

Cancer Prevention and Control (CAPAC) Research Training Program Information Packet

Application Deadline: January 24, 2025, at 11:59 pm (AST)

(We recommend requesting reference letters well in advance of the deadline.
Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.)

The Cancer Prevention and Control (CAPAC) Research Training Program is led by Dr. Ana Patricia Ortiz and Dr. Marievelisse Soto-Salgado, of the University of Puerto Rico Comprehensive Cancer Center (UPRCCC), San Juan, Puerto Rico, with support from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) grant (2R25CA240120-06).

Visit us at <http://www.cccupr.org/programas/capac-training-program/>

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Research being performed in Puerto Rico provides an opportunity to advance knowledge of cancer risk, and cancer prevention and control between Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations in the United States (US).

The Cancer Prevention and Control (CAPAC) Research Training Program at the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico Comprehensive Cancer Center (UPRCCC) aims to increase the pool of master's degree students (public health or biomedical sciences program), other health professional students (e.g. Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, etc.), and recent graduates from these programs to pursue a doctoral degree and/or a career in cancer prevention and control research with a focus on Hispanic health and health disparities. The long-term goal of this Program is to contribute to the development of the next generation of successful cancer control researchers with cultural sensitivity to the Hispanic population.

The program will recruit trainees from all racial/ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds to participate in a hands-on research experience in a Hispanic population and cultural environment. Trainees will be matched to a mentor based on their research interest in basic, clinical, and population-based research.

Overall, 25 trainees will be recruited every year to participate in the program. This 10-week full-time in-person (40 hours a week) research experience will be scheduled for every summer; activities will include their participation in a research project and complementary educational and professional skill-building activities. Upon application and evaluation of the request, the program will support a maximum of 6 trainees to extend their research experience for up to 15 weeks (40 hours a week).

While the official languages of Puerto Rico and of the CAPAC Research Training program are English and Spanish, Spanish is a dominant language in work and community settings locally. Thus, while proficiency in the Spanish language is not a program requisite, reading, writing and speaking Spanish is a plus and may be required for some research activities.

What can the CAPAC Research Training Program offer to its Trainees?

The CAPAC Research Training Program will provide a research experience in health disparities research in a Hispanic underserved population. Having a scientific experience in Puerto Rico will give trainees access to research topics of relevance in this population, including social determinants of cancer (e.g., socioeconomic status, type of health insurance, and geographic residence), infection-related cancers, and quality and outcomes of cancer care, among others. The program will also expose trainees to the Puerto Rican/Hispanic culture and cancer control activity on the island. This research experience will not only increase their knowledge of cancer prevention and control among Hispanics but also will increase their skills in conducting research in Hispanic populations. Furthermore, CAPAC will prepare trainees with the necessary skills to advance their careers in cancer prevention and control. The program represents an opportunity to contribute to the development of the next generation of cancer prevention and control professionals and to improve the health of the Hispanic population.

TIMELINE

November 1, 2024	Application period starts
January 24, 2025 (11:59 pm AST)	Application period ends (final due date)
January 24, 2025 – January 26, 2025	Internal evaluation by the CAPAC staff to check the completion of each application submitted
January 24, 2025 – March 7, 2025	Class of 2025 selection process
March 10, 2025	Applicants are informed of the application status
March 14, 2025	Deadline for trainees selected to confirm their space within CAPAC
May 27, 2025 - August 1, 2025	CAPAC Research Training Program (10 wks.)
May 27, 2025 - September 5, 2025	CAPAC Research Training Program (15 wks.)

REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

Successful applicants must comply with the following requirements:

- Master-level students (from public health or biomedical sciences programs), * Health professional students (i.e., Medicine [MD], Dental Medicine [DMD], Pharmacy [MSc or PharmD], Nursing [MSN or DNP], etc.), * OR persons that have recently graduated from any of these programs (within the past 12 months).
- ≥ 2.8 grade point average
- Two letters of recommendation
- Research experience
- Excellent written and communication skills in English
- One page essay of research interests and goals
- Basic knowledge of the Spanish language is recommended
- US citizen or US permanent resident

*Students must have completed 1st year of the master's program by the start of the CAPAC program. **Current doctoral students (PhD or DrPH) OR those already accepted into doctoral programs (PhD or DrPH) will not be eligible.** The top 40 applicants will complete a telephone interview in English and Spanish to assess their oral communication skills.

