

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
2012 Summer Program for Undergraduates

This announcement describes an eight-week summer program of study and research for undergraduates at the University of Chicago. Its web page is

<http://www.math.uchicago.edu/may/REU2012>.

Its first year of operation was 2000, and details from past years may be found at

<http://www.math.uchicago.edu/may/VIGRE/index.html>.

In this program, students have the opportunity for intensive study and research in mathematics. Students participate in at least one of several courses taught by Department of Mathematics faculty members.

The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity for students to be involved in a deeper experience in mathematics than is usually available during the academic quarters. This program is especially beneficial for undergraduates who are considering graduate study and research in mathematics.

Since the program is no longer federally supported, it will have to be more selective than in past years, and it will be substantially more mathematically intensive, with more time for study and research.

DATES: June 18–August 10, 2011; June 18–July 13 for the Apprentice Program. Participants in the full program are required to be in residence for all eight weeks. Apprentices are required to be in residence for the first five weeks and are welcome to participate in the program for the full eight weeks.

STIPENDS: Stipend information is provisional at this time. Acceptances will give firm offers of support. Each student chosen to participate in the full program is expected to receive a stipend of up to \$3,000. Each student chosen to participate in the apprentice program is expected to receive a stipend of up to \$1500. Stipends will be paid at the end of July. Please note: taxes will be deducted from these paychecks. Paid participants are not permitted to hold a part-time job while participating in the REU without explicit approval of the program director. Since the program is no longer federally funded, there will not be sufficient funding to support all who apply and deserve admission, and partial support will be offered to some people. As in the past, people accepted to the program but for whom funding is not available are welcome as full participants in all activities of the REU.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Students are expected to find their own accommodations. Graduate students and past participants will offer advice and assistance.

APPLICATIONS: Applicants must be currently registered students at the University of Chicago. Application forms for the summer of 2012 are available online at

<http://www.math.uchicago.edu/may/REU2012>.

They are due Monday, February 27, 2011. Late applications will not be considered. Completed applications should be returned to Eckhardt 314; if nobody is in that office, applications should be slipped under the door. Applicants will be notified of acceptance or possible wait list status by e-mail no later than March 19.

THE PROGRAM OF STUDY AND RESEARCH: Students attend courses taught by Department of Mathematics faculty. The courses consist of lectures and problem solving sessions; graduate student assistants run help and problem sessions. Some research problems and some problems aimed to aid understanding are introduced.

No previous knowledge or study in the areas taught is required. In addition, opportunities for reading and research with graduate students and/or faculty are offered, and regular meetings with graduate student and/or faculty mentors are required.

The apprentice program is similar, but includes material aimed at those with less mathematical experience. It is closely tied to the apprentice course. It lasts five weeks. Its participants are typically freshmen and sophomores who have not been in advanced mathematics courses, and they often participate in the full program the following summer.

All participants in the program are *required* to write a short mathematical paper on some problem or topic of their own choosing, in consultation with graduate students and faculty. The paper may be either expository or research, but it must be substantial. A first draft must be submitted to mentors by August 13 and the completed paper must be submitted by August 24, unless permission for a later date has been obtained from the program director.

The first few weeks have a larger proportion of lectures than the later weeks, setting up background in some areas, giving self-contained presentations in others, and offering many problems. However, there will be more classes and study and problem sessions later in the program than there were in the past. Papers are strongly encouraged to be on topics related to the lectures, and apprentice papers not related to the lectures must be approved by the program director.

Graduate student and faculty counselors will be on hand ready and willing to offer help throughout the program. Moreover, each student will be paired with a graduate student or faculty mentor who will meet with the student on a regular basis and will be available to offer tutorials. All participants are *required* to meet with their mentors at least twice a week. Topics for papers must be discussed with the mentors, first drafts must be submitted to them for feedback, and final drafts must take their comments into account. This is an essential feature of the program.

There will be student presentations on days (and/or evenings) near the end of the program, with the dates to be determined later. It is hoped that many will make presentations. These can be made by individuals or by groups working together.

The program offers a wide variety of material at various mathematical levels. Some is problem oriented, some introduces areas that are not ordinarily encountered in the undergraduate curriculum. There will be lots of problems, including research problems, that students can work on in groups or alone throughout the program — and later!! Students are encouraged to work together and to organize evening and weekend study sessions. Students are expected to spend substantial amounts of time working on projects or problems outside of classes.

The program for 2012 has not yet been fully established, but it is already clear that many more nontenured faculty will participate than in the past. As always, we plan to offer a variety of courses at various levels, arranged into several “sequences”. The program will be frontloaded in intensity to maximize opportunities to get started on research problems and papers. Abstracts of all course offerings will be made available in March. At this writing (January 31), the complete list of faculty participants has not yet been determined. The faculty participants will be announced as soon as possible; updates of this announcement will appear at

<http://www.math.uchicago.edu/may/REU2012>

Abstracts of the courses from the 2002-2011 REU's can be found at

<http://www.math.uchicago.edu/may/VIGRE>.