Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) of applicants of the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) - Summer Research Experience

The following frequently asked questions are unique to applicants of the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) Summer Research Experience and not of the other participating programs of the MD Anderson Summer Experience.

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How to Apply

How do I apply for the summer program?

After November 1 go to www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer and click on the link in the red box to apply. You will be routed to the Discover system to begin your summer fellowship application. You must enter your personal details and establish a password.

What is the Discover system?

DISCOVER is a web-based on-line application system designed to streamline the appointment process for fellowship applicants of MD Anderson Cancer Center.

What information is required in the Discover application?

The Discover application is similar to an employment application. Applicants will be required to enter their personal contact information, date of birth, citizenship status, academic history, and work history. The last portion of the application includes voluntary demographics and future plans information.

Why do you need to know my demographics?

The Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) and other programs at MD Anderson Cancer Center are proponents of diversity and inclusion. We encourage all applicants of all backgrounds including, but not limited to underrepresented minorities; first generation college students; economically disadvantaged and underserved backgrounds; alternative lifestyle communities (e.g. LGBTQ); and disabilities. What do you do with this demographic information?
The information in the demographics section is reported to the National Cancer Institute (in the form of percentages and graphs, not specific names or personal information) to highlight diversity in science. The data is not used in a discriminatory manner.

**Why do you need to know my future degree plans?**

This data helps our program determine your career trajectory and be better equipped to guide you during the summer experience. Many CPRTP alumni pursue careers as research scientists, medical doctors, tenured faculty, teaching professors, and principal investigators, as well as non-traditional careers in policy and administration.

**Why are you asking for my personal email address?**

We contact alumni annually to track accomplishments, grant funding, and careers in cancer prevention research. *Once a student becomes a CPRTP fellow, they will always be a fellow.* Our program needs a personal email and not an institutional email because many students do not check their institutional email daily and they may not have access to the institutional email following graduation. The personal email address will be kept confidential & all emailed correspondence will be bcc (blind carbon copied).

**If I want to apply to more than one MD Anderson Summer Experience program, will I need to set up a new Discover account?**

Yes. Each MD Anderson Summer Experience program has its own unique application link. It is the applicant’s responsibility to keep track of their Discover account ID number, the email address used to establish the account and password. MD Anderson Summer Experience applications are non-transferrable.

**Eligibility Requirements**

**Who is eligible for the CPRTP Summer Research Experience?**

Applicants of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience:

1. Must be a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident. Visa holders are not eligible.
2. Must have one (1) of the following academic designations by the fall semester of the program year:
   - Undergraduate junior
   - Undergraduate senior
   - 1st year Medical student*
   - 1st year Pharmacy student*
   - Masters student (graduate)
   - Doctoral student
   - Other health profession student (dental, nursing, etc.)
3. Must be enrolled in a degree program at a degree-granting institution within the United States.
4. *Students transitioning to a graduate or advanced degree program in the fall semester of the program year, must show proof of acceptance OR proof application to a degree-granting program, by the application deadline. This proof must be uploaded with the unofficial transcript of highest degree.*
What is the ‘program year’?

The program year is the year of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience of which the applicant is applying. For example: If a student is applying for the 2020 CPRTP Summer Research Experience in December of 2019 and they are selected, they must provide proof of enrollment for the spring semester of 2020. Usually, this is requested during the 2nd and 3rd phase of the applicant process.

Why are only U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents eligible?

This summer fellowship is supported by a National Cancer Institute R25E grant (R25-CA056452) that requires trainees to have U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status. Applicants with visas are not eligible for the NCI-funded fellowships.

I am a U.S. citizen, but I am attending a medical university in Japan, am I eligible to apply?

Unfortunately, applicants must be enrolled in a degree program at an institution within the United States. International medical students may be appointed uncompensated at MD Anderson Cancer Center as an observer, but cannot participate in the CPRTP Summer Research Experience.

Are high school students eligible for the CPRTP Summer Research Experience in Cancer Prevention?

No, however we encourage high school seniors to apply to the seven-week, King Foundation High School Summer Program. For more information, visit www.MDAnderson.org/Summer.

I will be an undergraduate sophomore by the fall semester of the program year, am I eligible to apply?

Yes, however preference will be given to those who will be undergraduate juniors and seniors in the fall semester of the program year.

Students Transitioning to Medical, Graduate or Advanced Degree Programs

I graduated with my Bachelor’s degree in the spring of the program year, do I need to apply to graduate school to participate in this program?

Yes. Applicants must be enrolled in a degree program for both the spring and the fall semesters of the program year. Transitioning students must submit proof of application OR proof of enrollment into a degree-granting program by the deadline. In other words, the applicant must either plan to apply (and show proof of application) or already be accepted (and provide a letter of acceptance) into a degree granting program.
I am a current undergraduate senior who will be graduating in May of the program year. I am hoping to pursue medical school in the fall. I have yet to take my MCAT, so how would I provide proof of enrollment in a graduate program or medical school?

