

ICTAS Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Grants: 2017-18

The objective of this program is provide seed funding to faculty teams to engage undergraduates, preferably from underrepresented groups including women, into interdisciplinary research during the academic year. Faculty teams representing multiple disciplines/departments/colleges are preferred. This program is intended to increase VT's proposals to the NSF's Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Site program and International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) program. Awardees are expected to apply for these NSF programs in 2018. Since it is expected to have a well-defined common focus in the REU Site or IRES proposals, faculty teams will be expected to propose research opportunities with a coherent intellectual theme.

A workshop will be organized at ICTAS on April 20, 2018 (9-noon) to: (i) showcase research work of undergraduate students in a poster session, (ii) bring PIs/co-PIs with experiences in running successful REU sites/IRES program to share their experiences with the participants, and (iii) invite prior year awardees to share their experiences.

Each team is expected to engage at least 2 undergraduate researchers. It is expected to make up to 15 awards of \$10k each during the fiscal year 2018. One or two awards are reserved for engaging students from the Honors College into research and the staff of the Honors College will provide assistance to the awardees in student recruitment.

Budget Guidelines: 1. At least 60% of funds must be spent on undergraduate students' wages. 2. If you plan to purchase equipment for supporting the research project/s, it must be briefly documented in the proposal and equipment budget can't exceed 15% of total funds. 3. Graduate students who will be engaged in the mentorship of undergraduate students can be paid through the project with an upper limit of 15% of total funds. 4. Project related travel is allowed and should not exceed 10% of the total funds. 5. Faculty salaries are not allowed.

In order to request funding, please submit a proposal (max. 3 pages). Please follow below guidelines strictly:

1. Faculty members: Names, Departments, Colleges: (Page 1) (clearly indicate PI's name, email and contact #)
2. Title of the Proposal: (Page 1)
3. Coherent intellectual theme: (Page 1)
4. Number of undergraduate researchers: (Page 1)
5. Number of undergraduate researchers from underrepresented groups: (Page 1)
6. Interested in Engaging Students from the Honors College: Yes / No (Page 1)
7. Brief description of proposed research and mentorship plan: (Page 2)
8. A commitment statement to participate in April 2018 workshop and submit a proposal (REU Site or IRES programs) to NSF in 2018. (Page 3)
9. A short paragraph to describe the outcome of the ICTAS REU award received in 2016-17, if applicable. (Page 3)

The deadline to receive applications is September 1, 2017 (Friday; 5:00 p.m.). Awards will be made by October 1, 2017. Research work is suggested to take place between October 2017 through April 2018. Please submit your request to Vinod Lohani (vlohani@vt.edu), ICTAS' Director for Education and Global Initiatives. If you have questions, please feel free to ask Vinod, or Stefan Duma (duma@vt.edu), ICTAS Interim Executive Director. Note: Investigators are encouraged to review RFPs of the NSF/REU Site and IRES programs.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – ICTAS REU Grants

1. Can I submit a single PI proposal?
Answer: Yes, you can. However, as indicated in the RFP, submission by a team of faculty members representing a variety of disciplines is preferred since the goal of the program is to engage undergraduates into interdisciplinary research.
2. Can the research period go beyond April 2018?
Answer: Yes, if your students are available, they can be paid (on wages) until the end of May 2018.
3. Is my team required to submit a proposal to the NSF's REU site or IRES program in 2018?
Answer: Yes, as long as these programs are supported by the NSF.
4. Can I get copies of successful proposals for the REU site and IRES programs?
Answer: Yes, this is one of the things discussed at the April 2018 workshop.
5. Will funds be transferred to my department or ICTAS staff will handle all funds related issues?
Answer: Yes, funds will be transferred to your department if you receive an award. Your team will be expected to follow the budget guidelines as stipulated in the RFP.
6. Can I include a non-VT person on my team?
Answer: Yes, you can and make sure role of this person is clearly defined.
7. Can I recruit a non-VT student for research?
Answer: If this helps you to make a stronger case for the REU site or IRES proposals, then you can plan to use 50% of wage funds for non-VT students and rest should be for VT students since one of the goals of the program is to engage VT students into undergraduate research.
8. Can I charge staff salary to this fund?
Answer: No
9. What's the agenda of the April 2018 workshop?
Answer: We invite PIs who have implemented successful REU site and IRES programs. Copies of successful proposals are also shared. All undergraduates are invited to present posters on their research.
10. I received this award last year. Can I apply again?
Answer: Yes, it will be helpful to clearly articulate how the 2nd award (if you are successful) helps your team in securing external funding.
11. How will you select students for the awards reserved for the Honors College students?

Answer: We'll put the awardees in contact with the staff of the Honors College who have agreed to work with the awardees to find suitable honors students meeting their requirements.

12. The proposal allows 3 pages. Is this requirement flexible?

Answer: No, as stated in the RFP, please follow the guidelines strictly.

13. How are proposals reviewed?

Answer: The proposals are reviewed by experts who have experience in implementing REU site and IRES programs.

14. I'm not a tenure track faculty member. Can I still submit a proposal?

Answer: Yes, as long as you can serve as a PI or co-PI on NSF proposals and recruit undergraduate students for research.