

2025 ASTRO Medical Student Fellowship Award Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of the ASTRO Medical Student Fellowship Award (formerly known as the Minority Summer Fellowship Award) is designed to introduce medical students from populations that are [underrepresented in medicine \(URiM\)](#) to the discipline of radiation oncology early in their medical education. In that spirit, we seek to improve representation of such populations and align with the [NIH definition](#) to encompass populations that have been defined as underrepresented in medicine. Medical students in all years are encouraged to apply; however, **preference will be given to first- and second-year students**. Non-medical student PhD candidates are welcome to apply, but please note that this funding source is not appropriate to fund PhD work. In an effort to promote radiation oncology as a career choice, the fellowship will provide medical students with an experience designed to expose students to clinical, basic and translational research questions in radiation oncology.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be met for a trainee to be considered for the fellowship program:

- Applicant must be enrolled in a U.S. medical school and be in good standing at the time the application is submitted.
- Applicant must identify a mentor with a successful record of research productivity (more information is below).
- Applicant must submit a certified letter confirming their [eligibility](#) for this program. The letter should include a seal of certification from the applicant's institution.
- The primary mentor (and the co-mentor, if there is one) must be an ASTRO member.
- Research must be initiated at a North American institution during the summer of 2025.
- The selected institution must have an established research and clinical program and an ACGME-accredited radiation oncology residency program with clinical faculty available to serve as mentors.
- Letters of commitment from both the mentor and the department chair at the selected institution must accompany the application. The letter of commitment from the mentor should confirm that the institution is able to support the project.
- Trainees selected for the fellowship program will be required to apply for complimentary membership to ASTRO.

APPLICATION METHOD AND DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted in [proposalCENTRAL](#) no later than **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025**.

- Emailed, faxed or mailed applications will not be considered.
- If you need help creating a proposalCENTRAL account, please read the [instructions](#).
- Once you create a proposalCENTRAL account, log in and click on the "Grant Opportunities" tab, then filter by Grant Maker and select ASTRO from the dropdown menu.

Grant Maker	Programs (Click for Guidelines)	LOI Deadline	Proposal Deadline	Contact Information	Apply
American Society For Radiation Oncology	Medical Student Fellowship		2/13/2025 11:59:59 PM	Kirsta Suggs	Apply Now

- Finally, click on the link for the Medical Student Fellowship Application, and begin submitting your information.
- If you have any issues, please email your situation to diversity@astro.org.

STIPEND AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The ASTRO Medical Student Fellowship Award will offer students a \$6,000 package that includes a \$4,000 stipend for the eight-week training program (exceptions can be made for a longer program but will need to be approved by ASTRO's Workforce Diversity Committee), \$1,000 for the completion of a final report, and \$1,000 toward the cost of attending the 2026 ASTRO Annual Meeting.

May 2025: The awardee will receive a direct payment of \$4,000 paid at the beginning of the fellowship upon receipt of a confirmation letter, project timeline and completed W-9 form (awardees will be given more detailed instructions in their notification letters). ASTRO does not pay indirect costs, overhead costs or salary support for the principal or co-principal investigator and has no responsibility for support beyond that stated in this application. This support is not for mentors.

December 2025:

- After the HEDI Workforce Diversity Committee reviews and approves the awardee's final report, the awardee will receive an additional \$1,000. Final reports must be received by **Friday, December 5, 2025** (more details are provided later in the application). **Awardees who submit reports later than the deadline (unless pre-approved by ASTRO) will not receive this additional \$1,000.**
- The awardee must submit an abstract to the 2026 ASTRO Annual Meeting before the abstract submission site closes. Regardless of whether or not the abstract is accepted for presentation, the awardee is expected to attend the 2026 Annual Meeting; complimentary registration will be provided whether or not the abstract is accepted for presentation/inclusion. ASTRO does not cover the abstract submission fee; it is understood that the stipend will help offset that minor cost.

Fall 2026: An additional \$1,000 will be granted to help offset travel expenses to and from the 2026 Annual Meeting. Specifically, the awardee will submit travel expenditures with a completed expense form and itemized receipts after attending the meeting and will be reimbursed for up to \$1,000 (any additional costs are the responsibility of the awardee). ASTRO will waive the Annual Meeting registration fee for an awardee only if the awardee provides the name and control number of the abstract he or she submitted, regardless of whether or not the abstract is actually accepted for presentation/inclusion.

NATURE OF PROJECTS

The fellowship is designed to develop a mentoring relationship that can help cultivate an interest in radiation oncology. Attending the ASTRO Annual Meeting will provide candidates with additional opportunities for professional growth after their fellowship ends. The fellowship project should be designed so that the awardee is involved in a clinical or basic science (biology, molecular science, etc.) research project **and** gains clinical exposure. At least once a week, the fellow will observe in clinical services, participating in all aspects of clinical decision making, treatment planning, delivery and follow-up. The fellow will be encouraged to attend lectures, seminars, symposia and conferences held at the host university. The mentor plan should outline this clinical exposure experience in detail.

Two different research tracks are described below (there is no established quota for these tracks; awards are granted based on criteria that do not including filling a certain number of spots in each track):

- The **Clinical Research Fellowship** is designed to expose medical students to the discipline of radiation oncology and to enhance skills in clinical research in radiation therapy. At least one clinical research project will be identified in advance with the help of the mentor. Consideration should be made for potential delays created by IRB review of the project application.
- The **Basic Science Research Fellowship** is designed to further the candidate's knowledge in radiation or tumor biology, physics or molecular science as they relate to radiation oncology. The candidate will spend one day a week in the clinical setting; the remaining four days will be dedicated to lab research. The research project must be identified in advance with the help of the mentor.