- Applicants who will receive a Bachelor’s degree in the spring semester of the program year are considered **transitioning applicants** and must either: 1) be accepted or enrolled into a graduate or medical school program, OR 2) intend to apply to a graduate or medical school program in the fall semester of the program year.
- All applicants are required to provide both their spring and fall semester academic designations in the **Additional Demographics** section of the Discover application. In addition, **transitioning applicants** must upload either proof of application OR proof of enrollment (for the spring and fall semesters of the program year), into their Discover account.

There is no option for uploading a proof of acceptance letter or application letter in the Discover system. How do I add this letter to my Discover account?

Applicants may include proof of acceptance or proof of application with their unofficial transcript of highest degree OR by using the **add document** feature in Discover.

**What type of proof of enrollment or application is acceptable?**

- Proof of application is a copy of the application to medical or graduate school.
- Proof of enrollment can be any of the following documents:
  1. A signed acceptance letter on institution letterhead from the Registrar, Student Affairs Office, or the Dean’s Office.
  2. Transcripts that confirm enrollment during the trainee’s fellowship period. If the transcript is from a non-US institution, it must be accompanied by a certified translation if in a language other than English.
  3. Verification of Enrollment Form (VOE).

**Would it be okay if I submitted the proof of application later? I haven't applied to a graduate school yet.**

No. Applicants are only eligible if they have applied to, been accepted to or are currently enrolled in a degree granting program at a U.S. institution and provide proof.

**I’m graduating from college in May of the program year, but plan to take some classes at a community college in the fall of the program year, can I still apply to the summer program?**

No. Students must be pursuing a degree at an institution for both the spring and fall semesters of the program year. Just taking additional classes does not qualify.

**I’ve applied to graduate school for fall of the program year, but won’t find out if I’m accepted until April of the program year, can I still apply to the summer program?**

Yes. You must upload a copy of your application to graduate school, along with a copy of the unofficial transcript of highest degree into your Discover account, by the application deadline. If you are accepted into the program, you must forward a copy of the acceptance letter to the CPRTP.

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Applicants currently in medical or pharmacy school

I am in my second year of medical school, am I eligible to apply?

Medical or pharmacy students beyond their 1st year of their program are eligible to apply, only if they provide a letter (with their unofficial transcript in Discover) from their home institution, on institutional letterhead, stating:

1. The applicant is taking a leave of absence from their home institution (include the dates of the leave of absence).
2. The applicant will not be receiving credit for participating in the CPRTP Summer Research Experience.
3. The applicant has permission to participate in the CPRTP Summer Research Experience during the program dates (include the start and end dates of the summer program).

I am a medical student and cannot start the CPRTP Summer Research Experience until July, am I eligible to apply?

No. Participants of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience must commit to the full 10 weeks of the program, no exceptions.

Multiple Program Participation

If I have already accepted another federally funded fellowship at my university, can I also receive funding from the Summer Research Experience?

No. Trainees are not allowed to receive any additional federal funding from any other institution or mechanism during the CPRTP Summer Research Experience.

I want to apply to the CPRTP Summer Research Experience, but I am also waiting to hear back about my medical internship. What should I do?

Follow your heart. If you decide to apply to both programs, you must figure out which program is more important. Please do not accept an offer from our program, if you know that you will accept another pending offer. Accept our offer as an alternate and provide us with the date you expect to hear from the other program. This will keep you in the running and allow our program to plan accordingly.

You should participate in an experience that fits you better, even if it means declining our program. It will reflect negatively if you accept our program, and later back out of your commitment to us because you received a better offer. Doing so not only burdens the CPRTP administrative staff, but it hinders another student (who may desperately want to participate) from participating in our program. Remember, you are in training to be a professional and it is important to implement such practices of full disclosure and integrity. There is always a proper and confident way to manage such situations, and if you are unsure, simply ask.

May I participate in more than one summer internship, even if I am not being paid by the other internship?

No. Awardees of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience must commit to the full-time, 10 week fellowship.
Test Scores

I’m taking the MCAT this summer; can I take off a week to prepare?

No. Awardees of this summer fellowship program are not eligible for any time off during the 10 week appointment. In cases of illness or emergency, students may be eligible for unpaid leave. If students cannot to commit to the full-time, 10 week program, they should not apply.

Are SAT/GRE/MCAT/ACT scores required for the Summer Program?

No.

Program Duration

How long does the summer program last?

The program is a total of 10 weeks, from the dates indicated on the CPRTP Summer Research Experience program page. Students must arrive on the date, time and location provided on the appointment letter to check-in and will receive instructions from CPRTP about orientation.

Do you offer short term fellowships all year round?

No. The CPRTP Summer Research Experience is the only short-term fellowship offered at this time.

I am unable to start work until mid-June, can I still participate in the summer program?

No. The program dates are set and all applicants must be available for the entire length of the program.

The summer research experience is 10 weeks, but my family has planned a vacation during the entire month of August, can I still participate?

No. The program dates are set and cannot be changed. Applicants who cannot participate during the entire 10 weeks, should not apply.

Our school year ends after the appointment start date for the summer program, would I still be eligible to apply even if the earliest I could join the program is June 15th?

No. Early or late program start is not permitted. Awardees of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience must commit to the full 10 weeks of the program dates listed on the program web page.

