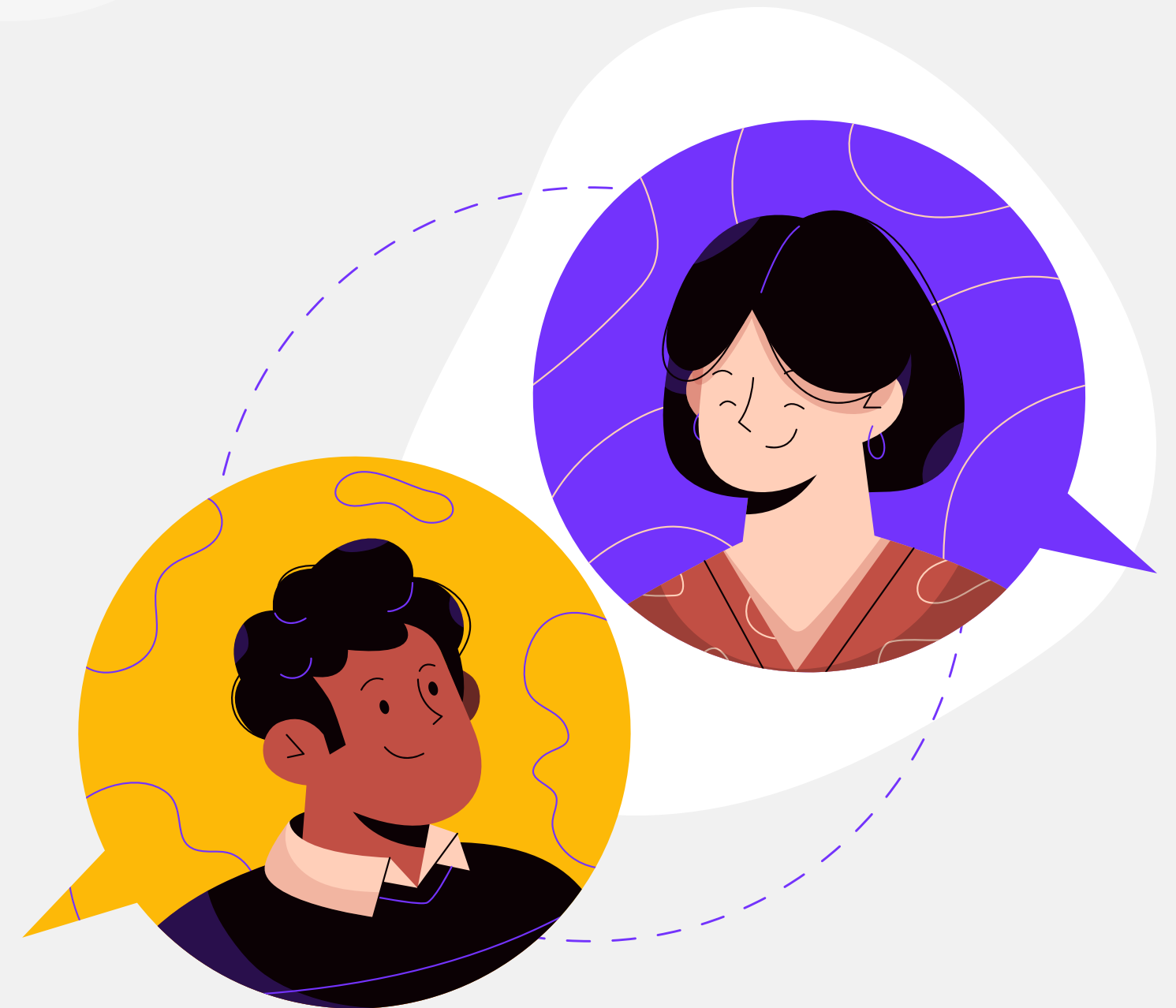


Applying to a Research for Undergradua tes (REU)

