Application Instructions

Program Description

The Cancer Prevention Research Training Program at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center prepares scientists and clinicians to achieve leadership roles as research investigators in the field of cancer prevention and control. The goals of this postdoctoral program are to expand the existing perspective of the fellow by strengthening their knowledge of cancer prevention research and current disciplines and to provide them with rigorous preparation in novel quantitative methods, appropriate to the proposed cancer prevention research. With a special focus on career development and interdisciplinary collaboration, we seek trainees in basic biomedical sciences, biostatistics and bioinformatics, systems biology, epidemiology, genetics, behavioral and social sciences, economics, and related population and public health disciplines.

Centered around mentored research in cancer prevention and control guided by experienced faculty mentors, multidisciplinary training will be accomplished through a robust training plan that is founded on rigorous quantitative methods, a specialized cancer prevention educational curriculum, an individual development plan, and career development activities. Trainees will participate in mentored research; attend cancer prevention science seminars; present their research at scientific meetings; participate in professional development seminars; and publish in peer-reviewed journals. Trainees are immersed in the type of cross-disciplinary research environment characteristic of cancer prevention and control research, with the objective of launching the trainee in the role of principal investigator early in his or her career. The Cancer Prevention Research Training Program is committed to building a demographically and scientifically diverse research workforce.

This fellowship is funded by a research training grant award from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas – CPRIT (Award# RP170259, Drs. Shine Chang & Sanjay Shete, Principal Investigators).

To help foster research collaborations in cancer prevention and control between MD Anderson and other educational research institutions, fellows are co-mentored by (1) a faculty member at MD Anderson’s Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences, and (2) a faculty member at MD Anderson’s partner institutions: UTHealth (excluding UT School of Public Health), University of Houston, Texas A & M University and Rice University. Non-MD Anderson faculty may serve as primary or co-mentor from one of the institutions listed above. Due to the administrative requirements, trainees’ paid appointments as postdoctoral fellows are made at MD Anderson.

Eligibility

- Applicants must have already earned a doctoral degree (e.g. M.D., Ph.D., DrPH, PharmD) OR must be within 5 months of earning a doctoral degree from the date of application deadline.
- Applicants may be from any disciplinary backgrounds that are relevant to research in cancer prevention and control, early detection and risk assessment.
- This fellowship is open to non-U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

Funding Support & Benefits

- Postdoctoral fellowships are funded for two years and paid at $51,000 per year.
- Fringe benefits include health insurance, paid institutional holidays, paid vacation, and sick leave.
- Funding support is also provided for tuition, reference books, meeting registration, travel support, and research costs. All equipment purchased by the fellow with CPRIT research funds are property of the CPRTP and must be returned by the fellow at the conclusion of the fellowship.
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Fellowship Requirements

In addition to conducting mentored research in cancer prevention, the fellowship recipients are required to participate in career development activities, as outlined in the fellowship requirement memo. Additional details will be provided to successful applicants during CPRTP orientation.

Mentor Requirements and How to Find a Mentor

Applicants are responsible for contacting faculty directly for discussions about mutual interests and securing their support as mentors, and ensuring that the following requirements are met:

1. Fellows are required to work with a minimum of two mentors with complementary research expertise.
2. At least one mentor must be from the **MD Anderson Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences (DCPPS)**, with faculty rank at the level of Assistant Professor or higher. DCPPS is comprised of five (5) departments below. NOTE: The fellow's paid appointment as a postdoctoral fellow will be made at MD Anderson in the department of the main **MD Anderson** faculty mentor.
   1. Behavioral Science
   2. Health Disparities Research
   3. Clinical Cancer Prevention
   4. Epidemiology
   5. Health Services Research
3. At least one mentor's expertise must be based in **quantitative methodology**.
4. Preference will be given to applications with **at least one** faculty mentor (main or co-mentor) from our partnering institutions: Rice University, Texas A&M University, University of Houston, and UT Health (**not** School of Public Health). Search by department name, research or discipline keyword, or faculty name, if known. NOTE: An applicant may have 2 main mentors: 1 from MD Anderson and 1 from a partnering institution.
5. Additional co-mentors may be added (from other MD Anderson departments or other institutions), as long as it is appropriate and the aforementioned requirements have been met. Use the **MD Anderson Faculty Search Engine** to locate additional MD Anderson faculty.