I need to end a week earlier than the August appointment end date, can I still participate in the summer program?

No, the dates of the program are set and all applicants must be available for the full 10 weeks of the program.
Other MD Anderson Summer Programs

How many programs participate in the MD Anderson Summer Experience (SE)?

As of 2018, there are nine (9) summer programs participating in the MD Anderson Summer Experience:

1. High School Summer Program
2. Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) – Summer Research Experience (this program)
3. Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT-CURE)
4. U54 Partnership for Excellence in Cancer Research Summer Training Program
5. First-Year Medical School Student Program
6. Summer Undergraduate Research Program
7. IITERT Undergraduate Summer Research Training Program
8. Summer Imaging Research Program
9. University Outreach Summer Program

Can I apply to more than one MD Anderson Summer Program?

Yes, as long as eligibility requirements are met. A new Discover account must be created for each application. Each application will be assigned a unique Discover ID number. All applicants must keep a list of the Discover IDs and passwords for each account.

If I apply multiple times to the same program, will this increase my chances of acceptance?

No. All programs will accept one application per student. Any duplicates or incomplete applications will be purged from the Discover system after the application deadline.

What is the difference between the CPRTP program and the other MD Anderson summer programs?

Visit each summer program page from www.MDAnderson.org/Summer for eligibility requirements and fellowship details. One of the biggest differences to note are the eligibility requirements: The CPRTP is only open to U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents. We also accept undergraduate (rising juniors and rising seniors--preferably), graduate, and medical students. We do not accept high school students.

To whom do I direct questions about other MD Anderson summer programs?

Each MD Anderson summer program has their own program manager. Select the program of choice from the MD Anderson Summer Experience page and scroll to the bottom of the page for contact information.

Is the CPRTP the same as the CPRIT-CURE Summer Undergraduate Program?

No. While our acronyms are similar and we are both a part of the MD Anderson Summer Experience, our programs are not affiliated. Our program name is the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) and is housed under the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences (DCPSS). Visit the CPRIT-CURE funded Summer Undergraduate Program, for fellowship details or to apply.
Stipend Support (Salary) & Work Hours

What is a stipend?

The word "Stipend" is the same as "Salary" or "Pay", within MD Anderson. These terms are synonymous and are interchangeable. Per MD Anderson's payroll department, taxes will be withheld from the pay checks of all employees and students who receive a salary or stipend.

Are taxes withheld from my paycheck?

Yes, however, the amount taxed depends on the designated allowances on the federal tax form completed by the student during the onboarding process.

How much is the stipend?

CPRTP Summer Research Experience students will receive up to $15.00 per hour (less taxes). This rate is non-negotiable and determined by the National Cancer Institute R25E grant (R25-CA056452). The stipend is subject to change.

When are paychecks distributed?

Summer students will receive paychecks the 5th and 20th of each month. Direct deposit is mandatory. Paper checks are not distributed to MD Anderson.

How many positions are available for the CPRTP summer program?

As of 2018, 25 positions are available for the CPRTP summer research experience.

Can I work part-time?

No, the summer program is a full-time, 10 week experience.

How many hours per week are students expected to work during the summer program?

All students will work full-time, 40 hours per week. This is based on a Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm schedule.

Is my schedule flexible?

Please consult the primary mentor during the first meeting, to determine the work schedule.

Will I need to use a time clock?

Students appointed at MD Anderson are not required to use a time clock. The department timekeeper of the mentor’s department will keep record of all department employee’s time via a computer based system.
Benefits and Time Off

Do I have health insurance or paid sick leave benefits?

No. Because this is a short-term fellowship, awardees of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience are not benefits eligible. If a summer student is out sick, the department timekeeper may dock an employee for missed days. Some departments do allow make-up time. Please consult the mentor or department supervisor for specifics.

My family takes a 2-week vacation every summer; will I be allowed to take this time off?

No, absences cannot exceed 4 days. Applicants unable to commit to the full-time, 10 week program, should not apply.

Will the CPRTP cover any lab supplies, conference registration or travel related to my summer project?

Yes, each CPRTP summer student has $1,000 in research support available to purchase books, lab supplies, conference registration and other pre-approved items. Membership fees are not covered. The CPRTP summer program manager will provide students with detailed instructions and the approval process during the first week of the program.

May I use the MD Anderson Fitness Center?

Because awardees of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience are appointed for less than six months, they are not eligible for membership at the MD Anderson Fitness Center.

Housing

Is housing available?

A housing supplement may be available to selected students based on financial need and on a first come, first serve basis. This housing supplement is defined as either 1) money added to the stipend to assist student with paying their housing or 2) a percentage of the housing expenses billed directly to the CPRTP.

How do I sign up for housing?

Applicants who are in need of housing must indicate this information in the demographics section of the Discover application. The CPRTP program manager will provide details to those who have indicated a need for housing on their application.
Application Phases

How do I access the application?

The application link will be available on our summer program page at www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer on November 1st of each year.

How many phases make up the summer application?

There are three (3) phases of the application process. Phase 1 (Pre-Application), Phase 2 (Recommendation), and Phase 3 (Pre-Appointment). These phases take place primarily through the Discover system, with a few items requiring electronic submission via email.

