



Guide to Summer Research Programs

Interested in conducting summer research? Look out for Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Programs! REUs offer students the opportunity to conduct research at another university during the summer. The programs typically run for 8-10 weeks and often offer a stipend, housing, and travel costs.

5 ESSENTIALS FOR APPLYING TO REU PROGRAMS



Keep in mind every program has its own application requirements. Carefully read the program website and application to ensure you are meeting the requirements of the program

1) Personal Statement. This 500-1000 word essay is extremely important. Space is limited, so make every word count. Explain the desire to spend the summer at the REU and why you are the ideal candidate for this position. The personal statement should be tailored to each

2) Letters of Recommendation. Most sites require two to three letters. Find people who know you well in a academic setting and can speak about your research potential and why you would be a good fit for the REU program in question. Set a goal to provide letter-writers a month in advance. The more time you give letter writers, the better the recommendation.

3) Transcripts. Some sites require official transcripts, while others will accept an unofficial transcript. Request official transcripts at least two weeks before your application is due.

4) CV/Resume. Start with the Career Center to find samples in your discipline. Get feedback on your CV/Resume from faculty and friends.

5) Deadline & Waiting Period Fill out the application by the deadline. Stay organized and aim to finish at least one week early in case you need more time obtain transcripts or letters of recommendation.

Where to Find REU Sites

Speak with faculty in your field. Faculty Advisors have helped many students reach their academic and career goals and will often have a deep knowledge of the resources available to you.

National Science Foundation (NSF) REU Site Search. Science and Engineering specific REU programs that are available across the nation.

Google “[Discipline] Summer Programs” Doing your own research on what is available to you helps ensure that you find a program that is specific to your needs.

Stop by the Office of Undergraduate Research to find additional resources and opportunities!

Tips for Submitting a Competitive REU Application

Read and follow the directions. Make sure to provide exactly what is requested. If you have questions about any part of the application, contact the program director and ask for clarification.

Demonstrate specific knowledge and interest in the program to which you are applying. Don't use the same application essay for every program you apply to. Tell the reader exactly why you are interested in the specific REU to which you are applying. Browse the program's web site, and use this knowledge to highlight specific aspects of the program that are particularly appealing to you.

Carefully proofread your application. An application with spelling or grammatical errors leaves a bad first impression. Read your application carefully before you submit it, and ask someone else to give you some feedback as well.

Choose good references. What your references write about you can make a big difference in distinguishing your application from others. Choose references who know you well and who will take the time to write a thorough and detailed letter of recommendation. It's okay to ask a reference, “Do you think that you will be able to write a strong and detailed letter for me?” Also give your references a copy of your application essay and any other information that would help them to write a strong letter for you.

Say what makes you different from other applicants. Summer programs such as REUs are highly competitive. It is not unusual for a program with 8-10 participants to receive 100-200 applications. If you have unique experiences that set you apart from other applicants, make sure to mention these.

Be genuine. Don't oversell yourself. Provide an honest account of your background and experiences, but don't be boastful or arrogant.

Apply to multiple programs. It's important to remember that REUs are extremely competitive, and even the very best students do not get accepted by every program to which they apply