



Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) on Energy and the Environment (IExE)

Frequently Asked Questions

I've applied online via Drexel's website, now what? . . .

You must also submit your unofficial or official transcript, as well as have one of your listed references submit an email recommendation on your behalf to the iexe-reu@drexel.edu address, in order to have your application considered complete and reviewed for a formal slot in the program. We encourage recommendations, if possible, to come from faculty members whom you have a professional relationship with (either in class or through other educational or scientific/research experiences). Recommendations from other job managers or directors of leadership experiences are also allowed.

Someone from the Drexel REU Team will email you within a few weeks of your original submission to inform you if we have your completed application package. If you do not hear back from us in a few weeks, that means we have not received your completed package (so check with your references). Due to the high volume of applications, you will only receive one of these confirmation emails and no reminder emails for incomplete applications; however if you are unsure or concerned with the receipt of all your materials, you are welcome to email the address above to check with us at any point during the process (we will get back to you as quickly as we are able). We accept applications on a rolling basis starting November 30, 2017 and will begin offering positions to applications shortly into the new year. The application process will be open until all slots are filled, and typically we will put a notification up on our webpage (<http://drexel.edu/iexe/education/research-experience-for-undergrads/>) to let applicants know when we are closing our online application link (typically at the end of February), as well as when all our slots have been filled (typically around the end of March).

What is the time commitment for REU?

The Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program is 8 weeks long. It begins with move-in and orientation on Monday and includes 8 work weeks, ending at noon on Friday. For 2018, the program will run from 6/18/18 until 8/10/18. The final presentation/poster session will be on 8/9/18. All REU participants must be present during the entire 8 week duration. Should an emergency or other appropriate reasons to leave for short periods of time during the program arise, depending on the circumstances, they must be communicated and cleared with the participant's Project faculty PI (overseeing professor of the assigned project) and REU Point of Contact (POC).

Do I get paid as an REU participant?

Yes. The compensation for 2018 is \$4000 (pre-tax). Note that the stipend will come a few weeks into the start of REU, not at the very beginning, and usually comes in installments during the REU program depending on how the HR department processes your paperwork.

Where will I live for the summer? How does the housing work?

All REU Interns will be offered housing at one of Drexel's undergraduate dorms for the duration of the program at no cost (from 6/18/18 until 8/10/18). Note that you will not be able to check into the housing until the morning of 6/18/18 due to the changing of the terms for existing Drexel students in the dorms, so you must plan travel arrangements accordingly. Students traveling from more than 500 miles away from Philadelphia (based on the home address provided in the application) are eligible for a \$500 travel stipend to help cover costs to get to and from the program. No travel stipends are provided for those that wish to commute daily from a local address.

You are welcome to organize your own housing while participating in the program; however, it will not be financially covered as the dorms are, so we strongly recommend that you enroll in the on-campus housing option. The dorms will come with basic furnishing such as a bed, desk, and wardrobe, but REU students must supply their own towels and sheets (extra long twin). Wifi is free and available in all dorms, and all utilities are covered. We try to put all participants in the same dorm, 2 participants per double room, by gender; however this is not guaranteed due to campus housing demands. There will be a Drexel student floor monitor introduced to the participants for any help, or guidance with housing or general campus information during their stay. As an example, one year all REU participants stayed in Millennium Hall, details here: <http://drexel.edu/campuservices/universityHousing/residence-halls/millenniumHall/>

Is food covered?

No. Meals are not covered by the REU program, but are instead figured into the stipend amount awarded to provide flexibility. That way, students have the option to put any of the variety of dorm meal plans onto their Drexel DragonCard that they receive typically in the first week, hopefully during orientation on the first day (as long as they submit their paperwork in on time before the program), if they choose. More information about the types and costs of those plans can be found at this link: <http://drexel.campusdish.com> Otherwise, participants can utilize the wide variety of restaurants and grocery store options within walking distance of campus. Again, we try to put participants in a dorm with a shared kitchenette that has basic utensils/supplies to have the option to cook, if at all possible.

Can I bring my car? If so, is there a parking pass I need to purchase?

While cars are permitted, they are not encouraged because Drexel is in a very busy area of downtown Philadelphia, where parking is expensive and challenging. Note that Philadelphia has numerous public transportation options, more information here: <http://www.visitphilly.com/getting-around/>. If you wish to park on campus, you will need to purchase a parking pass, which is on the order of \$500 for the summer and will be left up to the participant to arrange. Details for parking can be found here: <http://drexel.edu/campuservices/parkingServices/permits/rates/>

As an REU participant, are there extracurricular activities that I need to participate in during the program?

