

Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)

Guidelines for a Successful Experience

The purpose of REU funding is to support meaningful and active participation of undergraduates in NSF-funded research projects. Note that it is not funding to hire students. You are not hiring undergraduates, and they are not working for you. That does not mean there should be no expectations. The purpose of this guide is to assist in managing REU student participation.

Student eligibility: Any undergraduate student who wishes to participate in your research under REU funding must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States or its territories, and matriculated in a degree program leading to the Associate's or Bachelor's Degree, or who will be matriculated at the time of the experience.

Recruitment Plan

Faculty should undertake to recruit students that meet pre-determined criteria. One important consideration needs to be the attraction of underrepresented students (women, minorities and persons with disabilities).

Expectations

Prior to meeting with any REU candidate, Faculty should carefully consider what their expectations are in regard to student participation. Remember that students may begin the experience with very little knowledge of research practice and may be highly dependent on you for direction and guidance in the activities where they will participate. A well conducted experience should lead the student to a point where they can work more independently. Students should be encouraged throughout to ask questions, offer observations and otherwise interact with the research team.

Points to consider include:

- What is the time commitment expected? (Start/End dates; hours/week)
- What project meetings will they be expected to attend?
- What specific responsibilities will they have? (literature search, coding, annotation, analysis, etc)
- Are there any deliverables? (data, reports, presentations..)
- Any reasons you might want to terminate the experience

In addition, faculty should plan on regular REU-focused meetings with students for such purposes as: mentoring to the research environment; evaluation of activities; discussion of issues; answering questions; providing additional avenues for growth.

Agreements

Once faculty and REU candidate have met to discuss the opportunity and expectations, and have negotiated a reasonable participation that respects both the needs of the research and the undergraduate, an agreement should be drawn up that documents all expectations. Flexibility for changes in schedule and research timelines should be built in to any such agreement, and it should be signed by both the student and faculty and kept by the faculty with the project materials. A sample agreement follows.

Others' practices

Reviewing others' REU practices may help you in organizing your own. The following links may help in this regard, although many of these are REU Sites, not supplements to specific grants:

Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium: <http://www.lumcon.edu/reu/>

Wellesley College: <http://www.wellesley.edu/chemistry/research/nsfreu>

UC Riverside – proposal guidelines provide suggestions for management at the bottom of the page: <http://irows.ucr.edu/cd/honors/reu/reuinfo.htm>

UFL student application example: <http://www.phys.ufl.edu/reu/application.shtml>

Rutgers FAQ for Faculty re REUs:

<http://rci.rutgers.edu/~aresty/facultyfaq.htm#responsibilities>

Check out the Faculty Guidelines for Undergraduate Students at this site, posted by several faculty :

<http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/earlycareer/research/students.html#guidelines>

WebGURU – Guide for Undergraduate Research provides information for undergraduates about many research topics such as the nature of research and the research team, professionalism, ethics and integrity, communication, intellectual property and career information

<http://www.webguru.neu.edu>

University College of London has specific guidance aimed at preventing poor performance by student researchers and addressing it when it occurs:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-3/research-students-poor-performance>

REU Agreement

Student Name:

Project Name:

REU timeframe:

CITI training completed on:

The undersigned have agreed on the following set of expectations for participation in this research project.

- The student will participate in the research for approximately 5 hours/week for the 2013-14 academic year.
- The student will attend biweekly project meetings.
- The student will initially be involved in annotating data as assigned according to the Annotation guidelines, and report back on task completion, making the data available on the project website.
- As the research proceeds, the student and PI will identify further areas where the student can participate in a meaningful way.
- The PI and student will meet once a month to discuss the REU experience and any issues that may have arisen.
- If a student cannot participate in any way that is expected, the student will notify the PI promptly. Likewise, if meeting times or tasks change, the PI will notify the student promptly.
- The student will receive an \$8000 stipend to support this experience, payable on a monthly basis.
- The terms of this agreement can be modified at any time by mutual agreement.
- The PI reserves the right to terminate this agreement for non-participation or for other documented reason related to the student's performance.

We agree to these terms:

PI: _____ Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Degree Program and Undergraduate Status: _____