

Emailing Potential Faculty Mentors

After determining the topic you want to explore for your research project or creative experience, the next step is to search for potential faculty mentors. This guide will help you contact professors whose interests match yours.

Before You Contact Professors...

- Research the professor and read some of their recent publications! This will increase your confidence that they are a good fit for your interests and help demonstrate to them that this is important to you.
- Do not become fixated on a very narrowly defined topic or research question. While you want to pursue your specific interests, it's important to be flexible when you're approaching professors.
- Research more than one professor. We recommend that you compile a list of at least three to five before you start contacting them.
- As you research professors, look for instructions for contacting them about possible research opportunities. If they have posted instructions, follow them. Otherwise, we recommend that you email them to ask for an opportunity to discuss your research interests.



Write the Email

The purpose of the email is to get a response and an opportunity to meet with the recipient to discuss your research interests further. Do not include information that does not directly serve that purpose.

We suggest a three-paragraph format similar to the following:

Paragraph 1: About You

- Why do you want to do research?
- What type of research do you want to do?
- Do you have any background that is directly relevant to the research?
- Why does this matter to you? How will getting involved in research of this type help you get closer to whatever academic, career and personal goals you might have?



Paragraph 2: About the Professor

- Why did you choose them as a good fit for your research interests?
- Give one or two specific examples from the research you have done on them, why you found them compelling, and how they fit with your goals.

Paragraph 3: Ask for an Appointment

- State your desire to meet with them to discuss your research interests and the possibility of conducting research under their guidance.
- Briefly include days/times that you're available (e.g., Monday through Wednesday from 11–4, and all day Friday)
- Your full name and contact information.

Consider the following

- The email should contain enough information to give them a reason to respond without being tediously long.
- Rigorously edit and proofread the email to make sure it's complete, concise and error-free. Consider making an appointment with the [Writing Center](#) for help. If you would like additional assistance, schedule an appointment with a [UROP Advisor](#). 
- Imagine that you are the faculty member reading your email: What is your reaction? Do you want to respond? Did the student effectively connect my research to their interests?
- Faculty are most interested in working with students who demonstrate passion, curiosity and motivation. Having been undergraduates themselves, they recognize that you don't have a lot of relevant knowledge or experience.
- Watch UROP's [Guide to Emailing Faculty video](#) for more information. 
- Send a follow-up email after a week or so if you haven't received a response.
- Be sure to prepare before meeting with a professor: research them further, think of questions to ask, and be prepared to answer their questions openly and thoroughly.