

University of Delaware
Disaster Research Center (DRC)
Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the REU program?

Is this a paid research training program?

Am I eligible to apply?

I'm a senior, can I apply?

What do I need to apply?

When must I apply?

How are students selected?

When do we hear if we're accepted?

What is a "typical" day like in the REU program?

Where will I live?

What other activities are included in the REU program?

What projects are available to work on?

What are past research projects?

What is the REU program?

The Disaster Research Center's (DRC - <http://www.udel.edu/DRC/>) Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program is funded by the National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, and the University of Delaware. The Program is designed to engage ten undergraduate students each year, in hands-on research training to enhance their understanding of the social science aspects of disasters. Each summer, a nine-week research-training institute will be held at the DRC to provide students with the necessary academic background, training, and relevant research experiences to prepare them under the guidance of faculty mentors to function as relatively independent research scholars. Students are exposed to several course modules that include qualitative research methods used in the study of hazards and disasters, theoretical social science approaches to understanding the causes and consequences of disasters; and the ethical implications of disaster research. REU trainees will work with leading scholars and researchers on state-of-the-art research projects that focus on issues such as disaster mitigation, search and rescue, preparedness, response and recovery, warnings and technology, and disaster vulnerability and resilience.

Is this a paid research-training program?

Yes. Students receive a stipend of \$400 per week for each of the 9 weeks. Additionally, housing and transportation (to and from the program) are provided. Another \$400 one time stipend is provided for meals. You can use this stipend to purchase a meal plan through the University (see www.udel.edu/dining), or purchase your own meals at any location on campus, including the many restaurants on Main Street.

Who is eligible to apply?

Sophomores and juniors may apply; students must have completed their sophomore year by the time they enter the DRC-REU program.

Students should have declared a social science major (e.g., Anthropology, Geography, Psychology, Political Science, Public Health, Sociology or Urban Affairs, among others). Students must have completed at least 12 credits in the social sciences.

Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.0.

I'm a senior, can I apply?

Unfortunately, seniors are ineligible because REU students are required to use the next academic year to continue on their research projects with their academic advisor.

What do I need to apply?

Applicants must submit the following documentation:

- 1) Completed application form (http://www.udel.edu/DRC/REU/Application_Information.htm)
- 2) Academic transcript(s)
- 3) Essay on research interests, previous experience/training (if any), particular interest in the disaster research field, graduate school plans, and how participation in the REU program will contribute to the student's academic and professional development
- 4) Two letters of recommendation from faculty members
(http://www.udel.edu/DRC/REU/Application_Information.htm).

When must I apply?

The application deadline is February 13, 2009. Unfortunately, if we have not received all of your application materials (including transcripts, essays, and recommendation letters) your application will not be considered. You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete.

How are students selected?

The selection committee will use the following eligibility criteria:

- Students should have declared a Social Science major (e.g., Anthropology, Geography, Psychology, Political Science, Public Health, Sociology or Urban Affairs, among others). Students must have completed at least 12 credits in the Social Sciences
- Students must have completed their sophomore year of their undergraduate program by the commencement of the summer program.
- Students should have a minimum GPA of 3.00
- Particular attention will be given to student's overall achievement in the social sciences (minimum grade point average of 3.00 in social science courses)
- The applicants' essay and the letters of recommendation will be used to gauge their interest or commitment to research generally, and in disaster research specifically, and their graduate career plans
- Selected students must be US citizens or permanent residents

When do we hear if we're accepted?

You will be notified if your application was accepted, "wait-listed" or declined by March 6, 2009.

What is a "typical" day like in the REU program?

In the early weeks of the program, students participate in morning sessions on research methods and social science aspects of disasters and in the afternoon learn about DRC projects or do independent research. On Friday mornings, students have the opportunity to hear presentations from leading disaster scholars and practitioners through the *Invited Speakers Series*. Toward the end of summer, students focus mainly on their research projects.

Where will I live?

The Disaster Research Center is located at the University of Delaware (<http://www.udel.edu>) in Newark, Delaware. Therefore, students stay in on-campus dormitories located within walking distance to DRC. REU students are ***required*** to share a double-room with members of their cohort. Students live with other undergraduate students (from UDEL and other schools) who are on-campus for the summer doing research. Last year's cohort stayed at Christina Towers (<http://www.udel.edu/reslife/towers/TowersHome.htm>).

What other activities are included in the REU program?

Hazards Conference, Boulder, CO: This annual workshop is an invitational meeting focused on bringing together researchers and practitioners in the disaster research field. The workshop has representatives from many sectors (private, public, non-profit), and various disciplines and encourages provocative discussions on issues facing the disaster community.

Other professional activities that previous cohorts participated in included a trip to the Disasters Roundtables at the National Academies in Washington, DC and a collaborative trip with the Civil Engineering REU program to New York City. Last year's cohort (2007) also toured the Emergency Operations Centers of both Nassau County, NY and New York City.

In addition to the activities associated with the REU program, students are often able to participate in various activities with the University of Delaware's undergraduate research program (URP). In the past, the URP has organized activities such as picnics/BBQs, trips to Washington DC, Philadelphia and NYC. Activities vary by year and students are responsible for any related costs.

What are some past REU research projects?

REU trainees used data from Organizational and Community Resilience in the World Trade Center (WTC) Disaster, Technology, Weather Forecasts, and Warnings: Integrating the End-User Community, FEMA's USAR Task Force Deployment, December 26, 2004 Tsunami, and Alameda County Earthquake Study.

Here are the titles of their research projects: *Access to OK-FIRST: Race, Ethnicity and Population Distribution in Oklahoma*; *Household Vulnerability: How Do Female-headed Households Measure Up?*; *The Role of Key Players on Organizational Improvisation during Sudden Crisis: A Study of the September 11, 2001, Waterborne Evacuation of Lower Manhattan*; *Local Search and Rescue Teams: Who They Are, Where They Come From, and What They Can Do*; *Integrating Development and Disaster Relief: Sumatra Earthquake 2004*; *Public Education in Preparation and Mitigation*; *Mental Health, the Media and 9/1*; *Dissemination of Information: A Comparative Analysis of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Response*; *A Quantitative Analysis of Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics: How is Risk Perception Affected?*; *Risky Business: Risk Perception in Alameda County*