Center for Neurotechnology
Young Scholars Program-REACH for High School Students

Frequently Asked Questions

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 sensorimotor neural engineering and the key word is "engineering," such as medical devices and brain-to-computer interface. Be sure you understand what sensorimotor 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: http://www.csne-erc.org/.

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 (http://www.csne-erc.org/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 (http://www.csne-erc.org/content/young-scholars-program). For clarification, please be aware that the YSP-REACH is a commuter program intended for local students; it is not a residential program. Therefore, we do not provide housing, transportation, or meals. If you 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.

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.

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

Answer: We focus our *recruitment* efforts for the YSP-REACH by working with our program partners. These partners include three Seattle high schools (Cleveland HS, Chief Sealth HS, and Franklin HS), the DO-IT program at the UW, and the Math Science Upward Bound program at the UW. Students from other schools who meet our eligibility requirements are welcome to apply to the program.

Questions about the YSP-REACH Application Process

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

Answer: The YSP-REACH application is an online form. It is available on our website (http://www.csne- erc.org/content/young-scholars-program). Just click on the text "Application forms for 2019 are now available" to be taken to the online application form.

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

Answer: Yes. You can save your application and return to it later to submit. You can also log into the system to add your two references, and to check the status of your submission and whether your letters of reference have be received.

Question: I am having a problem with the online 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 Janis Wignall, CNT Pre-college Education Manager, by email at wignallj@uw.edu or by phone at 206-683-7131
- If you need technical help with the online application, please contact our web administrator Armin at csneerc@u.washington.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 haspassed. 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 4 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 uploading to your application). If you are a chosen as a finalist, we will 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: Janis Wignall, CNT Pre- college Education Manager, by email at wignallj@uw.edu or call (206) 683-7131

Question: I see that I need to designate one adult as a referee who will be asked to complete an online reference form on my behalf. Who should I designate?

Answer: That is up to you. Your referee should be an adult who knows you well and can speak to your interests, aptitude, maturity, and experiences. We suggest perhaps your science teacher. Be sure that you enter correct contact information for your referee; if you enter an incorrect email address then our automatically generated email invitation will not make it to him or her. Also, be sure to ask this adult first if he or she is willing to provide a reference and let them know to expect the automatically generated email invitation (from csneerc@u.washington.edu) with instructions on how to complete the online reference form.

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 neural engineering entails. Browse the
- CNT website, especially the Research tab and our blogs (http://www.csne-erc.org/).
- 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 4th, 2019. What ***exact*** time on March 4th will you stop accepting applications?

Answer: We will turn off our online application system at 11:59 pm on March 4th, 2019 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. Everyone should submit their application early, for two reasons:

- First, as part of your application, you will provide email addresses for one adult to provide a reference on your behalf. You'll need to submit your application with enough time so those two adults can complete an online reference form. Your online reference must be submitted by your chosen reference by March 11th, 2017. 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 reference form and does not allow for problem solving in case you or your references encounter a problem. ***Please understand that incomplete applications are not forwarded to our selection committee.***

- Second, sometimes an applicant encounters a problem with the application process. If you email us at 12:05 am on March 5th because you had problems submitting your application, we will be unable to assist you because you will have missed the deadline. Applicants sometimes encounter a problem with the online application form, or they mistype their teacher's email address, or their teacher—for whatever reason—doesn't receive the automatically generated email inviting them to complete the online reference form. Problems can happen. If you submit your application early, then we can work with you to solve these problems. If you wait until the last minute, then we will be unable to help you and your application will not be accepted. ***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 online 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 referee submitted the online reference form?

Answer: You will receive an automatically generated email when you submit your application. When your referee submits 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 your referee submitted the form, you'll know that your application is complete. You can also log into the application to check the status of your references. Note: All automatically generated email messages about your YSP-REACH application will be from csneerc@uw.edu. If you aren't getting these messages, check your spam or junk folders.

Questions about YSP-REACH Selection and Acceptance

Question: How competitive is the application process?

Answer: Very! For our Summer 2017 and 2018 sessions combined, we received nearly 250 applications.

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 CSNE.

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 by mid-March (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.csne-erc.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: What are the dates for the 2019 Summer Session?

Answer: YSP-REACH Session 1 July 25 – July 20, 2019
YSP-REACH Session 2 August 5 – Aug 10, 2019

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: No. The YSP-REACH is a full-time commitment for the 5-day session, 9am -3:30pm.

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 Janis Wignall, CNT Pre-College Education Manager, by email at wignallj@uw.edu or by phone at 206-221-1494. If you need technical help with the online application, please contact our web administrator Armin at csneerc@u.washington.edu.

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

Answer: We have recently relocated to the new Bill and Melinda Gates Center for Computer Science and Engineering (CSE2), 3rd Floor; 3800, East Stevens Way NE, Seattle, WA 98195