Get Involved in Research: Reaching Out

THE DO’s and DON’Ts

DO:

● Have an informative subject line
● Be clear & concise (not too long!)
● Include your name, year, major and UID in the email
● Include an unofficial transcript and resume or CV
● Proofread for grammatical issues and other silly mistakes
● Use your University email address. It is professional and will not get lost in spam.
● Be formal in your writing as well as opening/ closing statements
  ○ Dear Dr. XX ; Sincerely, Your Name
  ○ Note, if you are unsure of the salutation, check the faculty page.
● When applying for an advertised opening:
  ○ Address any qualifications the professor is looking for
  ○ Demonstrate your experience
● When inquiring about a potential research opportunity:
  ○ State specifically your interest in that research group (you should read the lab’s website and look through previously published work)
  ○ Explain why research is important for your goals and what you hope to get out of the experience.
  ○ Demonstrate what skills or knowledge you will bring to the lab
  ○ Ask to schedule a meeting or say that you will be coming to office hours

DO NOT:

● Include slang, abbreviations, or emojis
● Address the professor as ‘Mr., Mrs., or Miss’
● Send a generic email to multiple labs or professors
● Be impatient. Wait at least 3 working days before following up.
GENERAL FORMAT:

Typically, your email will have three parts:
1. Introduce yourself and provide some information about future academic/career goals.
2. Tell them why you are contacting them. Be specific. Why do you want to work on their research? Do your homework (read their website, check out a recent publication) – Faculty know a template email when they see one.
3. Request a meeting to discuss research opportunities and thank them for their time.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD EMAILS:
(in bold is the text you fill in with details specific to you)

Subject: Meeting to discuss undergraduate research opportunities in topic

Dear Dr. Professor,

I am a year student at university majoring in major. How you found out about the professor's research. Expression of interest in specific paper or topic. I would appreciate the chance to talk with you about your research in topic of interest and about possible undergraduate opportunities in your lab.

My experience in research experience or class, confirmed my intention to develop my research skills and goal. I know you are very busy. We could schedule an appointment or I can drop by your office hours on day and time.

I have attached my resume and unofficial transcript. Please let me know if there is any other information I can provide. I look forward to talking to you soon.

Best,

Name

Subject: Possible undergraduate research opportunities

Dear Dr. Professor,

I am a (year, major) at (university) and I am writing to ask about opportunities for undergraduate research in your lab beginning (time period). I have conducted
undergraduate research on (topic) with (names) in (program or class). (Expression of interest in the topic). I would like to continue a path of research on (topic) and would ultimately allow me to (career goal). I am especially interested in your previous work on (describe a paper or talk).

I have attached my CV and unofficial transcript to this e-mail, but if there is additional information that I have not included that you would like, I would be happy to provide it to you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ambitious Student

Email address

Additional Information:

- How to Email a Research Professor, Undergraduate Research Opportunities, University of Santa Cruz
- RE: Your Recent Email to Your Professor, Inside Higher Ed
- How to Email Your Professor, Wellesley College Project on Social Computing
- How to Cold Email a Professor, Sarah Bhattacharjee, University of California, Berkeley