MD Anderson Summer Experience Survival Guide

Congratulations and welcome to the MD Anderson Summer Experience! Now that you have been awarded a summer fellowship, you may be wondering, "What happens next?" This guide will assist newly appointed fellows (also referred to as "trainees") navigate the fellowship appointment and onboarding process to initiate employment at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Although it may be tempting to contact your program with questions, we highly recommend that you read this guide in its entirety, as it will answer many of your questions.

All items communicated herein are subject to change.

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MD Anderson Summer Experience Programs

As of 2019, there are ten (10) summer programs participating in the MD Anderson SE:

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

Check your email every morning and evening until you arrive at MD Anderson for your first day of employment. In addition, check your SPAM or BULK MAIL folder daily, as you will receive correspondence from different MD Anderson departments located within the ORTP, as well as your summer program. If you locate MD Anderson emails in your SPAM or BULK folders, be sure to designate the email address sender as “not spam.”
MD Anderson Entities

You’ll be interacting with three (3) or more separate entities during this process:

1) **The Office of Research Trainee Programs-ORTP (formerly known as the MD Anderson Academic and Visa Administration Trainee or AVA-Trainee)** is similar to a Registrar's Office and serves as the institutional resource for processing educational appointments for trainees & students. ORTP conducts new trainee onboarding and ensures educational programs and departments are in compliance with guidelines & policies from the UT System, the State of Texas, & Federal and other external agencies.

2) Your summer program listed at [www.mdanderson.org/Summer](http://www.mdanderson.org/Summer).

3) **MD Anderson Employee Health and Well Being** processes mandatory health procedures for trainees and employees and can intervene and override decisions made in the Castle Branch system.

**Application Phases**

There are three (3) phases of the application process. These phases take place primarily through the Discover system, with a few items requiring electronic submission via email. Be sure to communicate with your potential mentors that you will complete your employment paperwork through the Discover system and that your summer program will oversee this process. The immunization health records must be uploaded to Castle Branch Profile (see Immunizations below). Instructions are available in the Discover system.

**Phase 1 (Application):**
- Discover Application
- Curriculum Vitae (CV or Resume)
- Personal Statement
- Letters of Recommendation (Quantity: 2)
- Tobacco Policy Acknowledgement
- Unofficial Transcript of Highest Degree

The following two phases are completed after the student is accepted into the program, and all items in Phase 1 have been reviewed and approved by your summer program.

**Phase 2: (Recommendation):**
- **Proof of Enrollment for the spring semester** of the program year: All students must upload an updated unofficial transcript (reflecting Spring enrollment) OR a letter from your institution to the Discover account. The official transcript may be securely emailed to the summer program. Please contact the appropriate program manager for the mailing address.
- **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).
- **Proof of Selective Service** (both males and females will need to sign this form. Eligible males will need to upload proof in addition to completing this form)
- **Release of Liability**
- **Summer Experience Immunization Compliance Form** (this must be uploaded after all health documents are uploaded and approved in the Castle Branch system)

**Phase 3: (Pre-Appointment Contingencies):**
- **Appointment Letter**, including two additional attachments:
  1) Appointment Letter
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2) Campus Map, and
3) Summer Experience E Verify instructions. The actual link to complete the verification will arrive in a separate email. MD Anderson uses the secure Pre-Check system and you must enter your social security number.

- Media Release Form
- Photograph (for the MD Anderson ID badge)

Trainees will receive a separate email to complete the following additional tasks, outside the Discover system:
- Background check via Pre-Check system
- Online orientation
- Section 1 of electronic I-9 form
- Drug and tobacco testing are not required for short-term, summer program trainees.

Phase 2: Overview
After Phase 1, the summer program will award positions to selected applicants. Within one week of acceptance confirmation, trainees may 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 hyperlink or "Get Form" feature in Discover. 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 which are not legible will be rejected.

Immunizations

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center's department of Employee Health and Well-Being requires all educational trainees to provide documentation of immunizations or serological proof (blood test) of immunity. Castle Branch is an online screening service utilized by MD Anderson Employee Health.

