

Center for Neurotechnology (CNT)
Young Scholars Program-REACH for High School Students
Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 24, 2022)

Is Neural Engineering the Right Fit for Me?

Question: I want to be a (choose one) neurologist...neurosurgeon...neuroscientist...doctor. This program sounds like a perfect match for me! Is it?

Answer: Perhaps, but not necessarily. The YSP-REACH is focused on neural engineering such as medical devices and brain-to-computer interface. Be sure you understand what neural engineering is all about before you decide to apply for the program. Browse the CNT website, especially the Research tab and our blogs at: <https://centerforneurotech.uw.edu/>

Questions about YSP-REACH Eligibility

Question: How do I know if I am eligible for the YSP-REACH?

Answer: Everything you need to know about eligibility can be found on the YSP-REACH website (<https://centerforneurotech.uw.edu/content/young-scholars-program>).

Question: I don't live near the UW Seattle campus (i.e., I am from out-of-town or out-of-state). Can I still apply?

Answer: Everything you need to know about eligibility can be found on the YSP-REACH webpage (<https://centerforneurotech.uw.edu/content/young-scholars-program>). For clarification, we are planning the 2022 YSP-REACH as an in-person, commuter program; it is not a residential program. Therefore, we do not provide housing, transportation, or meals. If you live outside of the Seattle area and are able to arrange your own housing (perhaps with a relative) for the summer, then you could apply. In that case, please clearly explain your situation in your application. Your parents will need to understand that we do not provide supervision outside of program hours. Because of the possibility of COVID-19 health and safety concerns, we may have to change from an in-person program to an online, virtual program.

Question: I am currently a high school senior. Can I apply?

Answer: All high school students, including current seniors, are eligible to apply.

Question: Do I have to be a junior or senior to apply?

Answer: No. However, we would like you to have taken high school level science and math courses, and therefore we expect that the most competitive applicants will likely be juniors and seniors.

Question: Do I have to have computer programming experience to apply?

Answer: No, you do not. But if you do have experience with programming, please be sure to tell us in your application.

Questions about the YSP-REACH Application Process

Question: How do I obtain the YSP-REACH application?

Answer: The YSP-REACH application is a WORD document form that will be available on our website (<https://centerforneurotech.uw.edu/content/young-scholars-program>). Just click on the text "Application forms for 2022 are now available" to download the application form. You must complete the form and email it back with your transcripts. You must also ask one person to send a letter of recommendation on your behalf.

Question: I am having a problem with the application form. Who should I contact?

Answer: We are sorry to hear that and are happy to help you.

- If you have a general question or issue, please contact Dr. Eric Chudler, CNT, Executive

Director, by email at chudler@uw.edu.

- **Please note: If you wait until the last minute to submit your application, and then encounter a problem, we will not have time to assist you before the deadline has passed. In this case, your application will not be accepted.**

Our deadlines are firm; we do not grant extensions.

Question: I see that I need to upload my high school transcript to the application. However, my fall term/semester is not yet complete and grades have not yet been posted. What should I do? Should I wait to apply until my grades have posted (which is just a day or so before the March 15 deadline)?

Answer: First of all, do not wait to apply! Please apply early. Secondly, ask your school registrar to provide you with your most recent transcript. Some transcripts will list the classes in which you are currently enrolled, even if grades have not yet posted. If your transcript does not, feel free to add to your transcript an additional page that explains your situation and lists your current classes (then merge the two documents into a PDF before sending in your application). If you are chosen as a finalist, we may ask for you to provide your updated transcript at that point.

Question: I am a student with a disability and need accommodations in order to complete the application. Who should I contact?

Answer: Dr. Eric Chudler; email at chudler@uw.edu

Question: I see that I need to get someone to write a letter of recommendation for me. Who should I ask?

Answer: That is up to you. Your letter writer should be an adult who knows you well and can speak to your interests, aptitude, maturity, and experiences. We suggest perhaps your science teacher.

Question: I currently attend Running Start at a local community college. Can I ask one of my professors to provide a reference, instead of a high school teacher?

Answer: It is up to you to decide which adult knows you well enough—especially in the context of your interest and skills in science, math, and engineering. It is fine to designate a community college professor.

Question: What advice do you have for making my application strong?

Answer: Our selection committee considers a variety of factors when choosing which applicants to invite to participate in the YSP-REACH. Some general tips include:

- Be sure you understand what sensorimotor neural engineering entails. Browse the CNT website, especially the Research tab and our blogs.
- Think carefully about which adult you will ask to complete the online reference form on your behalf.
- Take the time to craft strong essays that help us learn more about you and why you would be a good fit for YSP-REACH. This is your chance to leave us with an impression of who you are.
- Proofread your application. Ask an adult to look it over before you submit it.

Question: It looks like the YSP-REACH application is due on March 15, 2022. What **exact** time on March 15 will you stop accepting applications?