No Discrimination

The UPRCCC does not discriminate against individuals on the bases of sex, race, color, age, national origin, political or religious ideas, gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, civil status, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, or because of being a victim or be perceived as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or stalking. This policy complies with federal statutes under Title IX, as amended, and is related to the institutional policies of the UPRCCC.

LEADERSHIP

CAPAC is directed by Dr. Ana Patricia Ortiz (Program Director) and Dra. Marievelisse Soto-Salgado (Associate Director), investigators at the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences in the UPRCCC. A team of faculty from participating academic institutions is actively involved in all phases of planning and implementation.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Trainees will be matched, based on their experience and research interests, to researchers performing cancer prevention and control research in Puerto Rico. These researchers will be their mentors during their participation in the program and will oversee the hands-on research experience of the trainees. The primary sites for trainee mentorship will be the UPRCCC (Research building and its hospital) and the UPR Medical Sciences Campus (UPR-MSU) (both located in the San Juan Medical Center, within walking distance of each other). Additional sites collaborating with the CAPAC Research Training Program include **1)** the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras Campus (UPR-RP) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, **2)** University of Puerto Rico-Humacao Campus (UPR-H) in Humacao, Puerto Rico, **3)** Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC) in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, **4)** Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and **5)** San Juan Bautista School of Medicine (SJBSM) in Caguas, Puerto Rico. The UPR-MSU is in the same Medical Center as the UPRCCC Research Building, the UPRCCC Hospital is located 7 minutes away (driving) from the UPRCCC Research Building, UPR-RP is located 15 minutes away (driving) from the UPRCCC Research Building, UPR-H is located 45 minutes away (driving) from UPRCCC Research Building, UCC is located 30 minutes away (driving) from UPRCCC Research Building, PHSU is located 75 minutes away (driving) from UPRCCC Research Building, and SJBSM is located 25 minutes away (driving) from UPRCCC Research Building.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND CHECKLIST

The CAPAC application will be submitted through the REDCap link included on the CAPAC website. Before submitting the application, please verify the materials against the checklist.

Documents:	Observation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Official undergraduate and graduate academic transcripts	*Must be sent by your institution; see more details instructions below. Transcripts must be received NO LATER THAN January 24, 2025 (11:59 pm AST). Postmarked unofficial transcripts may be accepted.
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of graduate degree diploma	Applies only to recent graduates. Please submit a copy of your graduate degree diploma in lieu of faculty advisor certification.
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Good Standing for those students enrolled on an MD, PharmD or DMD program	Label the document as follows: LGS_Name of student
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification of student status	Applies only to current students. Once you submit your CAPAC application form through the link provided on the CAPAC website, an automatic email will be sent to your faculty advisor, who will certify your status as a current student in a master's degree program or in a health professional program (e.g., Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, etc.). Certification must be submitted NO LATER THAN January 24, 2025 (11:59 pm AST).
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of recommendation (LOR) and CAPAC Recommendation Form from <u>two</u> faculty members and/or research mentor	Once you submit your application form through the link provided on the CAPAC website, an automatic email will be sent to your recommenders. The recommenders must submit a recommendation letter and the CAPAC Recommendation Form NO LATER THAN January 24, 2025, at 11:59 pm (AST).
<input type="checkbox"/> Resume or Curriculum vitae	Be sure you include information about health-related employment and/or research experience, scientific publications (if any), and scientific presentations (oral and/or poster presentations; if any). Also, include academic awards and honors received (e.g., award/honor title, award institution, and issued date). Label the document as follows: Resume_Name of trainee
<input type="checkbox"/> A 1-page essay in English, narrative form, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, and 1-inch margins. In the essay, applicants will describe their: 1) research interests in cancer prevention and control, 2) long-term goals, and 3) how these are related to cancer prevention and control research.	Label the document as follows: Essay_Name of trainee

An application cannot be evaluated unless ALL the necessary documents above are received. To be eligible for selection, all application materials must be submitted **NO LATER THAN January 24, 2025, at 11:59 pm (AST)**.

