

How to Email a Faculty about Research Opportunities



Tone

Your initial email should be formal and professional. You want to avoid using casual language (no slang or text talk). Also avoid emojis or an overindulgence of exclamation points. You can convey your enthusiasm without 😊!!! Ultimately, be sincere. You are more likely to get a response if you convey a genuine interest.

Length

Be brief. The email should include three parts:

- 1) Introduce yourself and provide some information about future academic/career goals. For example, are you majoring in History and plan to attend graduate school? Or are you majoring in Public Health and plan to pursue medical school?
- 2) Tell them why you are contacting them. Be specific. Why do you want to work on their research? Do your homework before you send the email. Faculty know a template email when they see one.
- 3) Request a meeting to discuss research opportunities and thank them for their time.

Email Account

Your email should come from your USC student account (@email.sc.edu). Gmail and Yahoo accounts tend to get caught in the spam filter.

Subject Line

A subject line provides the reader with an introduction to the email. This will be the first item they read from you. Never leave the subject blank. Use this as an opportunity to signal to them what your email is about. For example, "Request for meeting regarding research opportunity," "Seeking Research Experience," or simply "Research Opportunity."



Salutation

Never start a professional email with "Hey" or "Hi." Review their professional website or Curriculum Vita (CV) to verify their education background. For example, if they have a PhD or MD, you will want to address them as "Dr." If you are not sure, "Professor" is appropriate.

Signature Block

A what? A signature block provides your reader with a brief snapshot of who you are academically. Information should include your first and last name, college and major, graduation year, email, and phone. Avoid quotes or images.



Resume

Do you have a resume that highlights your academic, volunteer, and work experiences? If so, attach it as a pdf to the email. Be sure to make a note that it is attached so the reader does not miss it. Been meaning to create or update your resume? A resume is not required when you send the initial email, but one may be requested at a later time. Good to get a start on it now. Head over to the Career Center and have them get you started. They are located in Thomas Cooper Library, 5th floors. Drop-in hours, Monday-Friday from 1-4 pm.

Handout resource

Nordquist, R. (n.d.). *How to Write a Professional Email*. Retrieved from grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/profemails.htm

Example

Subject: Research Opportunity

Dear Dr. **** ***,

I am a rising sophomore majoring in Spanish, minoring in French, and completing USC's Foreign Language Education Certification Program.

I have always been interested in the ways that languages bridge gaps between people and hinder or help their quality of life and relationships. Recently, I became interested in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology as an option for Graduate School.

Recently, your professional profile caught my eye because I believe that early childhood is often the most helpful time to diagnose and treat a language disorder, and also because I love working with children. Your article, *Early Intervention and Prevention Practices*, piqued my curiosity due to its emphasis on field application.

I am interested in learning more about your research and the possibility of assisting you on any current projects. Would you have some time to meet with me to discuss any upcoming opportunities? I am available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. I am also happy to meet at your convenience.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
First Name

First Name and Last Name

College

Major

Class of '

Email

Phone

Did you know?

The Office of Undergraduate Research will review your emails before you send them. Want a second pair of eyes?

Email our@sc.edu and request an edit!