Answer: We will stop accepting applications at 11:59 pm on March 15, 2022 and will not accept any applications submitted after this time. However, this question always worries us because it usually means that an applicant is waiting until the very last minute to submit an application. **Please do not procrastinate.** The application is available now, so you can

plan ahead and submit your application early. Everyone should submit their application early, for two reasons:

- First, as part of your application, you will need to have someone write a letter of recommendation for you. You'll need to ask your letter writer with enough time so the letter can be written and submitted by March 15, 2022. Keep in mind that teachers are busy and need plenty of time to complete this task. Many students end up with incomplete applications because they wait until the last minute to submit their applications. This does not allow teachers enough time to complete the letter of recommendation. ***Please understand that incomplete applications are not forwarded to our selection committee. Our deadlines are firm. We do not grant extensions.***

Question: Oh no! I waited until the last minute to submit my application and then encountered a problem. Now I have missed the deadline and the application system is now closed. What can I do?

Answer: You are free to apply next summer, if you are still eligible. We will not accept an application submitted past the deadline for any reason, even if you encountered a technical difficulty with the online application process. Problems can occur, so it is up to you to plan accordingly. This is why it is so important to submit your application early. ***Our deadlines are firm. We do not grant extensions.***

Question: How will I know if my application is complete and that my letter of recommendation was submitted on time?

Answer: You are welcome to contact Dr. Eric Chudler (chudler@uw.edu) to ensure that your application is complete. It is your responsibility to ensure that your letter writer submits a letter on time.

Questions about YSP-REACH Selection and Acceptance

Question: I am a parent and my son/daughter wants to participate in the YSP-REACH. How can I best help them?

Answer: We appreciate your enthusiasm and desire to help your child through the application process. The YSP-REACH is a college-level experience. We have found that the students who do the best in the program and get the most out of the experience are students who have high levels of maturity, independence, and self-motivation. The YSP-REACH application process is a great opportunity for encouraging these skills in your child. If your son/daughter has a question about the program or the application process, encourage him/her to reach out to CNT staff directly instead of doing it on his/her behalf. Encourage your child to submit his/her application early and to check-in regularly with both references until he/she is certain that the application is complete. While it is fine to help with proofreading your child's application, the essays should be your son/daughter's own work and capture his/her own voice.

Question: Is there a grade point average cut-off for a student to be eligible to apply?

Answer: We do not have a formal policy for a GPA cut-off.

Question: Who will evaluate my application?

Answer: A selection committee comprised of education and diversity staff at the CNT.

Question: What are the selection criteria?

Answer: Our selection committee reviews each application holistically, trying to get a good sense of the applicant through the story that the essays, transcripts, and references provide. We try to determine if an applicant will be a good fit for YSP-REACH and all it provides and how well the program authentically matches an applicant's college and career plans. That said, the program is very competitive. We will take into account coursework, grades,

extracurricular activities, and college/career goals when we look at applications, but we are especially interested in your answers to the essay questions and your referee. Therefore, we suggest that you put thought and research into your responses, and choose your referee wisely.

Question: When will I hear if I have been selected for the YSP-REACH?

Answer: We expect to make admission decisions in late March or early April (but can't guarantee it). You will be notified by email if you are accepted or are not accepted into the program.

Question: If I am not selected this year, can I apply again next year?

Answer: Yes, as long as you still meet the eligibility requirements listed on our website (<http://www.centerforneurotech.org/content/young-scholars-program>).

Question: I applied last year and wasn't accepted. Can you tell me why not?

Answer: We cannot give specific feedback about why an individual was not accepted into the program.

Questions about YSP-REACH Logistics

Question: Will I get college credit?

Answer: No, you will not receive any academic credit for participating in YSP-REACH.

Question: What kind of housing is provided?

Answer: None. This is a commuter program; it is not a residential program. Students are expected to provide their own housing and they are responsible for their own transportation to and from the University of Washington each day.

Question: Is food included?

Answer: No, students are responsible for their own meals. That said, we do sometimes provide meals and snacks during classes or special events.

Question: Can I take classes or work another job during the YSP-REACH session?

Answer: An in-person YSP-REACH program is a full time commitment for the 5-day session, 9 am - 3:00 pm. If the program is virtual, the YSP-REACH program will meet for about 2 hours each day for 5 days, most likely between 10:00-11:30 am.

Question: How will I get to campus?

Answer: It is up to you to arrange your own transportation to and from the UW's Seattle campus. The campus is served by many Metro bus routes and is bike-friendly. Parking on-campus is quite expensive (\$15 or more daily), so we encourage you to use mass transit.

Question: I've read through this entire document and still have questions. Who should I contact?

Answer: If you have a general question or issue, please contact Dr. Eric Chudler at chudler@uw.edu

Question: Where will the YSP-REACH program take place?

Answer: Assuming the UW allows in-person summer programs, the YSP-REACH program will be held in the Bill and Melinda Gates Center for Computer Science and Engineering (CSE2), 3rd Floor; 3800 East Stevens Way NE, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195

Question: How much does it cost to attend the YSP-REACH program

Answer: If the program is held in-person, the cost will be \$500/student; if the program is held online, the cost will be \$100/student. Scholarships to cover the costs for some students will be available. Students and their families will be notified if there is a change to the type of program (in-person vs. online, virtual).