Immunizations are included in Phase 2 of the application process. Trainees must download the Summer Experience Immunization Compliance Report form from Discover. There is a non-refundable, non-reimbursable fee required to use this service. Please read the instructions carefully and note the technical helpdesk contact number.

The following health documents must be uploaded to your Castle Branch account, and not the Discover system:

1. Demographics and Health Questionnaire form (4 pages)
2. Minor Consent Form (if trainee is 18 yrs or younger)
3. Privacy Practice Form
4. Required immunization vaccination records:
   o Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR):
     ▪ 2 vaccinations

All awardees must have access to e-mail, printer, fax, scanner and telephone to complete additional required application documents. After notification of fellowship award, time-sensitive documents will be due between February and May. Should an awardee decide to take a vacation, it is their responsibility to complete all documents by the deadline. Failure to complete these documents on time will result in the forfeiture of your short-term fellowship.
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- Positive antibody titers for all 3 components (lab reports required)
  - Varicella (Chicken Pox):
    - 2 vaccinations
    - Positive antibody titer (lab report required)
    - Medical documentation of history of Chicken Pox
  - TB Skin Test:
    - A negative PPD skin test AND Respiratory Query within 3 months of Certified Background’s account initiation.
    - If PPD skin test is Positive, submit positive PPD skin test AND a Negative Chest X-Ray dated on or after the positive PPD skin test result, but within the past 10 years AND Respiratory Query within 3 months of Certified Background’s account initiation.
  - Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Tdap):
    - Must be documentation of a Tdap booster within the past 10 years

**Immunization tips**

- Schedule an appointment with your family physician/free clinic and contact your parents/guardians for shot records immediately after receiving fellowship award acceptance.
- Obtaining immunizations, uploading health documents and obtaining approval from MD Anderson Employee Health is a lengthy process and failure to upload your immunization forms by the deadlines can result in the forfeiture of your summer fellowship.
- **If you have a medical condition which precludes you from obtaining vaccines, contact MD Anderson Employee Health at EHOccHealth@MDAnderson.org.**
- Check the Certified Background account daily for health document status. The system will not automatically send notifications of missing documents.
- Items marked rejected must be addressed immediately.
- Items marked compliant are accepted and require no additional action.
- All health documents must be legible, and signed by a licensed physician or healthcare provider.
- Screen prints are not acceptable.
- After all documents are marked compliant, navigate to the To Do List Summary located via the left menu, save and upload the Immunization Compliance Report into your Discover account. The Immunization Compliance Report must be labeled Compliant in green letters. If the report is not identified as compliant, your immunizations are incomplete.
- **NOTE:** Do not upload an incomplete compliance report to Discover. The program cannot submit the paperwork for employment to the ORTP until the immunization compliant document has been uploaded.

**Phase 3: Overview**

The program will submit phase 2 documents to the ORTP to initiate employment paperwork. Once ORTP reviews and approves all Phase 2 documents, Phase 3 application documents will become available. **Phase 3 is comprised of documents to be completed inside and outside of the Discover system.** Students will receive an email from
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Discover system with "Appointment Letter Signature Requested for Your Appointment" in the subject line. Students must follow the instructions in the email to logon to Discover to complete the following steps:

1. **Appointment Letter Signature Requested for your Appointment** will be the subject line of an email arriving from MD Anderson Discover OR Lydia Martinez. Lydia is our contact in ORTP and will be processing your fellowship appointment paperwork. Once you receive this email, logon to your Discover account and select GET FORM next to appointment letter. You will download the following three (3) items after you receive the email from MD Anderson ORTP:
   - **1a) Applicant’s Contract/Letter:** 1) Download and read **this letter in its entirety**, 2) sign and date the 2nd page and 3) upload **BOTH PAGES** of the letter into your Discover account. Keep a copy of this letter for your records and bring it with you on your 1st day of employment. Be sure to report to ORTP for check-in on the date, time and location indicated in the letter. **PERMANENT RESIDENTS:** Special check-in instructions will in the appointment letter and provided via email from the VISA Advisor with steps to verify employment eligibility. The VISA department can be reached at 713-792-1112. Be sure to schedule this appointment BEFORE or AFTER the ORTP check-in time listed in the appointment letter.
   - **1b) Campus Map:** Review these maps to familiarize yourself with MD Anderson campus before your arrival.
   - **1c) SE E-verify:** Download and **read both pages of the instructions carefully**. This document explains the electronic I9 process which is required to verify employment eligibility. It also tells you when to expect the email to complete this process.