Tips and tricks



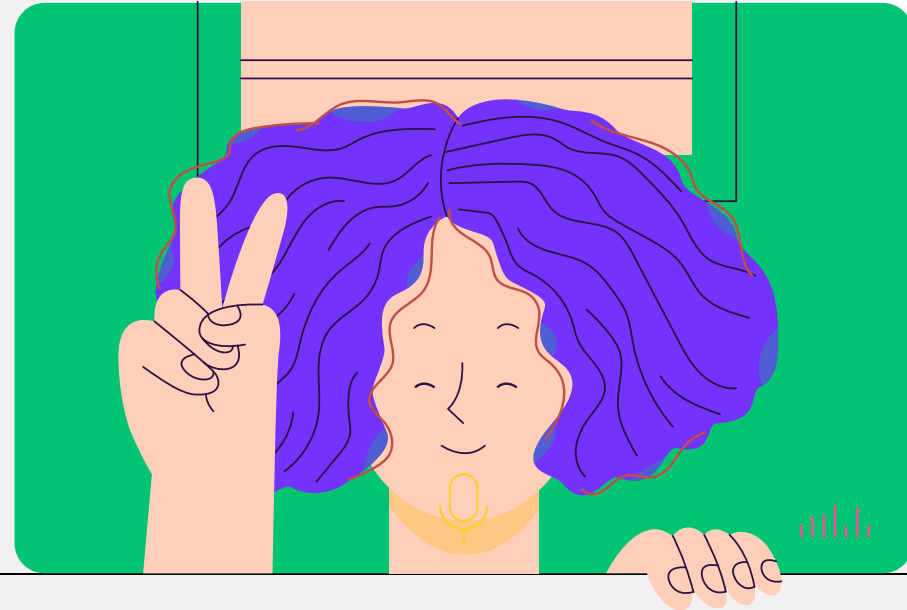
Applying to REUs is *nerve-racking*.

Having no previous research experience makes applying to REUs daunting. What do you put on your resume? What do you mention in your personal statement? **It's OK if you have no experience.** That's the whole point of applying for REUs - to have the chance to experience a research environment!

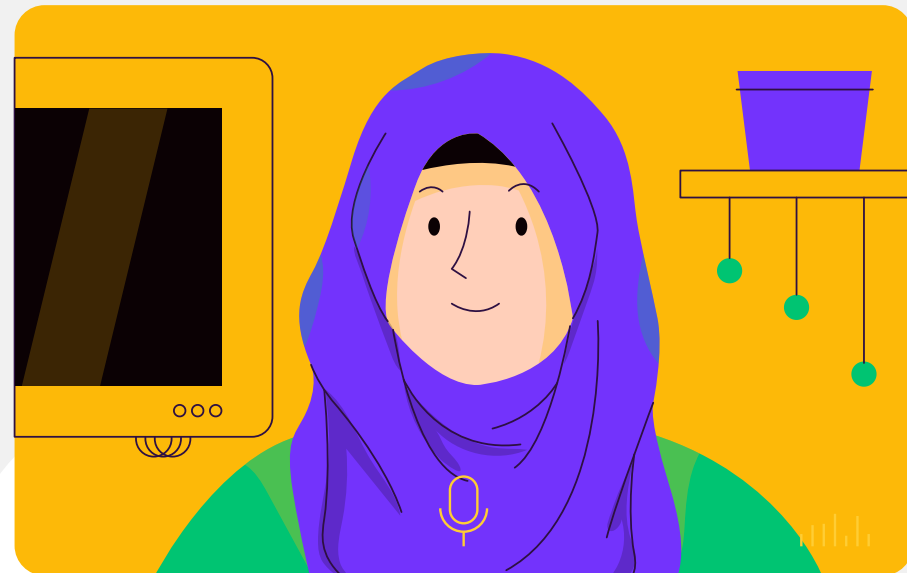
If you want to explore the world of research, then an REU is for you.



Topics



Looking for REU Programs



Recommendations

Personal Statements



Looking for an REU program.



What have you always been curious about?

Chemistry: Organic, Inorganic, Physical, Analytical, Biochem etc.

Biology: Microbiology, Zoology, Botany, Conservation etc.

Mathematics: Algebra, Number Theory, Geometry, Arithmetic etc.

Physics: Classical, Modern, Astrophysics, Nuclear, Biophysics etc.

Comp Sci: Comp. systems, AI, Security, Software Eng., Bioinformatics etc.

Psychology: Clinical, Cognitive, Behavioral, Biopsychology etc.

There are so many types of research. It can be quite overwhelming! Ask yourself what branch of your subject you'd like to know more about.