What happens after I complete my initial application (Phase 1)?

All MD Anderson Summer Experience applicants who complete all required documents in Phase 1 will be subject to a pre-review by the individual summer program. The program will notify the applicants of their application status.

Once selected application confirm acceptance of the fellowship, they will receive an email from the Discover system with additional documents to be completed signed and uploaded (Phase 2 documents); and an email from the program with instructions and deadlines for completing Phase 2 documents.

Just as in Phase 1, trainees must download and complete forms using the "Get Form" feature, unless otherwise specified. All pages of the completed documents must be uploaded into the Discover account. Signatures must be handwritten, not typed in a cursive font nor entered electronically. Failure to sign and date documents will cause the forms to be rejected. All handwritten data must be printed clearly and legibly. Documents that are not legible will be rejected.

What documents are required in Phase 1 of the application process?

- **Step 1**: Discover Application

- **Step 2**: Upload Documents. *These documents cannot be uploaded until Step 1 is complete.*
  - Curriculum vitae (CV) or Resume
  - Personal statement
  - Tobacco policy acknowledgement
  - Unofficial transcript of highest degree or current unofficial transcript (this can be requested and received by the applicant and uploaded into the Discover account)

- **Request Letters of Recommendation.** Two (2) letters are required.

How many pages are required for the personal statement of the Summer Research Experience application?

The personal statement should not exceed or be less than two (2) pages. References are not included in the page limit and mentor choices must be listed on a separate page. Read about the Personal Statement.
What documents are required in Phases 2 and 3 of the post-application process?

Awardees of the CPRTP Summer Research Experience will be required to provide additional documentation to complete the appointment process.

**Phase 2: (Recommendation):**
1. **Notification of Personal and Criminal History Background Check Form** (This is an electronic form. Awardees will receive a link and instructions to complete & submit this form electronically).
2. **Proof of Selective Service**
3. **Release of Liability**
4. **Immunization Compliance Form** (this must be uploaded after all health documents are uploaded and approved in the Castle Branch system)

**Phase 3: (Pre-Appointment):**
1. Signed Appointment Letter (upload all pages including signed page)
2. Photo
3. Electronic I-9 Form: All compensated trainees will receive an email sometime in May with instructions to complete Section 1 of the electronic I-9. This is mandatory and failure to comply will cause delays in onboarding. **Students must present original copies of the acceptable documents from columns A OR columns B & C, in order for AVA to complete Section 2 and complete the E-verify process.**
4. Any other pre-appointment documents.

Discover Application Process

What are the steps in Phase 1 of the CPRTP summer application process within Discover?

- Step 1: Application Form
- Step 2: Upload Documents
- Request Letters of Recommendation

Can I submit my Step 2 documents if I have not completed my application?

No. In the Discover system, **Step 1: Application Form** must be completed before advancing to **Step 2: Upload Documents**.

How do I complete the forms in Discover?

The documents are included within Step 2. Next to each document, you may see GET FORM, INSTRUCTIONS, UPLOAD, FAX, or VIEW. Select "Get Form" to download the form, print, complete, sign, scan, save to your PC and upload it using the hyperlink next to the appropriate document. Make sure you upload documents to the correct location. Double check that you have submitted the correct document by clicking on "View". If you notice you have uploaded the wrong document, simply select "Upload" and upload a newer or corrected version of your document.

What documents are required in Step 2: Upload Documents?

Curriculum Vitae CV or Resume, Unofficial transcript of highest degree, Personal Statement (with mentor choices listed on a separate page), Tobacco policy acknowledgement. See **Letters of Recommendation** for instructions.
How can I tell if all of my documents have been submitted?

Log on to the Discover account, select Summary from the left menu, under the Document Status section to view the list of documents and the document status. "Submitted" means the form has been submitted and received.

Why was a document returned to me in Discover?

A document can be returned in Discover for several reasons:

- Only the 2nd page of a required document was signed and uploaded in the Discover account. All pages of a required document must be uploaded including the signature page.
- The signature was typed instead of written by hand.
- An electronic signature was used, all documents must be signed by hand.
- The document was blank.
- The wrong document was uploaded.

What if I accidentally upload the wrong document or need to make changes to a document?

Simply revise the form that’s saved on the computer and upload it again. Once it is uploaded, the CPRTP will automatically be able to see the most recent document. The CPRTP will not begin reviewing applications and supporting documentation until the next business day following the application deadline.

These forms are not fillable, how am I supposed to complete them?

There are several ways to complete a non-fillable form:

- Download, print, write in the data (clearly and legibly), scan, save to the PC and upload it into the Discover account.
- Download, print, write in the data (clearly and legibly), and fax it to the Discover account (select the Fax option next to the document in the Discover system for instructions).
- Use the typewriter feature in Adobe Professional (Trial Version) or any compatible Adobe software.
- **For issues with Adobe:** Open the PDF in Discover, click Print, Select the Microsoft XPS Document Writer from the Name in the Printer pop-up winder, Click OK, name the file, save the file to the PC, double click to open the file and print with a regular printer. Write in the answers, scan and upload it into the Discover account.

Can I view documents after I upload them?

