

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) of applicants to the: Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities

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Eligibility & Requirements

How do I apply for the program?

Visit the [Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities](#) page and select the “Click here to apply” icon. Applicants will be routed to the Discover system to complete the application documents.

Who is eligible for the program?

Master’s and Doctoral level graduate students in their 2nd second year are eligible for the program. All applicants must be enrolled in a degree program for the duration of the program.

Are non-U.S. citizens or residents eligible to apply?

Yes, trainees do not need to be a U.S. citizen or resident to participate in the program, as long as they are enrolled in a degree granting institution throughout their participation.

I will be graduating with my degree during the program year. Can I still apply?

No. Trainees must be enrolled in a degree granting institution throughout their participation.

Are SAT/GRE/MCAT/ACT scores required for the program?

No tests are required for this summer program, but scores will be requested in places within the application documents.

Why do I have to complete an immunization form and get a TB test?

All MD Anderson employees are required to have a TB test performed before starting work. It is mandatory that ALL accepted applicants submit the required documents at CertifiedBackground.com as instructed. A non-refundable \$20 processing fee is required to access the immunization system.

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

Yes, as long as eligibility requirements are met. **PLEASE NOTE:** A new Discover account must be created for each application with a unique email address. All applicants must keep a list of email addresses and respective applied programs to eliminate confusion.

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Personal Statement

What are the requirements for the personal statement?

Please upload your personal statement as a Word document using 1-inch margins, 12-point font, and single spaced. Your personal statement should be no more than 2 pages (not including references), and include the following components:

- 1) Provide a brief background on yourself.
- 2) Describe your interest and experience in disparities research and working with racial/ethnic minority populations.
- 3) Describe your interest and experience in breast cancer research.
- 4) Describe your future careers plans
- 5) Briefly describe what you hope to gain from the program.
- 6) Describe what you are interested in researching specifically in breast cancer disparities among Black and Hispanic women?

How do I submit my Personal Statement?

The personal statement must be uploaded in Discover with the remaining Phase 1 documents.

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Proof of Enrollment

What qualifies as 'Proof of Enrollment'?

Proof of enrollment can be any of the following documents:

- A signed acceptance letter on institution letterhead from the Registrar, Student Affairs Office, or the Dean's Office.
- 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.
- Verification of Enrollment Form (VOE).
- National Student Clearinghouse Verification Certificate.

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Program Duration

How long does the program last?

The program is a year-long. See website for current fellowship start date. Trainees must be available during the timeframe provided. Doctoral students may be eligible to extend their appointment to an additional year.

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

All trainees will work part-time, or 20 hours per week. Trainees may need to be flexible with hours when meeting with their mentors. This work includes research with mentor, attending seminars/workshops, and community shadowing experiences.

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Stipend and Student Benefits

What is a stipend?

A stipend is the same as 'salary' or 'pay' within MD Anderson. These terms are synonymous and interchangeable.

Are taxes withheld from my paycheck?

Per MD Anderson's Payroll Dept., taxes will be withheld from the paychecks of all employees and trainees who receive a salary or stipend, however the amount taxed depends on the designated allowances on the W-4 form completed.

How much is the stipend?

Trainees receive a stipend **up to** \$29,000 (less taxes) during the year-long program. This rate is non-negotiable and determined by the Susan G. Komen Graduate Training grant.

When are paychecks distributed?

Trainees will receive paychecks the 5th and 20th of each month. **Direct deposit is mandatory.** Paper checks are not distributed by MD Anderson.

How many positions are available for the Susan G. Komen Graduate Training in Disparities Research Program?

The program accepts up to 5 students per year to participate in the year-long program.

Will the program cover any conference registrations or travel during the program?

Yes, all trainees will receive funding to travel to the annual Susan G. Komen Graduate Training in Disparities Research conference. Consult the program manager for the next conference date.

Is there housing available?

No, students are expected to have their own housing and travel established for the duration of the program.

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Program Mentors

Do I need to have a mentor before I apply?

No. Trainees accepted into the program will have further guidance in the mentorship process after the first phases of the application.

If my mentor is not on the list of mentors from MD Anderson, can I still use them?

Maybe, this is determined on a case-by-case basis. **NOTE:** All mentors must work specifically in breast cancer or health disparities.

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Application Process and Documents

How do I access the application?

Visit the [Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities](#) page and select the “Click here to apply” icon. Applicants will be routed to the Discover system to complete the application documents.

How many phases make up the program 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 applicants who complete all required documents in Phase 1 will be subject to a pre-review. The program will notify the applicants of their application status.
- Once selected applicants 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.

When will I be notified of my application acceptance or denial?

After the application deadline, we will notify all applicants (whether their application is complete or incomplete) within 5 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". In the meantime, please see **Important Dates & Deadlines** at www.mdanderson.org/KomenTrainingProgram.

What documents are required in Phase 1?

1. Discover Application
2. Curriculum Vitae (CV or Resume)
3. Personal Statement
4. Letters of Recommendation (2)
5. Tobacco Policy Acknowledgement
6. Unofficial Transcript of Highest degree (requested and received by the student and uploaded in the Discover account).