***You may include a copy of your student academic transcript with your CAPAC application form at the time of application. Nonetheless, official academic transcripts must be sent by your institution to our email (capac@cccupr.org) or mailed to:**

Centro Comprensivo de Cáncer de la UPR
Attention: Dr. Ana Patricia Ortiz / Dr. Marievelisse Soto-Salgado
(CAPAC Program)
P.O. Box 363027, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936-3027

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The program will consist of the following activities:

➤ **Meet and Greet session**

The Program will offer a virtual meet and greet session (1 hour) for accepted trainees. The purpose of this session is to present an overview of the CAPAC program and to have a Q & A session to clarify any doubts prior to the program's initiation.

➤ **Orientation day**

The Program will start with a one-day orientation for the trainees and the administration of baseline evaluation surveys. Participation in Orientation Day is mandatory.

➤ **Hands-on research experience (40 hours per week) in-person**

Trainees will be matched to a mentor based on their research interest in cancer prevention and control research. Standard working hours will be Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Vacations are not permitted during regular work hours of the CAPAC Program.

➤ **Team Building Activity**

Trainees will participate in a team building activity on the second or third Saturday of the Program.

➤ **Complementary Educational activities**

Trainees will engage in a program that will include seminars and workshops that have been tailored to strengthen their professional and research skills in cancer prevention and control. Participation in all educational activities is mandatory.

➤ **Scientific Day**

At the end of the summer program, trainees will present, in poster format, their work on a scientific day. This activity will provide an opportunity for trainees to socialize and network with faculty members and researchers, residents, clinical and research fellows, and students from participating institutions. Participation in the Scientific Day is mandatory.

➤ **Tracking and follow-up:**

Trainees will be required to complete an exit evaluation survey and commit to participating in follow-up surveys to track and document their status and progress toward their scientific productivity and academic/career development.

TRAINEE STIPENDS

Travel. Up to \$800 as reimbursement will be available for travel expenses of trainees outside Puerto Rico (from United States Mainland). This funding will help cover the costs of round-trip air transportation and baggage fee of trainees to Puerto Rico and back to their homes at United States Mainland. Reimbursement will be provided upon the trainee's arrival to Puerto Rico (within a 3-week period) after providing proof of travel payment.

Housing. Trainees will receive a housing allowance of up to \$1,000 to partially cover housing expenses. This incentive will be available to all trainees at the time of Program initiation. **Trainees will be responsible for their housing arrangements**, although the program will provide recommendations. This housing allowance will be paid on the first day of the Program.

Puerto Rico has a transportation system known as the *Tren Urbano*, which has a train station in *Centro Medico* (Medical Center), which is close to some of our research institutions (UPRCCC, UPRMSC, and UPRCCC Hospital). To facilitate transportation to the work site, we recommend staying at housing near one of the train stations of the *Tren Urbano*. From the *Centro Médico* train station to the UPRCCC, Hospital UPRCCC, and UPRMSC, walking time is approximately 8-10 minutes. The train fee is \$3.00 round-trip. A monthly pass (30 days) can be obtained for \$50.00 and a 90-day pass for \$90.00. For more information, go to <https://tutrenpr.com/index.php>.

Research and education. Up to \$1,000 per trainee will be available for research and education expenses (e.g., laboratory and other research materials, publication costs, and conference costs). The research mentor will identify the research materials needed for the research experience of his/her trainee before the starting date.

Subsistence. Trainees will receive an incentive of \$15 per hour (40 hours per week) for their time participating in the program (10 or 15-week tracks). It is imperative that trainees work in their assigned institution, under the direct supervision of their mentor and his/her research staff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT CAPAC STAFF MEMBERS:

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