It is mandatory that all applicants view their documents for missing information via the assigned Discover account. Applicants can view any documents and the application, even after submission, by logging on to the Discover account, selecting "Step 2: Upload Documents" from the left menu, and select "View" next to the document.
Personal Statement

The Personal Statement form is not a fillable form, but has instructions, how do I submit a Personal Statement?

Detailed instructions are provide in the PERSONAL STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS form in the Discover account. Applicants must type a 500 to 1000 word description of why they are interested in MD Anderson’s Summer Experience.

How should I format the personal statement?

- First and Last Name must be at the top of all pages OR in the header.
- Spacing: Single or Double
- Word limit: 500 (minimum) 1,000 (maximum)
- Page limit: 2 pages
- Page minimum: 2 pages
- Page maximum: 2 pages
- Margins: 1-inch (all margins)
- Font face: Any
- Font size: 12 point
- Format: Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Adobe (.pdf)
- Required citation or format styles (e.g. MLA, APA): No preference. Any style or format is acceptable.
- References: Not included in the 2-page limit
- Mentor Choices (CPRTP Summer Research Experience applicants only): Not included in the 2-page limit.

What areas should I address in the personal statement?

Your personal statement must address the following areas:

1. Why you are interested in the MD Anderson Summer Experience?
2. What are you hoping to gain or achieve from this experience?
3. How would you benefit from this experience?
4. What are your educational goals?
5. Describe your research interests and please be specific (e.g. tobacco cessation, HPV, colon cancer).
6. Include any specific information about prior research, goals for future research and investigation.

I would like to include references, is this included in the personal statement page limit?

No.

Who will read my personal statement?

The personal statement will be read by the CPRTP Review Committee which is comprised of junior and senior faculty within the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences.

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How to Find a Summer Mentor

Do I need to have a mentor before I apply?

No.

How do I find a mentor?

Visit [www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer](http://www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer) and select **Find a Summer Mentor** from the left menu.

Do I need to contact a potential mentor?

No. The CPRTP will provide instructions to summer fellowship awardees for contacting and interviewing potential mentors.

Where do I list my mentor choices?

On a separate page, submitted with the personal statement. The mentor choices page is not included within the 2 page limit of the personal statement.

How many mentor choices are required?

A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10.

What are the summer mentor requirements?

1. One primary mentor is required. Two or more mentors are optional.
2. The mentor must have a faculty or adjunct appointment at MD Anderson Cancer Center and preferably within the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences
3. Instructors and Postdoctoral Fellows may serve as mentors, as long as they are supervised by a faculty at the Assistant Professor level or higher
4. The proposed summer research project must be related to cancer prevention.
5. Faculty outside of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences may serve as mentors as long as they meet all of the aforementioned requirements and the project is related to cancer prevention
6. Where do I include my mentor choices within the Personal Statement?
How do I search for potential summer mentors?

There are 3 search methods:

1) Go to www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer → Find a Summer Mentor (left menu) → scroll down to Previous CPRTP Summer Mentor & Projects, and select from the list of faculty listed.

2) Search the faculty pages of the five (5) departments within the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences (DCPPS) listed below. Each faculty name on the department page is hyperlinked to the faculty profile which describes their research.
   1. Department of Epidemiology Faculty
   2. Department of Health Services Research Faculty
   3. Department of Behavioral Science Faculty
   4. Department of Clinical Cancer Prevention Faculty
   5. Department of Health Disparities Research Faculty

3) Use the MD Anderson Faculty Search engine at http://faculty.mdanderson.org and search by faculty name OR research keyword (e.g. colon cancer) using the Faculty Name box.

If I am awarded a fellowship, how will you match me with a mentor?

Upon notification of award, the CPRTP will review the mentor choices of the awardees, and provide copies of your application to the faculty listed as your mentor choices. The faculty will review your application and determine whether they are available for an interview.

What factors determine whether a faculty will allow me to interview them?

- Your previous research experience (if any)
- Whether your research interests are in alignment with their current projects
- Ability to work independently
- Whether you are seeking lab experience or basic science experience
- Whether their current research is in cancer prevention
- Their current work load (e.g. upcoming grant submissions)
- Their summer travel schedule (e.g. upcoming conferences)
- The number of students they are currently mentoring
- Available space within their department

What happens after the faculty informs CPRTP which students may contact them? What is the interview process like?

The faculty will inform us which students they are interested in interviewing. We will provide you with an interview form, interview questions, faculty contact information, and a deadline for interview results. In most cases, you will interview the faculty's senior research scientist, lab manager, program manager, postdoctoral fellow or instructor. These individuals work directly with the faculty mentor and will take an active role in mentoring the summer student, while managing daily activities. In these scenarios, the faculty mentor will act more as a supervisor and oversee the summer research project. In contrast, other faculty mentors will interview and subsequently work directly with the summer student. The interview usually takes about 15 minutes.
What happens after I complete my mentor interviews?

Once we compile all interview results, we will begin matching students and contact the faculty to confirm a match. When both you and the mentor are in consensus—a match is made. Finally, we will have the matched mentor complete a project description form, which will be provided at CPRTP orientation during the first day of your fellowship.