As an REU participant, in addition to working on your project in the laboratory of your faculty PI, you will attend seminars, educational assessment lunches, and other research and career development workshops during the program. These end up being on the order of once to twice a week for about an hour, and occur during normal business hours. Your overseeing faculty PI (professor) will have a copy of these commitments, but it is always good to reiterate your absences for these events to him/her. Some additional social activities will be arranged, but are not mandatory. Last year's enrichment program activities is found on the IExE webpage after WEEK 8: <http://drexel.edu/iexe/education/research-experience-for-undergrads/>

We are planning to provide two additional opportunities for REU participants. One is a field trip to the Academy Of Natural Sciences (optional), which is an affiliate of Drexel for a behind the scenes look, and the other is a community-service demonstration to middle school students, to help encourage careers in STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics) through a program called FirstHand (<http://firsthandphilly.org>). REU Participants will create a little presentation and/or interactive demonstration (5 minutes) based on the topic of their project to be presented to FirstHand students around week 7 of the program (mandatory).

Lastly, the REU culminates in a poster session on the second to last day of the program (8/9/18). It is important to ensure that you are available for the entire REU program, start to finish – the final day of the program, 8/10/17, you will be let go after lunch and can schedule travel after 3pm. The last poster session is well attended, and it is an excellent opportunity to show off your great work while networking; plus, there is a certificate and prize for best-presented research poster!

What is the typical workload as an REU participant?

As an REU participant you are committed to working 35-hours per week for 8 weeks (slightly less than a typical job). Thus, you should not accept the REU if you cannot commit to this time, or holding a second part time job, etc. Accepting an REU position implies that you agree to be available for the entire eight-week program. You should consult with your faculty advisor regarding your specific work schedule and work schedule flexibility.

Can students change their project preferences?

No. Unfortunately, due to the complexity of the matching process between the participant's top five choices from the applications, and the selection of the faculty for their needs, students will not be able to change their project preferences.

Is my REU stipend taxable?

Yes. It is taxable, and Drexel's HR should set up the taxes taken out of the stipend according to the paperwork you submit prior to the start of the program.

What happens if I get, and accept the REU offer?

You will be notified via email individually with an offer, along with what project you were

assigned to and a document to sign if you accept. We ask that you let us know via email within a week of your offer if you will choose to accept or decline a position in the program. If you accept, you will submit your signed acknowledgment of acceptance form to us electronically or via provided fax, and you will receive a confirmation email from an REU team member acknowledging the receipt of your acceptance within about 24 and 72 hours. Then typically around the end of March, all accepted participants will receive an email with a packet of supporting information and paperwork regarding housing, HR forms for stipend and DragonCard, a campus maps, a suggested packing list, etc. The forms will be due before the start of the program, typically around mid to late April, in order to ensure all paperwork is in place for processing by the time to program starts. We cannot stress enough that you need to get your paperwork in on time, so that we have everything ready for you including financial compensation, access to campus buildings, Dragoncard, etc. when you arrive. Once paperwork is received and confirmed by an REU team member, you can then arrange travel to get to Drexel for the start of the program. Those that are receiving a travel stipend will be reimbursed, so please bring all travel receipts with you to orientation, where a form will be provided to fill out and submit on Day 1.

The first day of the program will include a check-in at the dorm for the morning (between 8am-noon). Then, all students will walk over together with the Drexel REU POC to the Main Building for an Orientation Overview Presentation, laboratory safety training, with a planned campus tour and stops at HR and the DragonCard center to pick up their IDs. The first day will include a pizza party that project POC's (called the *mentorship team*, often a graduate student perhaps with the associated faculty member) from each lab will attend to meet the participant and arrange a lab schedule, see the lab, etc., so you can begin your projects first thing on Day 2.

Can I use the campus Recreation Center during the program?

Yes, but your DragonCard will not allow free access; however it does provide a discount. You will need to visit Drexel's Recreation Center during normal business hours with your DragonCard to purchase a membership, which is on the order of \$35 a month (prices may vary, please check with their membership desk). More information can be found here:

<http://drexel.edu/reccenter/member-services/membership/Rates/>

As an REU participant, are there any restrictions during the summer?

Yes, but not many- have fun, work hard, meet new people and get a wonderful research experience! You must also abide by Drexel student code of conduct, including drug and alcohol policies, while you are here for the program, which can be found in the student handbook here: http://drexel.edu/studentlife/community_standards/studentHandbook/ Failure to follow this code of conduct may result in your expulsion from the program. Two additional rules specific to the REU include:

- 1 Students must spend a minimum of 8 weeks working in the faculty mentor's research group with the project they have been assigned to;
- 2 Failure to complete the REU summer research and educational enrichment commitment may result in the removal of the program and/or the stipend being partially and/or fully reversed.

*We hope you will consider being a **Drexel Dragon** this summer!*