

Once you have researched potential faculty mentors, we recommend that you email them and ask for an opportunity to discuss your research interests with them. We recommend a three-paragraph format similar to the following:

Paragraph 1: About Me

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

Paragraph 2: About the Professor

- Why did I choose them as a good fit for my research interests?
- What research have I done on this professor?
- Give examples from the research you have done on them (e.g. list one or two of their papers that you read and mention something specific that you found compelling).

Paragraph 3: Ask for an appointment

- Briefly include days/times that I'm available (i.e., Monday through Wednesday from 11–4, and all day Friday)
- Contact information

As you're writing this email, it's important to include enough information that the faculty recipients have a reason to respond without being so long that they don't want to read it (keep the paragraphs short). Remember that the purpose of the email is to get a response and an opportunity to meet with them to discuss your research interests further. Information that does not directly serve that purpose can wait to be discussed later.

Plan to contact more than one faculty member; they may not all be accepting students, or one may not be a good fit for you. Also, it's appropriate to send a follow-up after a week or two if you haven't received a response to your email.