



### How to Find National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Programs

The current homepage for the National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) is <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/reu>.

#### Timeline:

November (Thanksgiving break may be a good time)	The websites should be updated with upcoming year information and applications. Search the website and identify your target opportunities.
Before Winter Break (This is a hectic time for all but you need your recommenders on board early in the process)	Ask for letters of recommendation. It may be difficult to reach people during the winter break.
Winter Break	Apply for at least 10 REUs (more would be preferable!). Assume the deadline is January 1 (even though many are later in February or even March).
Two weeks before each application deadline	Remind letter writers of each deadline
As deadline approaches	Make sure recommendations have been sent
You could start receiving responses from the programs as early as February. Don't despair though, mid- to late March, even mid- April is also reasonable.	

#### Step 1: Identify Interesting NSF REU

Navigate to the REU main page and use the "[Search the Directory of REU Sites](#)" to navigate to the search page OR use this direct link National Science Foundation (NSF): [Search REU Sites | NSF - National Science Foundation](#) (<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/reu/search>) {links verified 10/2024}

**Keep an open mind about topic and location in your search.** For example, the "Research Area" filter may be overly restrictive in your initial searches and may not reveal all the programs available in your research topic. For example, selecting "Research Area" -> "Education" yields just 2 results from all available sites while a general keyword search without any filters of "education" yields 31 possible sites. Using the "Location" filter too early may not allow you to embrace the true spirit of the REU program to broaden your academic horizon. For example, using the same general keyword search "education" with a filter specifying a single specific state yields only 1 result. This is the opportunity to travel and live (for ten weeks) someplace new and learn beyond your current view of your field. {search statistics from 10/2024}



# Research Experience and Mentoring

## REU Handout 1: Getting an NSF REU



U.S. National  
Science  
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## Search REU Sites

Use this page to explore existing U.S. National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF REU) Sites. You can search by research area, location and keyword.

The directory provides the website and contact information for each REU Site. Once you have found an REU Site that interests you, you must consult each REU Site directly for information and application instructions.

If you are the director of an REU Site and your Site's entry in this directory needs to be updated, please contact the NSF program officer who oversees your REU Site award or the [REU Site program contact](#) for the NSF unit that manages your award.

 [Search](#)

Filter by

Location

Research Area

Sort by [Institution \(A to Z\)](#)

706 results [Export results as .csv](#)

*Main NSF REU Search Site*

## Step 2: Explore your search results

As an example, here is a search for a "tissue engineering" REU on the NSF web site that yields 283 results {from 10/2024}.

 [Search](#)

Filter by

Location

Research Area

Sort by [Most relevant](#)

283 results [Export results as .csv](#)

### REU Site: Engineered Materials for Tissue Engineering and Drug Delivery

**UC San Diego**  
Bioengineering  
La Jolla, CA

Topics: Biomaterials, Polymers, Cells, Tissues, Mechanical Properties, Nanoparticles, Collagen, Fibronectin, Electrospinning, Foams, Hydrogels  
→ [Abstract of award](#)

Adam J. Engler  
(858) 246-0678  
[aengler@ucsd.edu](mailto:aengler@ucsd.edu)  
 Roberto Gaetani  
[rgaetani@ucsd.edu](mailto:rgaetani@ucsd.edu)

### REU Site: New approaches to engineering cells, tissues, and organs

**University of Maryland**  
Bioengineering  
College Park, MD

Topics: bioengineering, engineering cell, tissues, organs  
→ [Abstract of award](#)

Ian White  
(301) 405-6230  
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 Kimberly Stroka  
(301) 314-1813  
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*NSF site search results for "tissue engineering"*



# Research Experience and Mentoring

## REU Handout 1: Getting an NSF REU

Click on the REU program name link to find the program description and application instructions and deadlines. *Note that some reason the link doesn't work, go to the sponsor university's main web site. From there, search for REU or Mechanical Engineering Research to find the web page. Some schools, have all their REU websites listed on one page, but usually you have to look department by department to find the mechanical engineering REUs vs. the math REUs vs. the materials science REUs.*

Make a list or table of the most promising REU sites and prioritize your list. Some considerations could include:

- Location
- Relevance to career goals
- Potential location for graduate studies
- Social media feedback from past participants

### Step 3: Apply

Students must apply directly to REU Sites. Students must consult each REU Site opportunity directly for information and application instructions. The more REUs you apply to, the better your chances! On each one, check out the "eligibility" section to make sure you have the minimum requirements: GPA, major, class standing (sophomore, junior, senior), citizenship, etc. If you don't have the minimum requirements, it is probably not worth your time to apply. If it is not clear, contact the program manager for clarification – don't eliminate yourself without asking.

Also check the deadline to make sure it hasn't passed. Deadlines can be as early as January and as late as March.

Then note the application requirements. They are usually:

1. REU Program Application Form
2. Two letters of reference, typically uploaded by the person writing. See the module "Requesting Recommendations" for some insight.
3. Official undergraduate transcript(s) – you have to order this from the University registrar
4. Statement of interest in the program (sometimes called the "personal statement"), limited to two pages, where you talk about relevant experiences and why you would make a successful researcher)
5. Resume. Note that even if you don't upload your resume, it will be useful to send your reference providers a copy.