

Postdoctoral Fellowship in Cancer Prevention Research

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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 moving them from their base of strength in a particular specialty and to equip them with additional knowledge and 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.

We are currently accepting applications for two (2) available fellowships:

- 1) ***The Janice Davis Gordon Memorial Postdoctoral Fellowship in Colorectal Cancer Prevention*** is awarded to a cancer prevention research fellow specializing in the **prevention of colorectal cancer.**
- 2) ***The Halliburton Employees Contribution Fund*** awarded to research fellows specializing in **any type** of cancer prevention (e.g., lung, skin, colorectal, breast, etc.)

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 the 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 has no citizenship requirements or restrictions and is open to all postdoctoral applicants including non-U.S. citizens and permanent residents.
- Applicants must propose research in cancer **prevention.**
- Applicants with proposed research in **colorectal cancer prevention** will be considered for **both** fellowship awards: ***Janice Davis Gordon Memorial Fellowship in Colorectal Cancer Prevention Research*** or ***Halliburton Employees Contribution Fund.***

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Funding Support & Benefits

- Postdoctoral fellowships are funded for two years and paid at \$53,760 per year.
- Fringe benefits include health insurance, paid institutional holidays, paid vacation, and sick leave.
- **Funding support is not provided by this fellowship award.** Applicants must consult the MD Anderson primary mentor for allowance of these expenses.

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. The primary mentor must have a faculty appointment at the Assistant Professor level or higher at MD Anderson.
3. **At least one mentor must be from the [UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, 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:
 - a) [Behavioral Science](#)
 - b) [Health Disparities Research](#)
 - c) [Clinical Cancer Prevention](#)
 - d) [Epidemiology](#)
 - e) [Health Services Research](#)
4. 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.
5. Use the [CPRTP Postdoc Mentor list](#) or 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.

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Research & Career Statement Format

- **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

Submitting the Application

- 1) Click the APPLY link from the fellowship page to create your Discover account.
- 2) **Please make note of your Discover username and password.**
- 3) Complete the application in three (3) steps:
 - 1) Application Form (*similar to a job application*)
 - 2) Upload documents (details on next page)
 - 3) Request letters of recommendation.
- 4) After completing the application form (in **1**) above, you will be prompted to select “Submit”. **Pressing the submit button does not submit your entire application, it only saves your application and opens up Steps 2 (upload documents) and 3 (request letters of recommendation).**
- 5) Follow the instructions on the next page to upload the remaining documents to Discover. **There is no additional submit button.**
- 6) You may check the status of your submitted files in your Discover account.
- 7) We will pre-review documents and return the documents to you if they are incomplete. **Please check your email frequently.**
- 8) **At application deadline:** We will email you within two business days of the application deadline with the status (*i.e., application under review or application missing documents*). If you are notified of missing items, you must provide those missing items by the deadline in the email.

Important Notes: Before Starting your Application

- **All application documents are due by the application deadline on the website, including letters of support and letters of recommendation.**
- For common questions, read the **CP RTP Postdoctoral Fellowship FAQs** (Frequently Asked Questions).
- If your answer is not found in the FAQs, email Apply@CancerPreventionTraining.org.
- COVID immunization record (or COVID immunization exemption), other Immunizations (e.g., MMS, Varicella, TB Skin Test, Tdap), 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.**

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Application Documents (*Upload Documents – Discover*)

STEP 1: Complete the Discover Application Form (similar to a job application).

STEP 2: Upload Documents: All materials communicated herein must be uploaded to the Discover portal in STEP 2. Please visit the ‘Apply’ link on our website to create the Discover account.

- 1) **Application Checklist & Coversheet** must be completed, dated and placed on top.
- 2) **Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)**; be sure to include title of thesis and dissertation.
- 3) **Diploma of Highest Degree**: Upload a copy of the diploma of (highest) qualifying degree. The document must be legible. High school, undergraduate, or other diplomas are not required.
- 4) **Fellowship Requirements Memo (signed by applicant and primary mentor)**
- 5) **(Current Doctoral Students ONLY) Letter from Dissertation Chair**:
 - Must be on letterhead.
 - Must be written and manually or electronically/digitally signed by dissertation chair (not applicant).
 - Must be dated within 90 days of application deadline.
 - **Must specify the anticipated dissertation completion date, which must be no more than 5 months after the application deadline.**
- 6) **Letters of Support, Biosketch and Other Support from each prospective mentor and merged into a single pdf file** (e.g., *Mentor #1 Letter of support, biosketch, other support, Mentor #2 Letter of support...etc.*)
 - a) **Requirements for Letters of support from each prospective mentor**:
 - Must be on letterhead.
 - Must be manually or electronically/digitally signed.
 - Must be dated within 90 days 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 be e-mailed directly from mentor or support staff to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org with “*Letter of Support for Jane Doe – CP RTP Postdoc Applicant*” in the subject line.
 - b) **Mentor’s Profile Form**
 - c) **Mentor’s NIH Biosketch** (from each mentor listed).
- 7) **Mentor Profile Form**: Requires contact details for each mentor and their assistant.
- 8) **Mentor Requirements Memo (signed by primary mentor ONLY)**.
- 9) **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.
- 10) **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.
- 11) **Unofficial Transcript of Highest Degree**: Upload a copy of the official or unofficial transcript of the (highest) qualifying degree. The document must be legible, include the institution name, grade point

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average, and any appropriate test scores. Unofficial transcript copies are acceptable for the application; official transcripts must be submitted by finalists. H.S. or other diplomas are not required.

Additional required documents: To upload items #12 and #13, from your Discover account (*Step 2: Upload Documents*), scroll down to “Optional: Add Additional Documents”, select the appropriate Document Type, type the name of the document next to ‘Document Name’, select Add Document (you will see it added to the list of documents), then upload the document.

- 12) **A copy of the credential evaluation** if the qualifying degree was obtained from a non-U.S. institution.
13) **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.

From the left menu in Discover, select ‘**Request Letters of Recommendation**’ and enter the referee details, including email address. Each individual will receive an automated email with a link to upload the letter directly to your Discover account. It is your responsibility to follow-up with the referee and ensure that the letter is submitted before the deadline. Each letter must meet the following requirements (inform your referee):

14) **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 the last 90 days of application deadline.
- Must include referee’s title, relationship with applicant, and length of acquaintance.
- If there are any issues with uploading the letter to Discover, please have the referee or the assistant e-mail the letter directly to the CPRTP at apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org with “Letter of Recommendation for YOUR NAME - CPRTP Postdoc Applicant” in the subject line.

Application Review Criteria

The following criteria will be used to review applications:

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?
4. Are the **sponsoring mentors** well-funded? Can they provide research support expenses for books, travel, lab supplies, and other materials? 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?

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Phase 2: Research and Career Proposal

- Awards of postdoctoral fellowships are made at the conclusion of Phase I. Successful applicants will be invited to Phase II and are considered *contingent awardees* and in the CPRPT program.
- Final fellowship award is contingent upon the acceptance of the research and career proposal and hire as a postdoctoral fellow at MD Anderson.
- *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 (RTP) 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

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