2. **Media Release Form**
3. **Photograph:** Follow the instructions to upload a suitable photograph to be used for your MD Anderson identification badge.

Summer students will receive a separate email to complete the following additional tasks, **outside** the Discover system:

4. **Background check via Pre-Check system**
5. **Online orientation**
6. **Electronic I-9 form**

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Do not procrastinate! If you do not have your original social security card and/or do not know the location of your immunization records, take steps now to order a new social security card and schedule a doctor’s appointment. The summer program is unable to assist those without proper medical records or identification.

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Mentor Matching

Many participants of the Summer Experience will be paired with a faculty mentor during the internship. Please consult your program for the mentor matching process and details.

Compensation

Rates of financial support vary year to year. Refer to your summer program webpage for the current salary amount per hour. In addition, the MD Anderson appointment letter generated in Phase 3 (see previous page) will include your annual salary, even though you are only appointed for 10-weeks.

For an estimate of the amount per paycheck, visit www.paycheckcity.com/cokronos/netpaycalculator.asp. Enter Tax year, State, Gross pay (use the amount provided in the award letter), select Semi-monthly for pay frequency, enter # of allowances (include any dependents), enter any additional withholding you may designate on your taxes, Select “Round Federal Withholding” and click Calculate. The net pay amount is an ESTIMATE and does not take into account any parking fees or other designated deductions.

Summer students are not benefits eligible and will not receive holiday pay, sick leave or any other health benefits (see Holiday pay on the next page). If a work day falls on a holiday, the campus will be closed, you will not work that day and you will not receive pay for that day.

Pay dates

Compensated trainees will receive paychecks on the 5th and 20th of each month. If these dates fall on the weekend, paychecks may be received the previous business day or next business day, at the discretion of the trainee’s banking institution.

Direct deposit

Direct deposit enrollment, via the myHR intranet system, is mandatory during the first week of employment. You will need your bank’s ABA routing number (9-digit) and bank account number. Paychecks are not distributed at MD Anderson, and those who do not sign up for direct deposit will receive paper checks in the U.S. mail at the address provided on the W-4 form.

Direct all paycheck inquiries (e.g. amounts, tax deductions, garnishments, or direct deposit) to MD Anderson Human Resources (myHR) at 713-745-6947 or 5-myHR.
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Taxes

The IRS W-4 input tax form will be provided by ORTP and must be completed at ORTP check-in. Trainees are advised to use a permanent mailing address (e.g. parents mailing address), as the W-2 output tax forms will be mailed to the address provided on this form unless otherwise indicated on the Exit Clearance Form completed during the last few weeks of the summer fellowship. In addition, trainees may elect to change their permanent home address in the MD Anderson PeopleSoft system after the start of the fellowship.

Holiday pay

**Summer students are not eligible for benefits** and will not be paid for holidays which fall during a week day. MD Anderson recognizes the holidays listed below.

- U.S. Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- Day After Christmas (if applicable)
- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day

Ineligible Benefits

Because summer students are appointed for less than 6 months, we are **unable** to offer the following benefits or reimbursement:

- Health Insurance (Medical, Dental, etc.)
- Retirement Benefits
- Life Insurance
- Paid Time Off
- Parking
- Transportation (transit, taxi, etc.)
- Moving expenses
- MD Anderson Fitness Center

Parking

During your first day of employment, parking is available at Mid-Campus (1MC) Garage located at 1400 South Braeswood, Houston, TX 77030. Daily parking rates are $12.00 per day, and must be paid with cash, credit or debit card when exiting the garage via parking machine. All MD Anderson parking garages are **not** open to the public, so be sure to park in the garage we recommend, until you secure a parking contract or other transportation arrangements.

