



LOGISTICS AND STUDENT HANDBOOKS

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Running an REU is a year-round endeavor, starting with preparing marketing and application materials in the fall, selecting students and finding mentors in the winter, and preparing the logistics including travel, housing, software, and project planning, all before the program starts. In addition, it is worth cultivating new and old relationships with partners throughout the year, including working with them in recruiting students. See the [chapter on Recruiting Students for Your REU](#) for more on that. This chapter gives an overview of the logistical pieces that you should prepare for as you start planning your REU.

➔ Logistics Before the Program Starts

Paying Students

Paying your REU students requires working with your administration early and clarifying how they would like to handle payments. Get this underway even before you have selected students.

- » Generally administration will require you to either pay students with stipends or hire them as student employees.
- » Determine whether it is a “stipend” or “pay” before you do your budget. Stipends usually count as a participant support cost on your grant and are subject to different overhead rules.
- » Ideally process payroll information as soon as you have accepted your full group of students and they have accepted your offer. It takes time to get students in the system and payments processed.
- » Provide students with a check for the students on their first day of the program, as some will not have the resources to pay for travel, rent, food or other costs.
- » Your administration should confirm what paperwork you need to collect, such as a W9.
- » Clarify if students need to register as students at your institution.
- » If students are paid with stipends, you can control the frequency of payments. It works well if you give students one check when they arrive, one mid-summer, and one at the end of the summer when they complete their work, or more frequently than that.



Health Insurance

Insurance requirements may vary at each institution. Ensure you communicate with students the expected requirements so that they have time to gather documentation or acquire the appropriate insurance if they don't have it.

- » Clarify with your institution what kind of insurance students are required to carry.
- » Most programs can't provide health insurance but expect students to be insured. Some students can't afford it.
- » Clarify how Workers Comp works and other liability insurance issues you might need to know about on your campus.

- » Some institutions will require that you register program participants with the on campus health center/provider to ensure that your participants are eligible to receive acute medical care while they are on campus. This may result in health fees at the end of the program.
- » Some institutions may require that you gather information from students (e.g., vaccination records, proof of insurance). Students will need ample notification to be able to gather and provide documentation.
- » If a student does not have health insurance, but your institution requires it from all participants, students might consider purchasing temporary health insurance.

Agreements and Forms

Prior to the start of each program, you should review and update all of the necessary agreements if needed. Your institution or funding agency may have changed requirements or guidelines. Ensure you update your program's contracts and agreements to reflect any changes.

When students accept your offer, consider a contract that outlines your expectations for the program, the code of conduct and deliverables (paper, poster, talk), and issues such as working on teams, hours they are expected to work. Ask students to sign this and send it back to you.

Other forms to have students sign are listed in the [chapter on Safety](#), and include an image/media release form, a code of conduct agreement, a liability form, and a medical and emergency contact form.

Travel Arrangements



Today some programs will have travel and others will be fully remote. If there is travel to your program, prepare a process in advance to save yourself a lot of extra work.

- » Timing: Get the student travel information as soon as all students are accepted. This would include their departure airport, date of birth, gender and name as officially spelled out on their official ID.
- » Be sensitive to special needs when arranging travel.
- » Be aware students may be traveling with little or no money.
- » Driving or flying: students may have a preference to drive. Let them know if and how much mileage they can charge.
- » Spell out what expenses you will and will not cover. These might include baggage, missed flights, changes to flights.
- » Get students to approve the itinerary before you buy a flight, or have them plan travel and seek reimbursement from you with receipts.
- » Arrange transport or provide information on shuttles from the airport.
- » Note that travel insurance may not be covered by the funding agency.

Housing Arrangements

If your students travel to your institution, you will likely coordinate their housing arrangements. Be aware of cost differences between housing provided by your institution or a private managing company.



- » Housing often needs to be arranged in the early spring at most campuses, possibly before you accept students, as many dorms can fill up over the summer.
- » Students will want information about their dormitory--what it's like, what will be provided, will they have roommates, etc. Do your dorms have food or will students need to buy groceries and cook (will there be a microwave or stove)? This might mean you give them an extra stipend instead of paying for dorm food or a meal plan. They often want to know whether to bring bedding with them.
- » What accommodations will you need to make for parents, non-traditional students, gender non-binary students--think about these issues early.
- » Some students may decide to arrange their own lodging. They may be local or have local relatives with whom they decide to lodge. Decide what kind of funding to provide students who opt out of dorms.
- » Consider using a short survey to match roommates based on preferences of quiet hours/ study time, level of social interactions/visitors to the apartment, and other factors.

Program Calendar

A program calendar should be one of the first planning tools you create. It will help organize your program's activities and help identify any scheduling conflicts/gaps in advance.



- » A calendar with major events, start and end dates, meetings, etc., should be started before students arrive. Mentors and students will want to know asap what the overall schedule for the summer looks like.
- » A shared Google calendar or something similar is flexible and easy to share.
- » A program calendar is also a good tool to document all of the program activities and will be useful when you work on reports and presentations about your program. Ensure you update it frequently throughout the program.

➔ Preparation for Being on Campus

Safety Issues

- » Provide written information about local/campus police and health care as well as local hospitals to the students.
- » Students should fill out a form that shows their insurance information, emergency contact, and any known medical issues.
- » See the [chapter on Safety](#) for more comprehensive information.

What to Bring

Students will be eager to plan their travel to your site. If you provide them with detailed information, their eagerness will not turn into stress.

- » In general, students need to know what to bring for your location. This includes clothing appropriate to the weather in the local area. Let them know dress code expectations; in particular, any business attire for professional presentations such as their poster session.
- » Students also need to know what specifically they will need for working with their science mentor. Special closed-toed shoes for the lab, hats, insect spray, sunscreen, etc. The science mentor could provide this info.

- » Make sure you don't require purchasing any new equipment or specialty clothing or offer to reimburse students from your grant.
- » Clarify if you expect students to bring a laptop and have a plan for students who don't have one.



Local Transportation

In the event that students will be on campus and have a car, they will need to be able to get from town or to town.

- » If students bring a car, will they need a parking permit? On some campuses parking is expensive.
- » Students need to be able to get around. Is there adequate public transit? If not, will they be isolated?
- » Does your campus or town have a bike loaner program?

Travel After the REU to Conferences

- » Work with students to submit abstracts on time and to apply for conference student travel awards.
- » Clarify early with students what travel costs you can cover.
- » Check if you can arrange travel such that students don't need to be reimbursed, as many students don't have enough credit to wait for reimbursement.

➔ Handbooks for the Students

Consider collecting basic information in a handbook for students to have before the summer starts. Among other things, include:

- » Start and end dates
- » Program staff contact info
- » Maps of campus, local area
- » Information about transit
- » Tourist info: restaurants, sites to see, things to do
- » Safety contacts: police, campus offices, health, online safety, etc.



Resources

USC Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU): Coastal Ocean Processes. [2018 Program Handbook For Mentors and REUs.](#)

Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) [REU Program Handbook.](#)

NCAR - Wyoming [Summer Program 2020 Student Handbook](#)