Look at the NSF website ([nsf.gov](https://www.nsf.gov)) and do some digging on school REU programs. Remember to take into account the location and whether you'll feel comfortable in the area!

Only apply to as many programs as your comfortable applying to.
It's takes work!

If you're an international student:

The National Science Foundation (NSF) only funds domestic students, but sometimes programs have funds set aside for international students. Check the program's website, or ASK a professor or a program director if they have the funds to support you. This means sending an email. Be direct!

Recommendations are important.

Here is that super detailed email I was promising you.

These are the programs I'm applying for and some details on submission:

University of Michigan:

- Deadline is **February 7th**. This is the earliest deadline, so I understand if you skip this one! I don't want to put any kind of pressure on you!
- The University of Michigan uses an electronic form for submission of letters of reference, this is the link: <https://apps-prod.chem.lsa.umich.edu/chem/reu/Reference.php>

University of Washington:

- Deadline is **February 14th**.
- Once I submit your email information, an email reference will be automatically generated and sent to you asking to submit the letter.

University of Oregon:

- Deadline is **February 15th**.
- Letters must be attached to the Referee Section page (I've attached the page below!)
- Can sent be sent through email, fax or regular mail:

REU Program – Materials Science Institute
C/O Priscilla Lewis
1253 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1252

email: cilla@uoregon.edu

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center: (I'm looking into 3 different projects: biogeochemistry, solar radiation, & science writing)

- Deadline is **February 15th**.
- Once I submit your email information, an email reference should be automatically generated and sent to you asking to submit the letter.

QESST Engineering Research Center: (This is all about solar energy and solar power systems!)

- Deadline is **March 1st**.
- The letter can be shared with me and I can upload it on my application; however, it can also be sent by email to: tiffany.rybiski@asu.edu. Please let me know which option you choose!

I'm applying to these programs in particular because, as you know, my main focus is on clean, sustainable energy and the technology which harvests/stores it. I, of course, will send you a reminder as the date(s) gets closer. Please do ask me any questions you have! I don't mind going out of my way to explain anything in detail, or find an answer that involves contacting the program. Also, I apologize for such a long email, I hope I didn't miss any details! As always, I'm so appreciative of you taking the time to write about me!!

Have a lovely day!

Ask about a month before the deadline. You want to make the recommendation process as easy as possible for your recommenders. **Ask them early.**

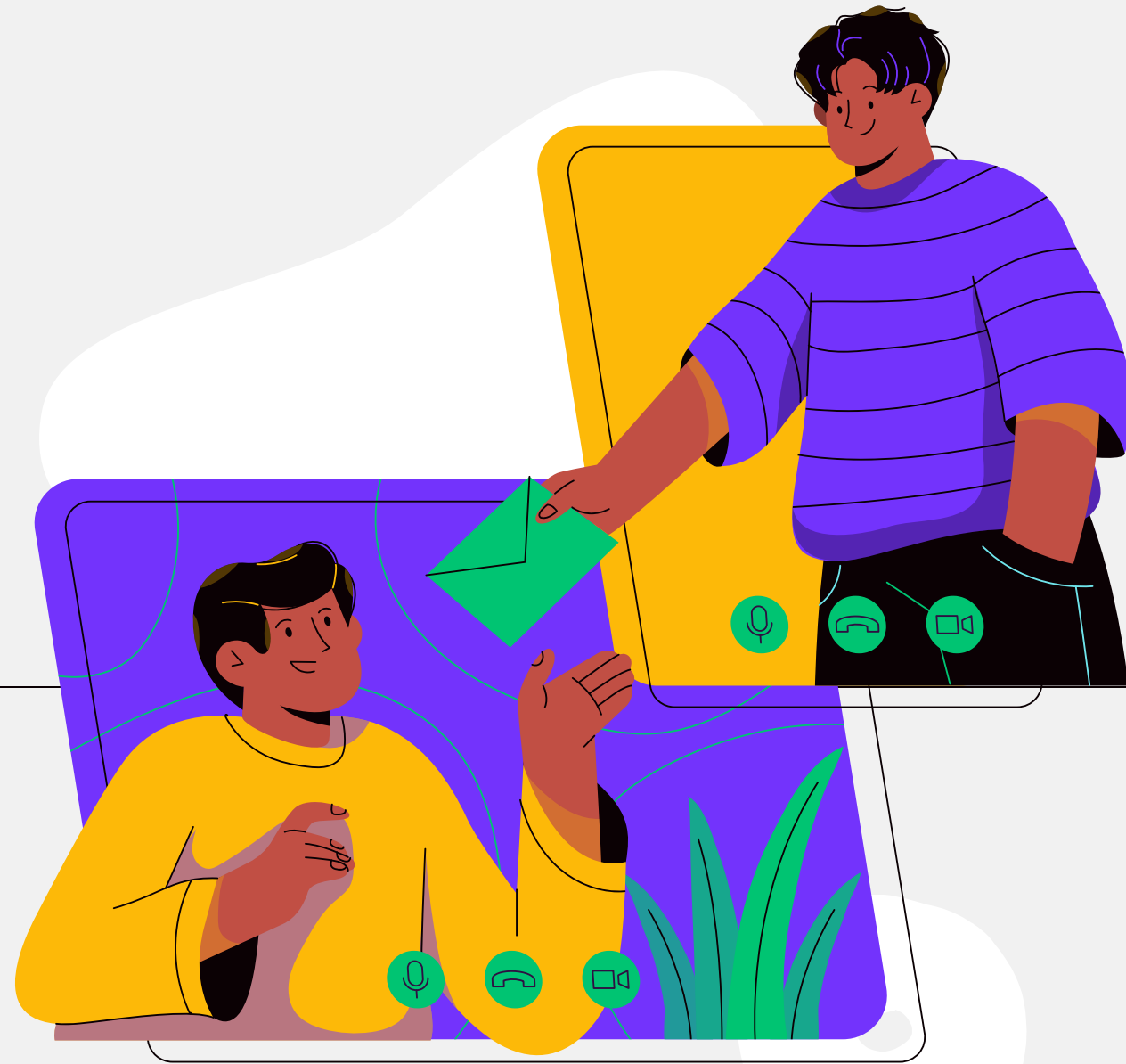
If they say yes, have a detailed email ready with:

- Program you're applying to
- Its deadline
- Links or addresses where they'll send the letter

Add why you're applying to these programs. Do they explore clean energy (this was my reason)? Do they have funds for international students?
Here's one of my emails for reference:

Give a gentle reminder about each deadline a week before it's due! Your recommenders have busy schedules. Remind them!

What makes a great personal statement?



It's always weird giving solid advice for personal statements mostly because each program looks for different things. Here's some suggestions that helped me out when writing mine.



Email a professor/grad student.

First, check if the program allows this. The email is mostly to express interest in doing research with the group. Ask for some publications. Here's an example:

Get specific.

Mention a study/research paper that you found intriguing and would be a nice example of what kind of research you'd want to do.

Tailor it to your program ! Make this study specific to the professor/research you're interested in. This also makes it easier for reviewers to pair you with a specific research group.

Dear Dr. Cossairt,

I hope my email finds you well. On my search for research opportunities for this coming summer, I noticed that you are involved in an REU and wanted to write to you about the potential of me doing research in your lab. I was reading your website and I noticed that you are working on optical energy conversion and making new materials. I am very interested in learning more about how molecules are designed to harvest light.

While, I don't have previous research experience, I have been learning photochemistry in my classes and I will have finished the first semester of organic chemistry before this summer. I have also had several chemistry classes, including sustainable chemistry and medicinal chemistry, these classes all make me really interested in the work you do.

I was wondering; will you be taking summer students this year? I know you are probably very busy, but if you are taking students I was hoping you might suggest some papers I could read to find out what kind of research students will be doing.

Best,



Are you under-represented in science?

"Do you attend a non-research institution (aka Bennington)"
"Are you minority in research?" "Do you come from an area with little resources?" "Are you FLoW?"
Mention it!!!!

Express your love for science !

What's your motivation to pursue research in science? What draws your interest into the subject? An adversity from your childhood? An inspiration? A simple curiosity?

Research takes time and commitment - can you withstand the environment? (Short answer is yes, duh!)



"Future goals"

Can include:

- PhD

or career paths like,

- Professor
- Research Scientist
- etc.

I would suggest looking into a path that involves research for these applications!