FINDING A MENTOR

Applicants must have an identified mentor as part of the application. HEDI has identified a few mentors throughout the United States who are interested in working with students applying for the fellowship program, but this list is not meant to be exhaustive. For our list of potential mentors, please visit www.astro.org/MSFMentors. If you are still unable to locate a mentor, please email diversity@astro.org for assistance from the HEDI Workforce Diversity Committee members in finding a radiation oncology program.

MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must identify a primary mentor who, together with the applicant, is responsible for the planning, direction and execution of the project. The primary mentor must hold the rank of assistant professor or higher and commit to meeting with the candidate at least weekly. The primary mentor (and the co-mentor, if there is one) must be an active ASTRO member and an accomplished investigator in the proposed research area with a track record of success in training medical students, residents and/or independent investigators. A standard NIH-formatted biosketch of the mentor(s) must be included with the application. A list or description of the mentor's prior trainees, including trainees' names, dates of mentored training, type of research and current positions, should be provided. Additionally, mentors could include a list of any joint research articles published as a result of the mentor's work with trainees. The reviewers will want to see a successful track record of mentoring other trainees at the same level as the candidate. If the mentor does not have a track record, then consideration should be given to including a more senior co-mentor with such experience. Co-mentors with complementary experience are encouraged, but one person should be identified as having primary responsibility for the candidate's mentoring. Mentors are required to initiate regulatory processes (including but not limited to EMR access and/or IRB review) upon award notification.

ENVIRONMENT – INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

The mentor plan should describe the facilities and resources that are available to the candidate and include a clear mentoring plan for the fellow. The mentor will be responsible for providing resources for implementation of the lab experience as well as support for the analysis and publication of the clinical research experience. The mentor of the host department should meet with the fellow at the completion of the program to discuss and evaluate the experience prior to submission of the fellow's report.

SUMMER CURRICULUM

A defining feature of the MSF program is the offering of a summer curriculum of professional development. The one-hour weekly lectures provide awardees with the introduction to scientific writing, how to apply to residency, instruction on developing relationships with mentors, and how to network. Applicants are expected to attend at a minimum 4 of the 6 summer lectures that will be held weekly from June 20 through August 1, 2025.

MENTOR AWARD

Mentors of students selected to receive the MSF award will each be awarded a \$2,000 stipend. The mentor stipend will be distributed in two payments. The first payment will be disbursed during the summer and upon receipt of required documentation. The second payment will be disbursed following the submission of students' final reports and draft annual meeting abstracts. If the abstract is accepted, mentors will be expected to attend their student's presentation at the Annual Meeting. Mentors will inform ASTRO of all presentations, awards and future grants that result from the work conducted under this award.

Mentors must agree to submit a signed Award Agreement that includes permission for use of the Institution and Mentor name, likeness and photograph in promotion of the MSF Program/Mentor Award. The Award Agreement will provide clear instruction on the disbursement of Award funds, and agreement to participate in mentor training meetings, and submit related reports. Mentors must complete a program evaluation and provide a final progress update within 30 days after the award project period end date.

SELECTION REVIEW CRITERIA

The HEDI Workforce Diversity Committee will review and score applications based on the following factors:

1. General qualifications of the applicant. Priority will be given to first- and second-year medical students; however, third- and fourth-year students are still eligible to apply. Applicants from schools without an affiliated radiation oncology residency and/or an affiliated comprehensive cancer center are encouraged to apply.
2. The applicant's personal statement
3. The quality of the structured research abstract
4. The mentoring plan, including the clinical exposure, facilities/resources available, and opportunities for development of the applicant
5. Letters of support from the applicant's mentor and department chair

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications by email in **April 2025**.

FINAL REPORT

A final report must be submitted to ASTRO, for potential distribution to the Board of Directors, no later than **Friday, December 5, 2025**. Reports are used to determine the effectiveness and success of the program. If the project has not been completed, the report can address the progress and current status of the project at that time (as well as an expected date of completion); a follow-up report once the project has been completed should also be submitted.

Final reports must begin with a summary statement not to exceed one page. Reports are to be submitted electronically (in a Microsoft Word document or PDF) to ASTRO at diversity@astro.org.

Complete reports must address each of the items listed below:

- An updated structured research abstract.
- Indicate any deviations you have made from your research plan and explain these changes.
- Indicate any issues or delays you have encountered in performing the research.
- Indicate if the results from your studies are being prepared for publication or will be within the next six to 12 months.
- Indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the Medical Student Fellowship program in which you participated. Please include any suggestions for improvement.
- Indicate what influence your experience in the fellowship program has had on your interest in the field of radiation oncology and residency training.

PUBLICATIONS

All scientific posters, publications and oral presentations resulting from the ASTRO-funded projects must acknowledge ASTRO by including a statement similar to the following: "This work was supported by the American Society for Radiation Oncology Medical Student Fellowship."

HEALTH EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (HEDI) WORKFORCE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The HEDI Workforce Diversity Committee is responsible for reviewing applications and selecting awardees. A HEDI Workforce Diversity Committee member will be assigned as liaison to communicate with each awardee on a continual basis to provide informal mentorship, receive updates and keep the awardee connected to ASTRO. To ensure the long-term success and sustainability of this fellowship program, it is the expectation of the HEDI Workforce Diversity Committee that awardees stay in touch with their assigned liaisons and provide continual updates regarding their training, residency, abstracts, publications, etc. This process will help us evaluate the fellowship and justify funding for the program to the ASTRO Board of Directors.

*To help you prepare, an outline of the online application follows. Applications must be submitted in [proposalCENTRAL](#) no later than **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025**. Emailed, faxed or mailed applications will not be considered.*