

Center for Neurotechnology
Research Experience for Teachers (RET) Program for Middle & High School Teachers
Frequently Asked Questions | Summer 2020

Questions about RET Eligibility

Question: How do I know if I am eligible for the RET Program?

Answer: Everything you need to know about eligibility can be found on the RET website (<http://centerforneurotech.org/content/research-experience-teachers>).

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: Please be aware that the RET program is a commuter program intended for local teachers; it is not a residential program. Therefore, we do not provide housing, transportation, or meals. If you are able to arrange your own housing for the summer, then you are welcome to apply. Please clearly explain your situation in your application.

Question: Do I need to have research experience to apply?

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

Question: Your website says something about encouraging applicants from three Seattle schools. I teach at a different school. Am I still eligible?

Answer: We focus our recruitment efforts for the RET program by working with our program partners. These partners include three Seattle high schools (Cleveland HS, Chief Sealth HS, and Franklin HS), their feeder middle schools (Asa Mercer MS, Denny International MS, and Orca K-8), the DO-IT program at the UW, and the Math Science Upward Bound (STEMsub) program at the UW. Teachers from other schools—especially STEM-focused schools—who meet our eligibility requirements are welcome to apply to the program.

Questions about the RET Application Process

Question: How do I obtain the RET application?

Answer: The RET application is an online form. It is available on our website (<http://centerforneurotech.org/content/research-experience-teachers>). Just click on the text "Application forms for the summer 2020 RET summer program are now available" to be taken to the online application form.

Question: I see that the RET application is an online form. Can I save it and return to it later?

Answer: Yes, you can save the application and return to it later to submit.

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

Answer: We are sorry to hear that you are having a problem with the application and are happy to help you. If you have a general question or issue, please contact Eric Chudler, CNT Executive Director and Education 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 have a disability and need accommodations in order to complete the application.

Who should I contact?

Answer: Please contact Eric Chudler, CNT Executive Director and Education Director, by email at chudler@uw.edu. Alternatively, you may also contact Scott Bellman swb3@uw.edu specifically about accommodations.

Question: I see that I need to designate two references who will be asked to complete an online reference form on my behalf. Who should I designate?

Answer: That is up to you. Your two references should be people who know you well professionally and can speak to your interests, experiences, and teaching situation. We suggest that one of the references be your supervisor or principal. Be sure that you enter correct contact information for your references; if you enter an incorrect email address then our automatically generated email invitation will not make it to your reference. Also, let them know to expect the automatically generated email invitation with instructions on how to complete the online reference form.

Question: It looks like the RET application is due on February 14th, 2020. What exact time on February 14th will you stop accepting applications?

Answer: We will turn off our online application system at 11:59 pm on February 14th, 2020 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 online application is available now, so you can plan ahead and 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 both of my references submitted the online reference form?

Answer: You will receive an automatically generated email when you submit your application. When each of your two references submit the online reference form on your behalf, you will also receive an automatically generated email letting you know that the form has been submitted. Once you receive confirmation that both references submitted their forms, you'll know that your application is complete. You can always log into the application system to check the status of your application and references. Note: All automatically generated email messages about your RET application will be sent to you but if you aren't getting these messages, check your spam or junk folders.

Questions about RET Selection and Acceptance

Question: Who will evaluate my application?

Answer: A selection committee comprised of education and diversity staff at the CNT and faculty members associated with the CNT.

Question: When will I hear if I have been selected for the RET?

Answer: We expect to make admission decisions in April (but can't guarantee it). You will be notified by email regardless of our decision.

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://centerforneurotech.org/content/research-experience-teachers>).

Question: Which labs host RET teachers?

Answer: We have many labs that will be hosting summer research participants; some of these labs will host RET participants. The host labs differ from year to year.

Questions about the RET Experience

Question: What is like to be a RET? What are the benefits?

Answer: Please watch our RET video to learn more about the program from past participants. You can find the video at the very bottom of the RET website (<http://centerforneurotech.org/content/research-experience-teachers>) or watch it on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dd2zX7M5Z0&list=UUoU1To4rnqk-q7Nd4F_3h9g).

Question: I've read that the RETs will develop a neural engineering curriculum. Can you tell me more about this?

Answer: Each summer, RET participants work together to design innovative curriculum units and/or lesson plans focused on neural engineering topics. These units are developed using project-based learning pedagogy and are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (with a special focus on the engineering design standards). During the summer session, teachers meet with CNT education staff twice a week for curriculum design sessions. At the end of the summer session, the RETs present their curriculum unit/lesson plan to the CNT community. Then, the following academic year, the teachers pilot the unit in their classrooms and, with the support of CNT education staff, make final revisions over the next spring/summer, and have their work published on our website. Our previous RET cohorts have designed curriculum units that can be downloaded from the CNT website (<http://centerforneurotech.org/content/lesson-plans>).

Question: The website mentions seminars and workshops. What will these be about?

Answer: RETs meet for twice-weekly curriculum design sessions with CNT education staff. RETs are also invited to seminars on a variety of topics, including responsible conduct of research, neuroethics, ethics of research with humans, ethics of research with animals, the industry environment, and scientific communication. In addition, RETs are welcome to attend faculty research talks and other events sponsored by the CNT.

Questions about RET Logistics

Question: What are the dates for the 2020 Summer Session?

Answer: The seven-week program runs from June 29 – August 14, 2020 (Mondays – Fridays).

Question: How do I get paid?

Answer: RET participants are paid a \$7,000 stipend for their full participation in the seven-week program. The stipend is paid in installments preferably through an electronic bank deposit.

Question: Will I get college credit, continuing education credit, or clock hours?

Answer: No, you will not receive any credit or clock hours for participating in the RET program. You will receive a stipend.

Question: What kind of housing is provided?

Answer: None. This is a commuter program; it is not a residential program. Participants 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, participants are responsible for their own meals. That said, we do sometimes provide meals and snacks during workshops or special events.

Question: Can I take classes or work another job during the RET session?

Answer: The RET program is a full-time, Monday-Friday commitment for the 7-week session.

Question: What hours will I work?

Answer: Each lab has its own culture and own rhythm. You and your lab mentor will work out a specific schedule for you, which will include time spent working on your research project, attending lab meetings, and attending RET classes, workshops, and special events. Generally, you can plan on being on campus Monday – Friday, from 8 or 9am to 5 or 6pm.

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 available but expensive, 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: Please contact Eric Chudler, CNT Executive Director and Education Director, by email at chudler@uw.edu.