Writing a Professional Email

The following are some sample email templates and best practices to follow when reaching out to faculty members and researchers alike regarding potential undergraduate research opportunities. While it is always best to craft your own personal message, these examples should help you formulate what to include in your email.

## **Tips to keep in mind**

Be concise – Narrow your email to essential information, lengthy emails, no matter how well written, will often get ignored. Save the details for follow-up emails and/or conversations.

Be reasonable – When reaching out to a prospective mentor, requesting for a meetup to discuss their research is reasonable. Asking to join his/her lab or become his/her research assistant is a stretch before you’ve had a conversation, this would allow both of you to assess whether this is a good fit.

Be formal – Even if you have spoken with this person before, it’s important to always maintain a formal tone and use formal language in an initial email to faculty or professionals. You never know whether your email might be shared or forwarded, so err on the side of formality.

Be sincere and genuine – False flattery will not get you far. Only reach out to faculty or other contacts that you have a genuine interest in working with, and never exaggerate or misrepresent your interests.

Be patient – Don’t expect an instant response. If you don’t receive a response within two weeks it' always a good idea to send a follow-up email. For the second email, simply resend the same email content, and avoid stating that you’re emailing a second time because you did not receive a response to your first email, as some people may find this offensive.

## **Anatomy of a good email**

Dear Professor …..... (*Use professor’s proper title and last name – shows respect)*

• Who you are *(Year, major)*

• What you are interested in *(specific research problem, field, gaining experience with skill etc.)*

• Why you are interested in this specific mentor or research area?

• Indicate availability *(e.g. 10 hr. /week for a year? For 199 units?)*

• Why you? What skills do you have and what proof do you have that you possess these skills? *(Classes you have taken, prior experiences etc.)*

• Thank them for listening sincerely (Best Regards, etc.),

Your full name

Your contact info

## **Sample E-mail**

Subject: Undergraduate Research Opportunities

Dear Professor/ Dr. Last Name of the Mentor

My name is *(Your name)* and I am *(first/second/etc.)* year student at the Minnesota State University Mankato. I am interested in *(specific research problems and fields).* I have reviewed your faculty profile and am interested in the work that you have done. *(Mention how this work aligns with your interest, Additional Information about the topic, Articles).*

I would like to set up a meeting to discuss your research interests and possible opportunities for mentorship.

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

Mav mail address