What documents are required in Phases 2 and 3 of the post-application process?

Note: Phase 2 and 3 documents are completed by fellowship awardees ONLY!

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 Certified Profile system, which includes a \$30 access fee)
5. Brief research proposal (instructions for the brief proposal will be provided after acceptance to the program).

Phase 3 – Pre-Appointment:

1. Signed Appointment Form (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.
4. Any other pre-appointment documents.

NOTE: It is highly recommended that all applicants ensure their immunizations are current at the time of application to the MD Anderson Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities. Awardees must have had a TB test within 1 year of the appointment start date. Any delay in obtaining your health of immunization records could forfeit your fellowship award. **Please do no procrastinate.**

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Application Submission

How do I submit my application in Phase 1?

After completing Step 1 in the Discover system, click the gray **Submit Completed Application** button to transmit the application to the program. After completing Step 1, you will need to advance to Step 2 to upload your documents. **Please do not upload more than what is required.**

What happens after I press the SUBMIT button?

“Application Submitted Successfully” will appear on the screen.

Will I receive a confirmation email, once I submit my application?

Yes, please be sure to check BULK or SPAM folders.

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 check 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 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.

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

Step 1: Application Form

Step 2: Upload Documents

Step 3: Request Letters of Recommendation

Can I submit my supporting 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 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.

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.

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 wrong document was uploaded.
- The document was blank.

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 program will automatically be able to see the document. Please note the training program 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 window, 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.

The Personal Statement form is not a fillable form, but has instructions.

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Transcripts

Do I need to submit a transcript from my undergraduate degree?

No. Submit only a transcript from the highest or current degree in progress. *For example*, if the student is currently a graduate student at the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH) and previously received a Bachelor's degree at University of Houston, submit only the current transcript from the UTSPH.

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, an official transcript will be requested if you are awarded a fellowship.

How do I submit an unofficial transcript?

Consult the registrar's office of the institution for procedures for requesting an "unofficial" transcript from the college or university. Once you receive this copy, upload it into the Discover account. The transcript must be recent and include current semester courses.

If you already have a hard copy of the transcript (unofficial or official), please scan it and upload it into the 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 transcript. Screen prints of a schedule, report cards, final grade reports & other documentation are not acceptable.

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Letters of Recommendation

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the student to follow up with the recommender to ensure the letter of recommendation was submitted. Students can check their Discover accounts to see if the letter was received.

How many letters of recommendation (LOR) are required for the Susan G. Komen Graduate Training in Disparities Research Program?

Two (2) letters of recommendation are required for the Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities. Please do not upload more than the two required letters of recommendation. Doing so will not improve your chances of obtaining a fellowship. The reviewers will only receive 2 letters.

Can I have the letters of recommendation sent to the program via email?

No. Letters of recommendation must be sent through the Discover system.

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

You are more than welcome to request letters of recommendation from as many recommenders as you wish (just in case), however we will randomly select 2 letters to be submitted to the review committee.

What are the Letter of Recommendation format requirements?

1. Must be on institutional letterhead
2. Must be recently dated
3. Must be addressed to the Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities
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 program. See the requirements above.

Do you require the 2 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 Susan G. Komen Graduate Training in Disparities Research Program 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.

What information will I need about the recommender to enter in Discover (to request my Letter of Recommendation from them)?

Applicants are required to enter the Provider's (recommender):

- First Name
- Last Name
- E-mail (MAKE SURE THIS IS CORRECT)
- Phone
- Country
- Professional Title
- Institution
- Relationship to the applicant

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 via 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.

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 KomenTrainingProgram@mdanderson.org. Please follow up with the program prior to the application deadline and we will attach the letter to the student's Discover account.

How do I add recommenders to my Discover account?

- For detailed instructions, log on to the Discover account, select Request Letters of Recommendation from the left menu.
- 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.
- 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.

Note the following:

- The recommendation provider must have a valid e-mail address and phone number.
- The status of each letter of recommendation may be viewed when logging on to the Discover account and navigate to the recommendation letter page.
- Letters of recommendation submitted on the applicant's behalf will not be viewable by the applicant.

- 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 a letter of recommendation is returned by the system or the department/program, a notification will be sent to the applicant's e-mail address on file. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to contact the provider to request that he or she resubmit the document.

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Application Status

Due to the heavy volume of applications, we are unable to notify students of missing application documents or status. All incomplete applications will be purged from the Discover system after the deadline and will not be reviewed. The Discover account will be disabled if the application is deemed incomplete.

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.

When will I be notified about my application status?

An e-mail will be sent within five (5) business days following the application deadline with the application status. View the Important Dates on the Susan G. Komen Graduate Training in Disparities Research Program page. Applicants will receive an "Application not accepted" or "Application Pending Final Review" email.

What does "pending final review" mean?

It means the application has been selected to be reviewed by the 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 on the Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities webpage.

What happens after my application is accepted?

The next steps in the process will be sent via email. The Susan G. Komen Training Program to Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities office will begin processing employment paperwork of fellowship awardees.

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Contact

Who do I contact with questions?

Contact KomenTrainingProgram@mdanderson.org with questions not found in this FAQs document.

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