What format should I use when submitting my mentor choices?

Please see page 2 of the Personal Statement instructions in Discover and use the following format:

Mentor Choice #1: Dr. Sandy Jones  
Department: Clinical Cancer Prevention  
Reason(s): I have always been intrigued by neurology and intend to pursue a career in oncology neurology and believe Dr. Jones would provide the appropriate guidance.

Mentor Choice #2: Dr. Jon Garcia  
Department: Gastroenterology Research  
Reasons: Genetics was also one of my favorite classes, which is one of the reasons I would enjoy working with Dr. Garcia.

Why would a faculty be listed on the Find a Summer Mentor page, but not be interested in a telephone interview with me?

All faculty listed on the Find a Summer Mentor page at www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer have been pre-screened by the CPRTP; agreed to mentor a summer student; have projects and research related to cancer prevention; and are aware of the mentor requirements and expectations set by the CPRTP. This eliminates the guess work out of the summer student randomly contacting an MD Anderson faculty and wondering if they have time to mentor a student. At times, summer faculty may realize they have other commitments at the last minute (grant applications, travel, conferences, etc.) and realize they are unable to mentor a summer student, although they agreed to mentor a student. Please do not be discouraged, as these unforeseen events occur from time to time. The CPRTP is committed to matching our students with the most suitable faculty.

What if I am not interested in being mentored by the faculty listed on the Find a Summer Mentor page?

Utilize one of the other 2 search methods, for locating mentor choices.

Do my mentor choices need to be from the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences?

No, but any proposed mentor must understand that the summer research project must be related to cancer prevention, per the terms of our NCI grant award.
Immunizations

When do I need to provide immunization records or get a TB test?

Only students who are offered a fellowship will be required to provide immunization records via the Castle Branch system as instructed. All MD Anderson employees are required to have a TB test performed before starting work. It is highly recommended that all applicants ensure their immunizations are current at the time of application to the MD Anderson Summer Experience. Any delay in obtaining health or immunization records could forfeit the fellowship award.

Transcripts

Do I need to submit a transcript from my high school?

No. Submit only a transcript of highest degree (if transitioning) or from the current institution. For example, if the student is currently a graduate student at The University of Texas Health Science Center – School of Public Health (UTSPH) and previously received a Bachelor’s degree at University of Houston, submit only the current transcript from the UTSPH.

I am graduating in May of the program year with a B.S. degree, but I have applied and been accepted to graduate school, what documents do you need me to upload to Discover?

Upload an unofficial copy of the transcript from the institution where the Bachelor’s degree was received and upload a copy of either the graduate school acceptance letter or graduate school application.

As of May of the program year, I am completing my freshmen year in college, do you need to submit my high school transcript?

No. Upload an unofficial copy of the current transcript from the current institution or proof of enrollment during the current semester. If you are selected, you will be required to submit proof of enrollment for the spring semester of the program year. See proof of enrollment.

I attended 3 colleges as an undergraduate, do you need all transcripts?

Not necessarily. Usually, the most recent transcript will include credits transferred from the previous institutions. If that is the case, upload only the transcript from your current institution.

Do I need to have a copy of my official transcript mailed to the program?

No. Unofficial transcripts at the time of application are acceptable however, we reserve the right to request an official transcript if you are awarded a fellowship.
How do I submit an unofficial transcript?

Most universities provide online portals for students to pay tuition bills and register for classes. Often times, this same system allows students to download an unofficial transcript, at no cost to the student. If this is not the case, please consult your college’s registrar’s office for transcript request procedures. Do not wait until the last minute. Once you receive a copy of the transcript, scan it and upload it to your Discover account. The transcript must be recent and include the current semester courses in progress. Some students find it easier to request a hard copy of the transcript (unofficial or official) and have it mailed to themselves. Once you receive the transcript, scan it and upload it into your Discover account. Official transcripts do not need to be mailed to our office.

What if I cannot get an unofficial transcript?

The application will be rejected without an unofficial transcripts. Screen prints of a schedule, report cards, final grade reports & other documentation are not acceptable.

I am an undergraduate freshmen and this is my first semester at this school, what should I submit?

Upload any of the acceptable forms of proof of enrollment.

Proof of Enrollment

What are acceptable forms of proof of enrollment?

1. A statement from a recommending faculty member at the applicant's home institution, to include attestation that the individual is a student at the identified institution, is at a particular academic level, and is of good standing. Term or dates of enrollment must be identified and must cover the trainee’s period of appointment (summer program dates). If emailed to the CPRTTP, the recommending faculty member must send the statement from his/her home institution's email account directly to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org.  
2. A signed letter on institution letterhead from the Registrar, Student Affairs Office, or the Dean’s Office  
3. Transcripts that confirm enrollment during the trainee’s summer program dates. Unofficial transcripts will be accepted; however, computer print-out or screenshot of class schedule will not be accepted.  
4. Verification of Enrollment Form (VOE)  
5. National Student Clearinghouse Verification Certificate

Letters of Recommendation

How many letters of recommendation (LOR) are required for the Summer Research Experience?

