

Odyssey Program Application Guidelines

What does a complete application consist of?

To apply for Odyssey Fellowship please fill in the one page online application form and attach the following documents:

- 1) Completed **Odyssey Fellowship Application Form** (Word format – download from website www.mdanderson.org/odyssey). This form has a section in which you have to enter the names and contact information of 2 referees who will write recommendation letters - your proposed/current advisor/sponsor can NOT be one of your referees.
- 2) A **letter from your advisor** indicating their willingness to mentor you in their laboratory and outlining a training/mentoring plan for you.
- 3) **Biosketches** in NIH format of applicant and advisor
- 4) **Summary of Proposed Research** - no more than 5 pages (font Arial 11, all margins 0.5 inches).
- 5) **Career Statement** – provide a brief summary of your prior research, with emphasis on impact and novelty and a brief statement about your long-term goals and how the Odyssey Fellowship will help you attain them – should not be more than 1 page (font Arial 11, all margins 0.5 inches).
- 6) Copies of maximum of 3 published papers or submitted manuscripts.

All these elements should be combined into a **single PDF file**, in the order indicated above, and the file named **Lastname_Firstname.pdf**. Email this file to the submission email address odyssey@mdanderson.org by the deadline.

What does the Summary of Proposed Research have to contain?

The **Summary of Proposed Research** should be no more than 5 pages long, and have the following sections:

Requirements:

- **Specific Aims**
- **Background and Significance**
- **Experimental Plan**
- **Training Potential** – (suggested length ~ 100 words) – a brief description of what you hope to learn by pursuing the proposed research, and how it will help you towards becoming an independent researcher.
- **Statement Regarding Innovation** – (suggested length ~ 200 words) – describes how the proposed work is innovative and novel. What new things will be learned if you complete the work, and will they significantly impact thinking in your field?
- Literature citations must be included, but do not count towards the 5-page limit.

Suggestions:

- The inclusion of how you will perform statistical analysis of your data is strongly encouraged.

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- If any preliminary data are included, it is important that you specify whether the data are yours or from your laboratory. Indicate in the Figure legends that generated the data. If published, cite the reference in the Figure legend.
- We strongly encourage you to write the application with a general scientific audience in mind. We receive applications covering a broad spectrum of disciplines, and as at NIH fellowship study sections, the reviewers may not be subject experts in your specific sub-discipline. Please provide adequate context for our reviewers to be able to evaluate the significance of the work you are proposing, with particular emphasis on the gap in knowledge you propose to fill, the significance and impact of the work and the central hypothesis.

Minimum font size is Arial 11, and all margins should be 0.5 inches.

What is the exact deadline for online submission of applications?

Please see our website for the exact deadline (www.mdanderson.org/odyssey). All submissions are via email (to email address odyssey@mdanderson.org) by midnight of the date specified online as the deadline. While the email address remains open, all submissions are time-stamped, and late submissions will not be reviewed. If you have technical difficulties contact us with specific issues.

When are the recommendation letters due?

You need to provide the names and email addresses of your referees in the Odyssey Fellowship Application Form. We will contact them to request the letters. You should advise your referees to expect an email, and that their response is due within two weeks of being contacted. We will contact you if we do not obtain the letters.

I already have an electronic letter of recommendation - can I submit this with my application?

We prefer to contact your references directly and ask them to use our form and scoring system.

What should the letter from the sponsor/advisor contain?

In addition to an indication of willingness to sponsor your application, the letter must include a training plan. The sponsor's training plan should be individually tailored to the applicant and should describe planned activities such as coursework, seminars, scientific conferences, and opportunities for interaction with other scientists. Training in career skills, such as grant writing, lecturing, and giving scientific presentations, is encouraged. The sponsor is not requested to evaluate the applicant in the letter.

I obtained my degree just over two years ago. Am I eligible to apply?

Our rule derives mainly from the MDACC rule that limits total post-doc time to 5 years, so when joining our 3-year program (on September 1st) you would have to have less than 2 years post-doc research time completed. If you have taken time off from research, this is not counted towards the two years. If in doubt, please send your CV to us and we will review it for you.



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Is there a limit to the number of applications from one lab?

There are no restrictions to the number of applications from any one lab, or the number Odyssey Fellows in one laboratory.

What are the review criteria?

You can see the review criteria on our website (www.mdanderson.org/odyssey).

Where can I get more information about the Program?

Visit our website (www.mdanderson.org/odyssey) and look for the Program Guidelines pdf which you can download.