**NOTE**
- To reach any MD Anderson faculty by phone, call the main switchboard at 713-792-2121 or 1-800-889-2094, give the operator the faculty's first and last name, ask for the faculty's direct phone number (write the number down), and request to be transferred.
- Applicants must apply with the support of faculty who have agreed to serve as mentors
- If you need help or are unable to identify suitable mentors, contact the CPRTP office immediately for suggestions.
- Requests for faculty mentor suggestions need to be made, no later than 1 month prior to the application deadline, although earlier is better.

Formatting the Application

- **Margins:** 0.5 or 1 inch
- **Format:** Single-Spaced
- **Page-numbered format:** Lower center of each page.
- **Name & current or future degree:** Top right corner of each page. Example: Jane Doe, MD or John Doe, PhD Candidate
- **Standard paper size:** 8.5 x 11
- **Font color:** Black
- **Font size:** 12 point font
- **Preferred font types:** Arial, Times New Roman, or Georgia
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Phase 1: Application Documents

1) Application Checklist & Coversheet must be completed, dated and placed on top.
2) Research & career statement: A 2-page, single-spaced, description of your research background and interests, and your educational & professional goals. Discuss the education and research which has prepared you for this fellowship and explain how this fellowship will help you meet your goals. References are not included within the 2-page limit.

NOTE: For CPRIT applicants, indicate both the 1) Main MD Anderson mentor, and 2) Main Partnering Institution mentor. The “main” mentor is defined as the individual who will guide your research, help define your research goals, support you in your quest to achieve those goals, as well as provide office space. This paid fellowship appointment will be made in the home department of the main MD Anderson mentor. Preference will be given to those applications with a mentor from one of the partnering institutions.

3) Letters of support from each prospective mentor:
   - Must be on letterhead.
   - Must be manually or electronically/digitally signed.
   - Must be dated within 5 months of application deadline.
   - Must briefly describe 1) relationship with other mentors (new or established), 2) planned roles and schedule for mentoring, 3) activities for developing or expanding collaborative research in cancer prevention and control, 4) metrics or outcomes that indicate successful collaboration and mentoring, 5) number of other trainees and their academic rank currently supervised, and 6) successful past trainees, including recently launched.
   - Must e-mailed directly from mentor or support staff to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org with “Letter of Support for Jane Doe – CPRTP Postdoc Applicant” in the subject line.

4) Mentor’s Profile Form
5) Mentor’s NIH Biosketch (from each mentor listed).
6) Mentor’s Other Support (from each mentor listed).
7) Three (3) Letters of recommendation:
   - Must be from referees who are individuals other than the proposed mentors. (See FAQs.)
   - Must be on letterhead.
   - Must be manually or electronically/digitally signed.
   - Must be dated within 5 months of application deadline.
   - Must include referee’s title, relationship with applicant, and length of acquaintance.
   - Must e-mailed directly from mentor or support staff to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org with “Letter of Recommendation for Jane Doe – CPRTP Postdoc Applicant” in the subject line.

8) Letter from Dissertation Chair (doctoral students who will receive their degree within 5 months of the application deadline):
   - Must be on letterhead.
   - Must manually or electronically/digitally signed by dissertation chair (not applicant).
   - Must be dated within 5 months of the application deadline.
   - Must specify the anticipated dissertation completion date, which must be no more than 5 months after the application deadline.

9) Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV): be sure to include title of thesis and dissertation.
10) Academic transcript of qualifying highest degree must be legible, include the institution name, grade point average, and any appropriate test scores. Unofficial transcript copies are acceptable for the application. The official transcripts must be mailed to the CPRTP at the address listed on the last page of these instructions.
11) A copy of the credential evaluation if the qualifying degree was obtained from a non-U.S. institution.
12) A headshot photograph. This photo must have a neutral background and can be a selfie or professional photo. If awarded a fellowship, this photo will be used in the CPRTP postdoctoral roster.
13) Proposal Keywords, Title, and Suggested Reviewer Form: In case your application is selected, the data you provide on this form will help us solicit subject matter experts to review your research and career proposal.
14) Fellowship Requirements Memo: Signed by the: 1) applicant, 2) main MD Anderson mentor, and 3) main Partnering Institution mentor (if applicable).
15) Mentor Requirements Memo: Signed by the: 1) main MD Anderson mentor, 2) main Partnering Institution mentor (if applicable), and 3) mentor’s department chair or designee ONLY.)
Submitting the Application