Two (2) letters of recommendation are required for the Summer Research Experience. If more than two letters of recommendation are uploaded into Discover the CPRTTP will randomly select two letters and include these letters in the application documents sent to the CPRTTP Review Committee. If you want a specific letter review, please email apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org.
Can I have the letters of recommendation sent to the program via email?

Letters of recommendation must be sent through the Discover system, per the diagram below.

How do I request letters of recommendation from recommenders for the summer program?

- You are to contact the two individuals that you have in mind, prior to requesting letters of recommendation.
- Log on to the Discover account, select "Request Letters of Recommendation" from the left menu, select "Add Provider" and enter all of the required information. The Discover System will automatically send the recommender an e-mail with a link to submit their Letter of Recommendation directly to the Discover account. It is the responsibility of the applicant to request letters via Discover and check the status of the letter submission via their Discover account and by following up with the individual recommender. Please inform the recommender that they will receive an e-mail notification to upload their letter and to check their spam folder if the e-mail notification is not received.

What if I am uncertain about one of my recommenders?

As a precaution, request letters of recommendation from more than two individuals, especially if you anticipate problems. If more than 2 letters of recommendation are received, the CPRTP will randomly select the 2 letters that will be sent to the CPRTP Review Committee. If you have a preference, please inform the CPRTP by sending an email to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org.

What are the Letter of Recommendation requirements?

Letters must be dated no earlier than one year prior to the application date and must be sent directly from faculty, mentors, or others who are in a position to comment on the ability and qualifications relevant to the type of position sought. Applicants may not personally forward the recommendation letters.

The format requirements include:

1. Must be on institutional letterhead
2. Must be recently dated
3. Must be addressed to Dr. Shine Chang or the CPRTP
4. Must be manually signed
I had letters of recommendation written for my application to another program at another institution, may I use these same letters?

No. Letters of recommendation must be specific to the CPRTP Summer Research Experience.

Do you require the two Letters of Recommendation (LOR) to be from a specific source?

We recommend that at least one of the letters come from a college science professor, however you can have a teacher, advisor, Pastor, former supervisor---anyone who knows you well and can speak about how you will be an asset to the CPRTP Summer Research Experience and what you will gain from the experience. If you have not yet taken the science courses or do not have a professor to ask, request a letter from another professor who knows the academic work. Ideally, both of the required letters of recommendation should come from a professor who knows you academically and professionally, if applicable. The stronger the letter, the stronger the application will be.

Are all documents and Letters of Recommendation letters due by the application deadline?

Yes, the application and ALL documents INCLUDING the required two (2) letters of recommendation are due by application deadline.

I requested Letters of Recommendation from two people, but they stated that they were never contacted by the program regarding details about submitting the recommendation?

When students request letters of recommendation through the Discover System, the provider will receive an e-mail that includes a URL with a direct link to the application, which will allow the provider to automatically upload their letter from their computer to the account. Direct the recommender to their BULK, SPAM or JUNK mail folder, as many mail servers automatically mark e-mails from the Discover system spam. If you continue to have problems, have the recommender send their letter to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org with the applicant name in the subject line.
What information will I need about the recommender to enter in Discover (to request my Letter of Recommendation from them)?

Log on to the Discover account, select Request Letters of Recommendation from the left menu and enter the provider's (recommender) information noted below. Click on the "Add Provider" button below to add the name of a new provider. The form will ask for the necessary contact information of the recommender. Once the contact information has been saved, an e-mail will be sent to the recommender with instructions on how to submit a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant. After clicking the agree box, the recommender will receive an email notification.

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. E-mail (MAKE SURE THIS IS VALID AND CORRECT)
4. Phone
5. Country
6. Professional Title
7. Institution
8. Relationship to the applicant

How do I check status of the letters of recommendation?

The status of each letter of recommendation may be viewed when after logging on to the Discover account and navigate to the recommendation letter page.

Will I be able to see copies of the letters submitted by my recommender?

No. Letters of recommendation submitted on the applicant's behalf will not be viewable by the applicant.

If a letter has not been received, how do I remind the recommender?

In the event that the provider has not sent a letter of recommendation, and the applicant may send him or her a reminder by clicking the "Resend E-mail" button next to the recommendation provider's name.
If the CPRTP rejects my letter of recommendation, what should I do?

If a letter of recommendation is returned by the system or the department/program (e.g. if the letter is not on letterhead, if the letter is unsigned), a notification will be sent to the applicant’s e-mail address on file. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the provider to request that he or she resubmit the document.**

I requested Letters of Recommendation from two people, but they stated that they were never contacted by the program regarding details about submitting the recommendation?

When students request letters of recommendation through the Discover System, the provider will receive an e-mail that includes a URL with a direct link to the application, which will allow the provider to automatically upload their letter from their computer to the account. Direct the recommender to their BULK, SPAM or JUNK mail folder, as many mail servers automatically mark e-mails from the Discover system spam. If you continue to have problems, have the recommender send their letter to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org with the applicant name in the subject line.

What if the recommender has problems uploading their letter of recommendation to my Discover account OR did not receive the e-mail from Discover?