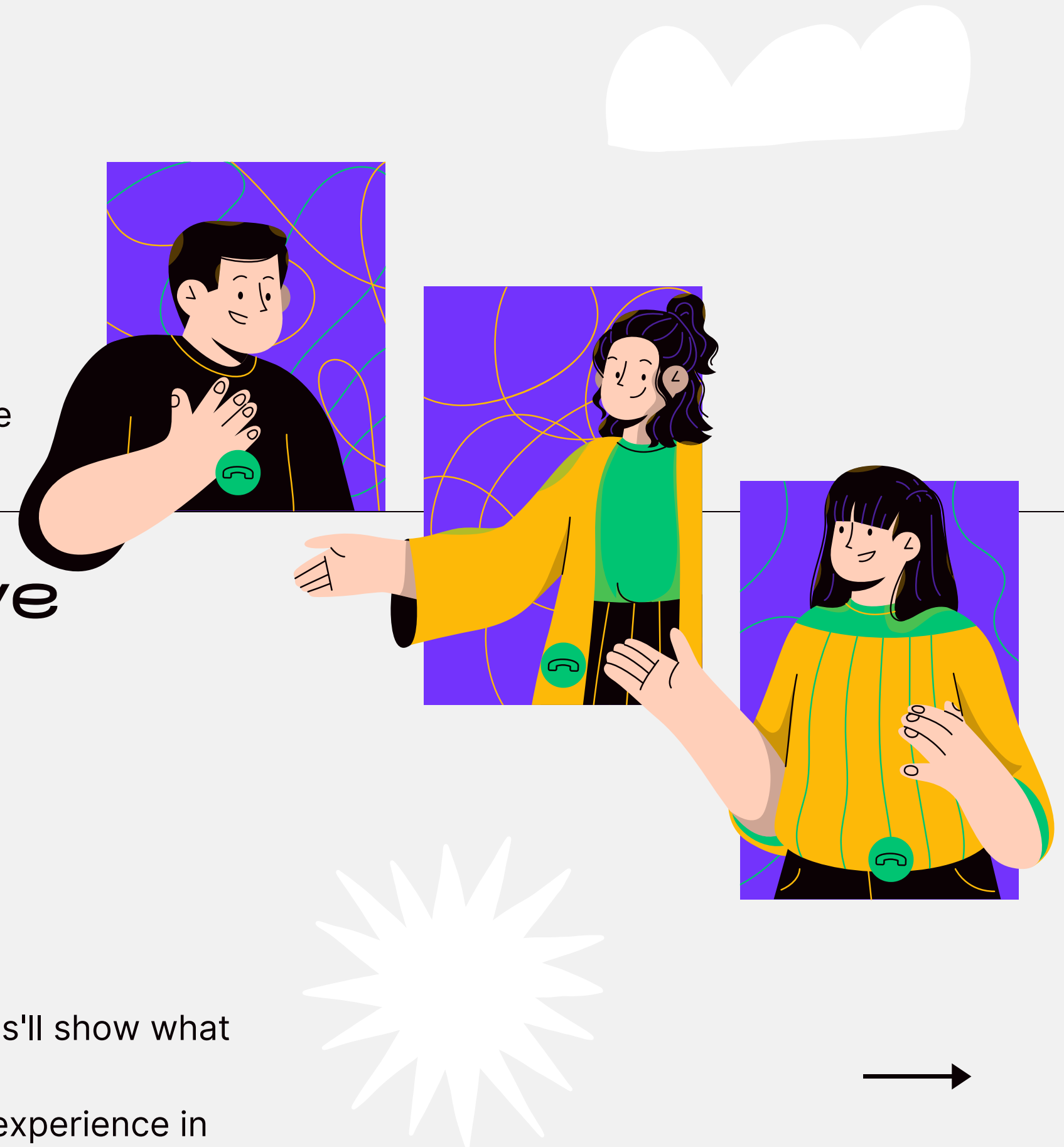
Refer to experiences you've had.

This can include:

- Classes you've taken
- Jobs you've learned from
- General past experiences (hobbies, skills)

Sharing small personal examples can be a great way to do this. This'll show what your background looks like on the subject your interested in!

It may even be helpful to mention that you've never had real solid experience in research/in a lab because of the limited resources and instruments at Bennington.





