

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MD ANDERSON CANCER
CENTER
ODYSSEY FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION
GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MDAnderson~~Cancer~~Center

Making Cancer History®

ELIGIBILITY:

Odyssey Fellows must have a doctoral degree (Ph.D., M.D., D.Phil. or equivalent). Must have a postdoctoral appointment less than two (2) years before funding starts (September 1st) if the postdoctoral appointment has always been at MD Anderson, or less than three (3) years total at any combination of institutions. Must also not be supported by any fellowships at the time the funding starts or agree to forfeit the current funding. Applicants must either have an appointment at MD Anderson or have been provided an official offer letter from MD Anderson, and plan to take the position before or at the time funding starts (September 1st), in order to be eligible to apply. Once appointed into the Odyssey program, fellows may not officially affiliate in any organized fellowship that is in conflict with the Odyssey Program's mission. A maximum of two Odyssey Fellowships per PI at any one time will be awarded.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Applications are reviewed by the Odyssey Advisory Committee in March or April prior to the funding start date, following the general format and approach used by NIH Study Sections dealing with applications. Review criteria will include (1) quality of the applicant, (2) quality of the proposal, and (3) quality of the mentoring statement from the sponsoring mentor. The reviewers will prepare critiques to be communicated to the applicant. Each proposal will be reviewed by two or three members of the Odyssey Advisory Committee. Additional faculty may be requested to participate in application review on an ad hoc basis, as necessary.

1. Quality of the Applicant

- a. Publications - quantity and/or quality. Is the applicant a first author or a major contributor to the paper? Has the applicant published in top-tier journals?
- b. Letters of recommendation
- c. Training Potential

2. Quality of the Proposal

- a. Specific aims – What is the central hypothesis or purpose?
- b. Experimental Plan - Is the approach reasonable?
- c. Training Potential - Will the candidate obtain new training in this lab?
- d. Innovation - Is the proposal innovative?
- e. Feasibility of completing a research plan in 3 years

3. Quality of the Mentoring Statement from the sponsoring PI

- a. Did the mentor write a detailed plan about how he/she will develop the career of the candidate?
- b. The statement should include specifics e.g. training to improve presentation and writing skills; opportunities to present at national/international meetings; statements on how the mentor will guide the postdoc applicant's career.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION AND PAGINATION:

All pages must be typed using 10-12 point font size; ¾ (0.75) inch side, top and bottom margins; and numbers at the bottom.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

1. Odyssey Fellowship Application basic information (filled out via online REDCap application)
2. Odyssey Fellowship Proposed Research - 6 pages, not including the references
3. Letter from the advisor indicating willingness to mentor and outlining a training plan – 1-2 pages
4. Biosketches in NIH format for the applicant and the advisor/s – 5 pages maximum for each
5. Two recommendation letters

Research Plan Components

A. Specific Aims: (1 page)

Introduce the topic, state what is known about the topic, and state what is not known (the gap in knowledge as related to the objective of your overall proposal). State the central hypothesis that you propose to test or the purpose of the overall proposal. It should be related to the gap in knowledge. List the specific aims by which you will test the hypothesis or accomplish your purpose. State your long-term goal. Identify the aspect—central hypothesis or one of the specific aims—for which you must develop preliminary data and explain why it is critical.

B. Significance and Relevant Background; Innovation; and Experimental Design (4 pages total)

Significance and Relevant Background:

Briefly sketch the background of the proposal and critically evaluate existing knowledge. Clearly indicate the potential for significant impact if the work is completed.

Innovation:

Describe how your proposal challenges existing research or seeks to influence clinical practice, if applicable. Explain any new or emerging theories, approaches, methods, instruments, or interventions. Describe why they are more advantageous than existing theories, methods, or tools.

Experimental Design:

Describe the experimental design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the work described in the application. Describe the protocols to be used and tentative sequence of the investigation. Describe how the data will be analyzed and interpreted. Describe new methodology and its advantage over any existing methodology. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of

the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. Include a brief description of physical resources available, if appropriate.

C. Training Potential: (1 page maximum)

Describe how your choice of mentor and / or project will complement the knowledge and skills gained during your PhD to increase your preparation for your future career. Indicate any specific training courses, modules, or instruction that you expect to complete during your fellowship.

Mentor Letter

Mentor should state that they intend to mentor the applicant for the three years of the Odyssey Program and briefly describe the mentor's commitment to participate in Odyssey program-specific activities. Mentors should also outline a training plan individually tailored to the applicant. The plan should describe activities such as seminars, scientific conferences, and opportunities for interaction with other scientists. Training in career skills, such as grant writing, lecturing, and giving scientific presentations, is encouraged. Please note that the mentor letter weighs heavily in the scoring process.

Biosketches (maximum 15 pages total)

- Applicant Biosketch (NIH format, maximum 5 pages)
- Advisor/Mentor Biosketch (NIH format, maximum 5 pages)
- Co-mentor Biosketch (if applicable) (NIH format, maximum 5 pages)

Recommendation Letters

The Odyssey Fellowship Application requests information on two referees, neither of them the advisor. Instructions will be sent to recommenders for submitting a letter via the online application system. Letters received past the deadline will not be included in the application and incomplete submissions will be disqualified.