

How to Craft an Email to a Potential Research Mentor

1. Do Your Research First

Before emailing, learn about the faculty member:

- Review their **department webpage**, **recent publications**, and **current projects**
- Identify their **specific research interests** (not just broad topics)
- Note any techniques, models, or questions their lab focuses on

This shows respect for their time and helps you write a targeted, thoughtful message.

2. Introduce Yourself Briefly

Start with a short introduction:

- Your name
- Your current program, year, or institution
- Your academic or career goals (briefly)

Keep this concise—one or two sentences is enough.

3. Explain Why Their Research Interests You

This is the most important part of the email:

- Mention **specific aspects** of their research
- Explain *why* it resonates with you (coursework, experiences, career goals)
- Avoid generic statements like “I find your work interesting”

Specificity makes your email stand out.

4. Share Ideas or Interests That Align With Their Work

Demonstrate intellectual engagement by:

- Briefly mentioning **research questions, techniques, or topics** you’re curious about
- Connecting your interests to their **current or past projects**
- Showing openness to learning rather than presenting yourself as an expert

This signals motivation and readiness for mentorship.

5. Close Professionally

End by:

- Thanking them for their time and consideration
- Expressing interest in the opportunity to discuss their work further
- Mentioning that your **CV is attached**

Always keep the tone respectful and appreciative.

6. Attach Your CV

Your CV should be:

- Clearly named (e.g., *FirstName_LastName_CV.pdf*)
- Focused on education, coursework, research experience, and relevant skills

7. Other useful tips

- Keep the email to **1 page or less**
- Use a **professional subject line**
- Address the faculty member formally unless told otherwise

- If no response, a **polite follow-up after 1–2 weeks** is acceptable

Example email

Subject: Prospective Research Opportunity Inquiry

Dear Dr. [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a [your year/program] at [your institution]. I am very interested in pursuing research opportunities that will allow me to further develop my skills and deepen my understanding of [general area of interest].

I have spent time reviewing your work on [specific research topic or project], and I am particularly interested in your research on [specific aspect]. Your approach to [method, population, question, or theme] aligns closely with my academic interests and long-term goals in [medicine/research/public health, etc.].

I am especially interested in exploring questions related to [brief idea or topic] and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to projects that align with your research goals. I am eager to learn and would value the chance to gain experience under your mentorship.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I have attached my CV for your reference and would be grateful for the opportunity to speak with you further. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Program / Year]
[Your Institution]
[Your Email Address]