Students may sign a parking contract for the remainder of their fellowship by visiting the MD Anderson Parking Department at Pressler Garage, PGA4.2000, Phone: 713-563-7275 (6 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday). Email: parking@mdanderson.org. The 1st month's parking fees are pro-rated and must be paid up front via personal check, while future monthly fees will be deducted from each paycheck. To avoid parking fees, students are encouraged to carpool or utilize public transportation. **Read more** about other daily MD Anderson parking resources.
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Work Schedule

- Please consult your program for work schedule. Typically, Summer Experience students will work full time, usually 8am to 5pm (with 1 hour for lunch), Monday through Friday.
- Trainees will not receive overtime pay for working late or weekends, and are free to work after business hours as long as permission is granted from the supervisor.
- Your daily work schedule will be determined by the primary mentor or supervisor.
- The MD Anderson Summer Experience fellowship start and end dates are set and cannot be modified. This means you will not be able to start nor end the fellowship early; take days off and make them up later; nor work a modified schedule. If you are unable to commit to the full 10 weeks of the program, please alert the education coordinator and re-apply at a time when you are able to fully participate.
- If you are considering taking summer courses, you must contact your summer program BEFORE enrolling in summer school. The summer experience is an intensive 10-week program, and does not allow flexibility for students to attend classes.
- Unplanned time off for illness, family death or emergency is allowed; however, there is a possibility you may not receive pay for any missed days. Consult your program for attendance policies.

What to Pack?

Umbrella, rain boots, rain coat or poncho, light jacket, walking shoes/sneakers, and other essentials for wet and hot weather conditions. Also plan for going from very hot outside weather to very cool indoor temperatures. Be sure to watch the weather forecast daily and always keep an umbrella at your desk.

Dress Code

MD Anderson daily dress code is business casual. Clothing does not need to be formal. Most thermostats within the buildings are set at 73 degrees, but will seem much cooler. Sweaters, pashminas or jackets can be kept at your desk in case you are cold while indoors, and be sure to lock up all personal items, even if you are stepping away from your desk to go to the restroom or printer.

Consult your mentor regarding any additional dress code requirements set by the department, including casual Fridays (some departments allow jeans on Fridays, while others do not). Typical Houston summers are very hot, humid and rainy.

Acceptable attire

- Trousers/Slacks/Khakis
- Knee-Length Skirts
- Casual Dresses
- Polo or Button-down shirts/Blouses
- Blazers/Sweaters, Pashminas, Jackets

Unacceptable attire

- Shorts, Torn or Frayed Jeans
- T-shirts with slogans or advertising
- Flip-Flops, Hats
- Mini-skirts
- Revealing or bare midriff tops

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Houston Weather Conditions

The summer program takes place during hurricane season which means there may be frequent rain storms and flash floods. In the event of extreme weather events, it is highly recommended that you do not travel to MD Anderson campus and stay home. Your safety is our top priority.

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Source: Greater Houston Partnership and www.VisitHoustonTexas.com

MD Anderson Campus and Culture

MD Anderson Cancer Center is a uniquely diverse and inclusive community of clinical, research, academic, and workforce professionals from diverse backgrounds. Read more. Our campus is comprised of over 17 buildings over several miles. Some buildings are not within walking distance and will require transportation. MD Anderson provides free shuttle service to other MDACC buildings to all MD Anderson students and employees. Because some MD Anderson buildings are not on a regular “route” you can call a “By-Request” MD Anderson shuttle at (713) 792-2338. All shuttle passengers will be required to show their MD Anderson badge ID and 6-digit employee ID to the shuttle driver upon pickup. “By-Request” shuttles may take anywhere from 5 to 25 minutes to arrive. Always begin traveling to an event on MD Anderson campus, 30+ minutes in advance.

