



BCI Sabbatical Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- 1. Do I really have to live full time on the island?** Yes. The successful applicant must reside on the island at least five days per week.
- 2. Can I apply to live on BCI with my family?** Yes, family members may be accommodated. However, having children on BCI involves logistical challenges and additional costs that are not covered by STRI.
- 3. Are children allowed on the island?** Children are welcome under certain conditions, but due to the remote and research-focused nature of the island, accommodations and activities for children are limited.
- 4. Is there a school?** No, but the internet is strong enough that homeschooling is an option.
- 5. Is day-care service provided?** No, but it is possible to hire a dedicated childcare provider. STRI will not cover this expense. BCI presents many hazards, so children under 12 require a full-time caregiver.
- 6. Will STRI pay for my airfare and other relocation expenses?** No.
- 7. Will STRI provide insurance?** Neither accident nor healthcare insurance will be provided by STRI for the incumbent or their family members. STRI's Human Resources office can offer information on local insurance providers for self-enrollment. One commonly used option among long-term fellows is PALIG, which offers the same coverage and rates as the plan available to STRI employees.
- 8. What visitor category am I?** The participant will be required to register a project and a visit with the Visitor Services Office (VSO). The candidate will fall under category A4 (Special appointment made by the Director's Office). Most STRI-associated fees will be waived. A full list of fees and can be found [here](#).
- 9. Who is eligible to apply?** Researchers, academics, and professionals in tropical biology or related fields (e.g., ecology, conservation, evolutionary biology, paleontology, archaeology) are encouraged to apply. Applicants should have a demonstrated research background and a clear plan for how the sabbatical will advance their work.
- 10. What is the duration of the sabbatical?** A minimum commitment of six months is preferred.
- 11. What support is provided?** On-island housing and meals and access to shared laboratory space. The incumbent may request a small multi-purpose space suitable as a lab and office for the duration of their time on BCI. Additionally, the incumbent will have access to STRI's research infrastructure and long-term datasets, as well as logistical support.
- 12. Is funding available?** While the program provides housing and research access, applicants are encouraged to seek external funding for travel, equipment, and personal expenses.
- 13. Can I bring collaborators or students?** Collaborators may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please include details in your proposal. Student involvement is possible but must align with STRI's guidelines and housing capacity.
- 14. What kind of research is suitable for BCI?** Barro Colorado Island is ideal for field-based studies in tropical ecology, biodiversity, species interactions, forest dynamics, and long-term ecological monitoring. Projects that leverage existing datasets or contribute to ongoing research themes are especially welcome.
- 15. What are the living conditions like on the island?** BCI offers basic but comfortable accommodations, communal dining, and shared research facilities. The environment is remote and peaceful, ideal for focused work and immersion in nature.



16. **What is the deadline?** The deadline for submission is December 1, 2025, and applicants will be notified by February 2026.
17. **Is the island accessible year-round?** Yes, Barro Colorado Island operates year-round.
18. **Is there medical support available on the island?** Basic first aid is available, but for medical care, researchers typically travel to Panama City. BCI Station residents are expected to bring all their own medications, both prescription and non-prescription, as STRI cannot provide any medications.
19. **Are there opportunities to engage with local communities or students?** Yes, STRI encourages outreach and collaboration. Researchers may participate in educational programs or coordinate with local institutions, depending on the nature of their work.
20. **How frequently does STRI provide a bus between the dock in Gamboa and the city?** Four days per week (M,T,Th,F).