



International Program Associate

RIKEN offers doctoral students the opportunity to further their studies as International Program Associates under the supervision of a senior RIKEN scientist.

Ju-Hyung Kim

“Science knows no country,” said the famous French biologist, Louis Pasteur, and these words are behind the philosophy of the programs offered by RIKEN to non-Japanese researchers.

Launched in 2006, one of these programs offers doctoral students the opportunity to further their doctoral studies as an International Program Associate under the supervision of a senior RIKEN scientist. RIKEN invites non-Japanese doctoral candidates enrolled in PhD programs at universities that are participating in RIKEN's Joint Graduate School Program to carry out research at RIKEN as International Program Associates (IPAs). So far, 67 IPAs have been accepted and the aim is to increase the number to 100 in the near future. In October 2010, current IPAs hailed from universities located on three continents, including Peking University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China, Pohang University of Science and Technology in Korea, the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay in India, and Karolinska Institutet in Sweden.

For researchers like Ju-Hyung Kim from South Korea, enrolling in the program was an easy decision. “I studied at RIKEN for two

months as an intern on the Winter Institute Program (Research Exchange Activities for Korean Graduate Students in Science and Technology) for my master's degree, during which time I was able to observe many beneficial aspects for researchers working at RIKEN—this turned out to be an experience that was very helpful in making up my mind to join RIKEN again for my PhD studies,” Kim says.

While carrying out his PhD studies at the University of Tokyo, Kim is supervised by Yousoo Kim at RIKEN's Surface and Interface Science Laboratory. The research he has conducted at RIKEN to date aims to unveil the fundamental properties of various organic molecules on metal surfaces using scanning tunneling microscopy/spectroscopy (STM/STS) and density functional theory (DFT) calculations. IPAs such as Kim are welcomed at RIKEN as a source of new ideas and perspectives in research fields that include physics, chemistry, biology, medical science and engineering. In order to qualify as an IPA, applicants must be non-Japanese nationals, hold a master's degree, and must be enrolled as a doctoral candidate at a university that has

signed or is willing to sign an agreement with RIKEN for the Joint Graduate School Program.

IPAs can participate in the program for a maximum of three years. Benefits include living expenses, a housing allowance and airfare for one round trip between Japan and the student's home country. However, the advantages of joining the program go far beyond monetary value. Created as part of RIKEN's mission to foster the development of scientists for the future, this program is based on a respect for different countries' cultures and the desire to foster international cooperation and mutual understanding among individuals. Kim's experience as an IPA is a testament to what can be achieved through the program: “The atmosphere at RIKEN is such that researchers from various fields can freely carry out discussions, and I have sometimes seen this lead to interesting collaborations with other research groups from completely different backgrounds.”

Further information

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