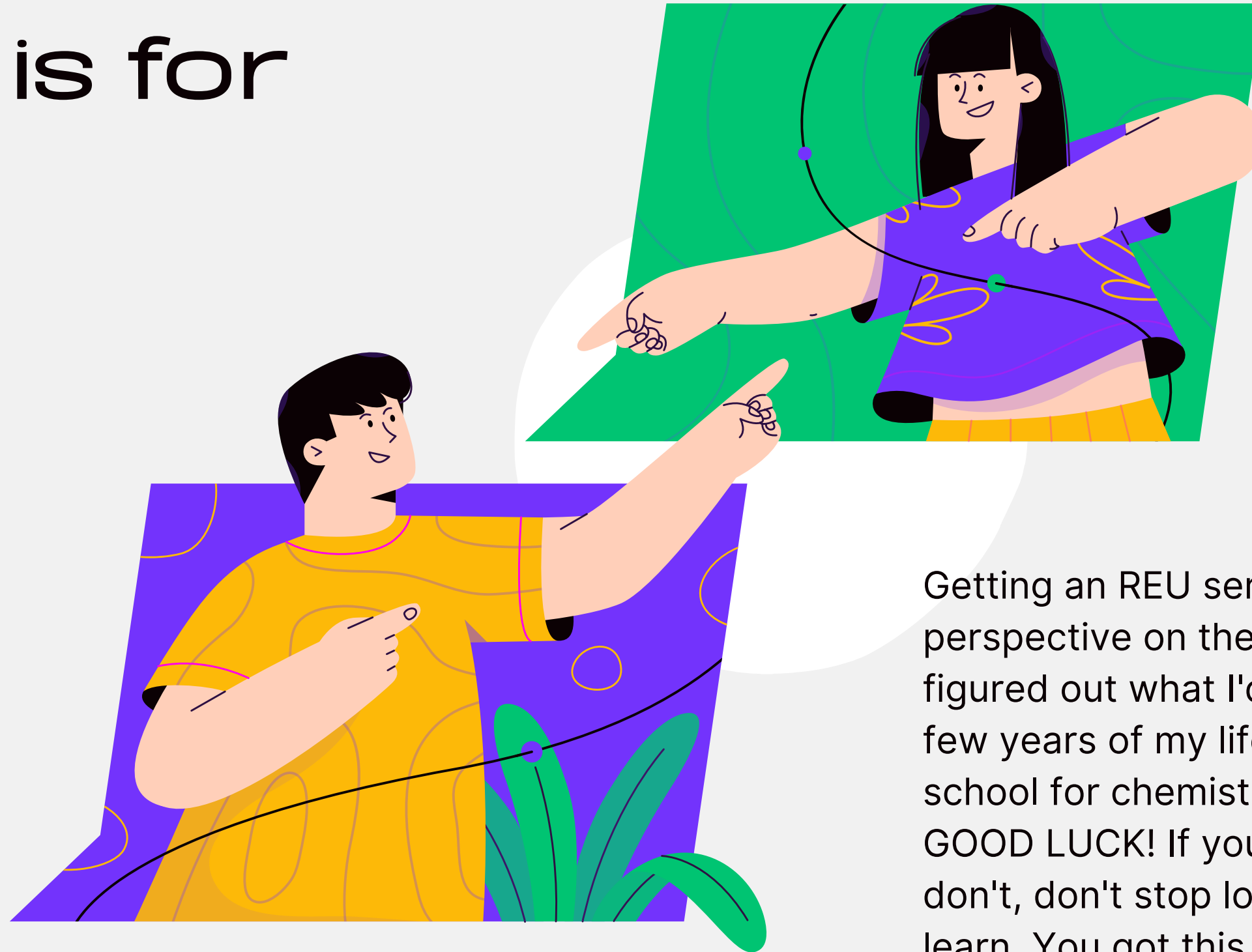
Do what feels right.

Remember that these are all suggestions. Express yourself in a way that makes you feel comfortable, and don't feel obligated to follow what I've put here!

Use this winter to really grind on the whole process since most applications are due sometime early February. If you have questions feel free to reach out to me via email: julisajuarez@bennington.edu !



This is for
you.



Getting an REU seriously changed my perspective on the world and on my future. I figured out what I'd love to do for the next few years of my life and am applying to grad school for chemistry now!
GOOD LUCK! If you get one, awesome. If you don't, don't stop looking for opportunities to learn. You got this.