- Confirm that recommenders e-mail address has been entered correctly into Discover,
- Ask the recommender to check their "Bulk" or "Spam" or "Junk" folder in their e-mail.
- **If the problem persists**, request that the recommender submit their letter of recommendation via e-mail to apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org and we will attach the letter to the student's Discover account. Be sure to follow up with CPRTP prior to the application deadline and

How Submit the Application

How do I submit my Phase 1 application in Phase 1?

After completing Step 1, you will need to advance to Step 2 to upload your documents. **Do not upload more than what is required (e.g. CPR certification, lifeguard certificate)**. After both Steps 1 and 2 are complete, click the gray **Submit Completed Application** button to transmit the application to the program.

What happens after I press the SUBMIT button?

"Application Submitted Successfully" will appear on the screen and the program will review your application documents. You will be contacted if your information is incomplete or additional information is required.
Will I receive a confirmation e-mail, once I submit my application?

Yes. See below for a sample e-mail (Be sure to check the BULK or SPAM folder):

*****SAMPLE EMAIL*****

THIS IS AN AUTO-RESPONSE EMAIL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO SENDER.

You have successfully submitted your pre-application form to the DISCOVER System™, the online application system for educational opportunities at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

DISCOVER ID: T000124690
First Name: Jane
Middle Name: Sally
Last Name: Doe
E-mail Address: janedoe@yahoo.com
Department Name: Cancer Prevention Research Training Program
Application URL: https://www2.mdanderson.org/sapp/Discover/default.aspx

The next step is to log into the DISCOVER System and start uploading or faxing the required documents to complete your pre-application. Instructions on how to upload or fax in documents are found within the Documents section in your account. Please keep your account information updated on a regular basis to ensure you receive important messages from our staff.

If you experience any technical difficulty signing in or using the DISCOVER System™ send an e-mail to DISCOVER_support@mdanderson.org or contact our phone support at 713-794-4636.

I did not receive my email, how else can I check the status of my application?

Log on to the Discover account, select Summary from the left menu, and under the Pre-Application Form Status, Application Form section, you should see Overall Status: Submitted. If this message is not visible AND all fields of the application form do NOT have green checks, the application is INcomplete and has NOT been submitted.

What does it mean if the SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION button is grayed out?

It means the application is incomplete. Log on to the Discover account and complete your Discover application and upload all required documents in Step 2, then press the Submit Completed Application button.

Can I make changes to my Discover application after I press "Submit"?

No. After the "Submit" button is pressed, changes cannot be made. It is imperative that applicants double check all data entered prior to pressing the submit button.

What happens if I make a mistake on the discover application or the uploaded documents.

Select “Edit My Information” from the left menu after logging on to your Discover account to change information within your Discover application. You may also upload another version of a required document if you notice a mistake. Our office will receive the newer form, but we actually have access to all versions of your submitted forms.

When will I be notified of acceptance or denial?

After the application deadline, CPRTP will notify all applicants (whether their application is complete or INcomplete) within 2 business days of the application deadline. During that time, please do not contact our office as we receive a large volume of applications and need time to review. The e-mail confirmation will state whether the application is "UNDER REVIEW" or "DENIED". If the application is "under review", applicants will be notified of the decision via email. In the meantime, please see the Important Dates at www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer.

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Application Status

Will the CPRTP contact me with my application status or if any documents are missing?

Due to the heavy volume of summer applications, the CPRTP is unable to notify students of missing application documents or status. It is the applicant’s responsibility to make sure their application has been submitted via the Discover account. The Discover system will recognize if a required document in Step 2 has not been uploaded. If a required document is not uploaded in Step 2, the application is considered incomplete. All incomplete applications will be purged from the Discover system and the Discover accounts will be disabled. The CPRTP will send a decline email to applicants with incomplete applications on or before the Notification to Awardees date per the Deadlines & Important Dates section of the CPRTP summer webpage at www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer.

Why didn't I receive a confirmation e-mail that my application was submitted?

Check the "Bulk Mail" or "Spam" folder within the email account.

Will the CPRTP notify me if I am missing any documents or if my application is incomplete?

No. It is the responsibility of the applicant to logon to the assigned Discover account to check for application completion or missing items. Contact apply@CancerPreventionTraining.org with questions not found on this FAQ document.

When will I be notified about my application status?

An e-mail will be sent within two (2) business days following the application deadline with the application status. Applicants will receive an "Application not accepted" or "Application Pending Review" email. Refer to the schedule under Deadlines and Important Dates on the CPRTP Summer Program page.

What does "pending final review" mean?

It means the application has been selected to be reviewed by the CPRTP Review Committee.

When will I know whether or not my application has been accepted?

Application status will be sent via e-mail. View the important dates at www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer. If my application is declined, will a reason be provided?

No. Applications are declined for a number of reasons including preset criteria established by the program. If an application is declined, we encourage you to re-apply next year or e-mail apply@cancerpreventiontraining.org. See Tips for a Successful Summer Application on our webpage at www.CancerPreventionTraining.org/Summer.

What happens after my application is accepted?

The next steps in the process will be sent via email. Typically the mentor matching process begins following notification of fellowship award, and the CPRTP office will begin processing employment paperwork of fellowship awardees.

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