Because some buildings have been renamed after distinguished donors, they may be referred to by two names. Example: In 2008, in the largest donation to MD Anderson's cancer prevention program, the Dan L. Duncan Family Foundation donated $35 million to boost the ongoing efforts to help people reduce their risk of cancer and take preventive measures against disease. The Cancer Prevention Building at 1155 Pressler Street, Houston, Texas 77030, previously known as the “CPB building” was renamed the “Dan L. Duncan Family Institute Building”. As a result many refer to this building as “CPB”, “Duncan Building”, or “Cancer Prevention”. This applies to many buildings on MD Anderson campus and can create confusion to newcomers.

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The First Week of the Summer Program

Summer Program: Day One

I. ORTP CHECK-IN (MORNING):

The first day of the summer program at MD Anderson will begin with the ORTP check-in (early morning). Refer to the appointment letter in Discover for MD Anderson ORTP onboarding check-in time, which usually takes place at:

MD Anderson Cancer Center
Mid-Campus Building 1 (1MC)
7007 Bertner Avenue
3rd Floor Meeting Center, Room 3
Houston, TX 77030

ITEMS TO BRING TO ORTP CHECK-IN:

1. **Social Security Card:** This is a MANDATORY document and must be the original, **not a photocopy.**
2. **A photo ID or any document in List A or List B of the I-9 document list that establishes identity.** The most common identification used to establish identity is a U.S. Passport, Permanent Resident Card, State issued photo identification (I.D.), or Driver’s License. This item must be original and unexpired. Certified copies are not accepted. The I-9 document list will be provided via email from ORTP.
3. Checkbook with routing number, account number and mailing address. If you do not have your checkbook, be sure you know your routing, account and bank information in order to setup your direct deposit online in the MD Anderson myHR/PeopleSoft system.
4. A minimum of $24 on a debit or credit card for full-day parking during the first 2 days. There is a daily $12 parking fee at the 1MC lot. This fee is for the entire day; **provided that you do not exit and re-enter.** You must pay any accrued parking fees upon exit. See Parking above.

**Permanent Residents** will be required to attend one additional check-in session with the VISA department. It is recommended that your Visa check-in occur BEFORE your scheduled ORTP check-in. VISA check-in details will be provided in an email from a VISA advisor and within the MD Anderson appointment letter in Discover. Please direct any Visa check-in questions directly to the VISA department at 713-792-1112.

II. POST ORTP CHECK-IN:

Please consult your program for details of what takes place following ORTP check-in. Many trainees will check-in with their summer program OR the department of the primary mentor.

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Summer Program Activities

All summer students are invited to attend the Summer Experience Welcome Lunch on the first Friday of the summer program. A complimentary lunch will be provided, as well as games and opportunities to engage with other summer students. **We encourage all programs and program managers to attend this summer kick-off event!**

In addition, summer students are encouraged to attend the MD Anderson Summer Experience Lecture Series & Reception every Wednesday from 4 to 6pm. Invited leadership will give a lecture from 4 to 5pm, followed by a catered reception from 5 to 6pm. This is a great opportunity to learn about careers and opportunities in cancer research, as well as participate in career development activities. **Consult your program manager for a copy of the SE Seminar schedule, which will include the weekly seminar, career conversation and cancer biology boot camp schedule.**

Finally, all summer students are invited to attend both a **Part A and Part B Elevator Speech Workshop.** The Elevator Speech (ES) is 90-second oral presentation heavily based on the student’s summer cancer research project and their experiences. During these workshops, students will be trained to organize, style and give a professional Elevator Speech. Workshop attendees will have the opportunity to register for the Elevator Speech competition and upload an **audition video.** Videos will be scored by a panel of judges and the selected finalists will compete, in-person, at the MD Anderson Summer Research Experience Final Event: Poster Session & Elevator Speech Competition during the last week of the Summer Experience. **See Final Summer Events for more information.**

