to-face interview:

Candidate		Weight
Potential European research leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Communication skills</li> <li>✓ Capacity to defend the research proposal and his/her candidacy</li> <li>✓ Career prospects to advance along the career path</li> <li>✓ Capacity to lead a research project: design, implementation and reporting</li> <li>✓ Team management skills</li> </ul>	70%
Motivation and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clear goals are set and aligned with those of IDIBAPS</li> <li>✓ Candidates show willingness and enthusiasm to enroll the programme</li> </ul>	30%

The evaluators will grade all eligible candidatures according to the following scale; the minimum threshold to be reached in each of these sections is 3:

- 0– The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information;
- 1– Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses;
- 2– Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses;
- 3– Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present;
- 4– Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present;
- 5– Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The final resolution will be published after the evaluation of the call and candidates will receive at the same time their Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). Within 15 days from the publication of the call’s results, candidates may submit a request for redress by sending an email at [bitrecs@idibaps.org](mailto:bitrecs@idibaps.org) if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated. The redress procedure will be strictly confidential.

An internal review committee will review the submission. A resolution will be given and sent by e-mail within one month from the reception. The technical or scientific appraisal of the evaluators will not be called into question. The selection and evaluation processes themselves ensure the independence and the objectivity of the evaluation.

**C - CONDITIONS OF THE BITRECS FELLOWSHIP**

**1. *Appointment conditions***

- Each candidate will sign a 3-year full-time contract for research only (fixed-term) at IDIBAPS including 22 days of working holidays and 4 days off work for personnel matters per year.
- The fellows may take time off from the BITRECS program due to illness, pregnancy-related illness, and maternity/paternity leave, in line with statutory provisions. Extension of the



contract can be accepted in some specific cases of leaves over 3 months. It will be determined on a case-by-base basis.

- In the workplace social security coverage (national insurance contribution and Spanish corresponding rights). Depending on the location of the outgoing phase an additional insurance will be recommended to be contracted by the fellow.
- IDIBAPS covers the Spanish Social Security contributions, as well as, the annual gross salary per fellow that could be:
  - 50.800€ for the fellows with mobility within the [28-EU members](#) or [associated countries to Horizon 2020](#). Both the fellow's origin and the fellow's destination for the outgoing phase must be among these countries. See *below examples 1 and 2*.
  - 53.200€ for the fellows with mobility from and/or to countries different to the 28-EU members or associated countries to Horizon 2020 (called third countries). The fellow's origin and/or the fellow's destination for the outgoing phase must be in third countries. See *below examples 3 and 4*.

In both scenarios the return phase is performed at IDIBAPS (Spain).

*Example 1: One fellow performs the outgoing phase at one organization in Sweden (EU member state) and the return phase at IDIBAPS in Spain (EU member state).*

*Example 2: One fellow performs the outgoing phase at one organization in Switzerland (associated country to Horizon 2020) and the return phase at IDIBAPS in Spain (EU member state).*

*Example 3: One fellow performs the outgoing phase at one organization in the United States of America (third country) and the return phase at IDIBAPS in Spain (EU member state).*

*Example 4: One fellow performs the outgoing phase at one organization in (third country) and the return phase at IDIBAPS in Spain (EU member state).*

- The candidate will benefit from a yearly allowance of 7.200€ for attending training and networking events (allowance managed by the BITRECS Programme manager). These activities to be sponsored, organised by IDIBAPS or other external bodies, must be appropriate for the programme and contribute to the career development of the fellow. Some examples are scientific seminars/congresses, workshops and others.
- Support for the mobility of the fellows.
- During their outgoing phase, the fellow will become an integral part of the outgoing hosting institution and, consequently, IDIBAPS will negotiate the fellow's access to its services and facilities.

Once hired by IDIBAPS, the fellows will receive a copy of the **Welcome Pack** where they will find practical information on IDIBAPS policies and internal regulations, as well as the facilities and services it offers. We strongly recommend you to have a look at the last section called "useful tips" as it provides insights on accommodation and other tips that might be useful for your installation in Catalonia during the return phase. Additional support can be provided at [bitrecs@idibaps.org](mailto:bitrecs@idibaps.org).

## 2. Training and career development opportunities

In order to make sure the fellows continue developing as top-level researchers and to ensure success in implementing their research project, they will be periodically assessed at different levels through:

- Supervision in the daily activity to follow-up the progress.



- Mentoring from a senior clinician-scientist to provide advice about future prospects and career development opportunities, especially regarding the personnel career plan of the fellows.
- Training in science through different research seminar series at IDIBAPS.
- Training in non-research oriented transferable skills through the participation in the Stepping-stone IDIBAPS programme related to career development and a specific training in business and entrepreneurship.
- Kick-off meeting and yearly assessment meetings will be face-to-face events organised by IDIBAPS in order to welcome the fellows and follow-up their research activity. Before these meetings, the fellows and their respective supervisors will have to submit yearly reports and prepare a short presentation.
- Specific support for exploitation and dissemination issues in order for the fellows to be further prepared to bring their research results to the clinical practice.
- Specialised advice for the dissemination activities to the fellows to encourage them to reach the society.

Meanwhile the fellows will benefit from life-long training opportunities in scientific aspects and networking with other clinician-scientists with the support of their research group. In addition to that, each laboratory encourages the researchers to take part to the lab meetings, journal club or seminars. It is expected that the outgoing institution will also invite the fellow to participate in training and networking events during their stay.

### **3. Responsibilities for the fellow**

The fellows will comply with the requirements of IDIBAPS and the outgoing institution. Some of these specific responsibilities are:

- Fully comply with current legislation and regulations at any of the hosting institutions.
- Respect the fundamental ethical principles, scientific practise and national, international and institutional regulations concerning ethical issues in research.
- Design at initial stage with the supervisors support the personnel career plan.
- Participate in all the training and career development opportunities offered by the BITRECS programme.
- Report the IDIBAPS Programme manager the research activity, if required.
- Report any aspect that may affect the correct implementation of the programme at any of the phases.
- Acknowledge BITRECS programme in any scientific or communications authored by them.

## **D - OTHER**

### **1. Legal regime**

All awardees will be subjected to the legal regime according to the law in force at the time of concluding the contract.

*In accordance with Organic Law 15/1999, 13 December, governing personal data protection, any personal data provided by applicants will be incorporated into the IDIBAPS Human Resources file. The purpose of keeping such data is to manage our relationship with applicants.*



Applicants may exercise the rights to access, change or delete said information by contacting the following e-mail address: [bitrecs@idibaps.org](mailto:bitrecs@idibaps.org)

## 2. Notes

The submission of an application for these fellowships implies all candidates' express acceptance of both these entry requirements and the criteria and decisions that IDIBAPS may make in case of any doubts regarding how to interpret the requirements and terms and conditions contained herein.

Detection of noncompliance with these entry requirements, regardless of when this occurs and the status in which the application is found within the fellowship awarding process, will result in automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship, should it have been already awarded. Should the research fellow not fulfil the aforementioned obligations, or any other obligation included among the terms and conditions of the fellowship, IDIBAPS reserves the right to act as it deems appropriate, including requesting the return of the amounts received.