1. Email the application in one single pdf file by the application deadline to Apply@CancerPreventionTraining.org
2. Both the application file and subject line of the email must have the following format: Last Name, First Name – CPRTP Postdoc Application.
3. The fillable pdf application components (e.g. Application Checklist) cannot be completed using the Read-Only version of Adobe. Enter data manually either by hand, using a downloaded free trial version of Adobe Pro, or by typing and scanning the documents.

Important Information

- All application documents are due by the application deadline, including letters of support and letters of recommendation.
- Missing items will result in an incomplete application and will not be reviewed.
- Refer to the CPRTP Postdoctoral Fellowship FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) for common application questions.
- If your answer is not found in the FAQs, email Apply@CancerPreventionTraining.org.
- Immunizations, tobacco and drug testing are required by the institution, for all new hires (including fellows) as part of the onboarding process. Immunizations (including the TB test and TB reading) must be current within one year of your fellowship start date.
- Since lack of immunizations can delay the fellowship start date, it is recommended that all applicants begin requesting immunizations and health documents as soon as their application is submitted.

Application Review Criteria

1. Relevance: Are the career and research interests of the applicant clearly in the area of cancer prevention? Is the proposed research project original and independent from the aims of a parent project? (Applications for research not relevant to cancer prevention, such as those focusing on cancer treatment, are not accepted.)
2. Academic merit: Does the applicant’s past academic performance suggest future success? Do the letters of recommendation indicate the author's knowledge of the applicant's capabilities? Are there specific areas or skills that the applicant needs to strengthen to achieve career success?
3. Promise and educational benefit to the applicant’s career development: Will the fellowship accelerate the applicant's career toward becoming an independent cancer prevention investigator? Does the applicant indicate strong commitment to a career in cancer prevention research? Does the applicant have the intellectual capabilities and work ethic to benefit from the fellowship? Does the applicant have a strong interest in applying novel quantitative methods?
4. Are the sponsoring mentors well-funded? Can they provide adequate staff and lab assistants, ensuring that the trainees can devote their time to scientific and career development? Do they describe a robust plan for collaborative research? Is there an integrated plan for mentoring? Given how many other trainees supervised, do mentors describe a plan to provide sufficient time for mentoring?
Phase 2: Research and Career Proposal

- Awards of postdoctoral fellowships are made at the conclusion of Phase I, contingent upon the acceptance of the research and career proposal and hire as a postdoctoral fellow at MDA.
- Awardees will be instructed via email to submit a “Research and Career Proposal” that describes the research proposed, educational objectives, career development plan, a publication plan, and timeline.
- The Proposal should describe a rigorous plan that will successfully launch the finalist into an independent research career in cancer prevention and control. The proposal deadline will be included in the email and is usually four weeks from the date of notification.
- The proposal will be reviewed by a combination of the CPRTP Advisory Committee and external subject matter experts. This review committee may suggest proposal revisions.
- Awardees will receive instructions to complete onboarding paperwork required by the MD Anderson Office of Research Trainee Programs (ORTP) in the Discover system. This paperwork includes, but is not limited to, immunizations, visa sponsorship forms, tobacco and drug testing, and criminal background check. Delays in securing proposal approvals and/or onboarding paperwork may push back the fellowship start date.
- The fellowship funding will not begin until all aforementioned contingencies have been met including: proposal approval, Discover onboarding (including immunizations), and Visa clearance (if applicable).

Contact

Shine Chang, Ph.D., Director
Cancer Prevention Research Training Program
713-563-3573
ShineChang@MDAnderson.org

Rana Banton, M.B.A.
Program Coordinator
Cancer Prevention Research Training Program
713-745-5312
RBanton@MDAnderson.org

Mailing Address

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Cancer Prevention Research Training Program
Attn: Rana Banton
P.O. Box 301439, Unit 1365
Houston, Texas 77230-1439

Business Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm Central Time
Fax: 713-563-9203
Website: www.CancerPreventionTraining.org
Email: Apply@CancerPreventionTraining.org