- It’s always better to be early than late. Always arrive 15 minutes early to every event to ensure good seating and as a “cushion” in case you get lost.
- For longer commutes which require shuttle service, leave 45 minutes early. **Example: If a Noon event is in the Mays Clinic (ACB) and your office is located in the Mitchell Building (BSRB), leave your office 11:15 a.m.**
A Typical Day

Now that you know what events take place during the MD Anderson Summer Experience, you may be wondering what a typical day is like. Most work days will begin at 8am and end at 5pm. **Schedules may be adjusted as long as students attend the mandatory activities required by their program.** Students will usually report directly to a supervisor which could be the faculty mentor, a postdoctoral fellow, graduate research assistant, lab manager, research manager, or other team member designated by the faculty mentor.

Students are encouraged to take a ‘driver’s seat’ in the research and play an active role in the project by communicating their ideas and knowledge, as this will enhance the summer experience. Time management will be key in a successful summer, as the summer student will divide their time between the department of the primary mentor, the lab (if applicable), and the program, for required activities.

Students will work on career development assignments such as informational interviews, elevator speech, scientific poster and final report. In addition, students are encouraged to form journal clubs and initiate shadowing opportunities resulting from informational interviews or in departments of interest (e.g. plastic surgery). Students will manage their schedule using MS Outlook and are expected to honor all commitments. In advance of any meeting or event, prepare questions in advance, show up on time, engaging with event facilitators and other students, and providing your undivided attention. In short, a typical day is busy!

Final Summer Events & Attire

The Summer Experience will conclude with two events held during the last week of the internship, depending on your program:

1) **Individual Program Seminar**
   Many summer programs participating in the MD Anderson Summer Experience will host a program seminar. During this event, students will usually give an oral presentation and present a scientific poster about their summer research. Attendees may include mentors, other department faculty and staff, as well as family and friends of summer students. **Consult your program manager for more information.**

2) **MD Anderson Summer Research Experience Final Event: Poster Session & Elevator Speech Competition**
   This 3-hour event is held on the last Thursday of the Summer Experience and all MD Anderson Summer Experience trainees will participate. Trainees will hone their scientific communication skills by: 1) Presenting a Scientific Poster during the 2-hour poster session, and 2) Viewing or participating in the Elevator Speech Competition. Finalists of the elevator speech competition will receive a certificate and winners will also receive a cash prize. This event is open to the entire MD Anderson campus and surrounding institutions, including the University of Texas School of Public Health, as well as family and friends of the summer students. **Read more about the final summer event.**

Attire for both events should be professional clothing similar to what you would wear to a job interview.

- **Options for Men:** Suits; long sleeve dress shirt, slacks & tie, bow ties, vests, dress shoes.
- **Options for Women:** Suits (pants or knee length skirts); dresses (knee length, long or A-line); skirts and blouses (long or short sleeve).

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Exit Procedures

Students must complete the following exit procedures during the last two weeks of their internship:

1. Complete the emailed exit survey sent from the Office of Research Trainee Programs/Academic and Visa Administration.
2. Complete the required boxes of the exit clearance form (provided by either the ORTP via email or your program) and provide your permanent mailing address. MD Anderson Human Resources will mail your IRS W2 to the address provided.
3. Take the form to the home department to complete only the top portion.
4. Return keys and materials to your department and/or program.
5. DO NOT give the ID badge nor exit clearance form to the home department of the mentor, unless instructed otherwise by your summer program.
6. The program will submit the completed and signed exit clearance forms to the ORTP.
7. Trainees may keep their ID badge as a memento, but be aware that the badge will be deactivated. MD Anderson reserves the right to collect ID badges at the end of the Summer Experience, so please confirm this with the program manager.

Former trainees who do not receive their W2 forms after January 31st of the following year must contact MD Anderson myHR at (713) 745-6947 or myHR@mdanderson.org. Save this information to your phone now because you may need it later.

Thank you in advance for being a part of the MD Anderson Summer Experience. We hope you get the most of this exciting and rewarding opportunity, as well as forge lasting personal and professional relationships.

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