



Pro Tips Emailing a Professor

Whether you're asking questions about an assignment or requesting to work in a professor's research lab, it's important to write emails that are direct and detailed.

Writing a General Email

- ✓ **Subject:** Keep it short! Your subject should clearly and concisely explain the purpose of your email to the recipient. In some cases, such as emailing a professor, including your name and course number are also important.
- ✓ **Greeting:** Be sure to introduce yourself, including your full name and any information that may be important to the email recipient. If you are writing to a professor, make sure to include the course you are taking with them. If you are emailing an advisor, student services, or another campus office, be sure to include your EMPL ID number. *Always be sure to address your recipient with the correct title-- Professor or Dr. for professors! Never address a professor by their first name.*
- ✓ **Message:** Write clearly, making sure your questions can be understood. If you have multiple questions, make a list! Remember that some professors teach hundreds of students-- it is better to give more information than not enough! When ending your email, ensure that your expectations from this encounter are clear; for example, are you expecting a response? To be registered for a course? A confirmation of an appointment? End your email with a positive signoff, noting that you are looking forward to whatever is to come next.
- ✓ **Signature:** It is not always clear who you are from your name attached to your email account. Therefore, always end your email with a kind salutation followed by your full name.
- ✓ **Proofread:** Always remember to proofread your email for spelling and grammar mistakes prior to sending. Double-check that you are spelling the recipient's name correctly and including correct information about yourself.

Asking About a Professor's Research

- ✓ **Research your interests.** Use each department's website to find faculty members who you may be interested in working with. Read their webpages and see what information is available about their lab online.
- ✓ **Learn about their work.** Find the faculty member's published research by using library databases. Read what you can, noting what interests you and what questions you have. (Repeat this process with multiple faculty members to try to find the best fit for you.)
- ✓ **Contact the faculty member/lab.** Be sure to write a thorough and formal email, expressing your interest in their work, showing your knowledge about what they do, and requesting an appointment. Be sure to bring a few questions about their work to the meeting-- as well as something to take notes with! *Always be sure to address your recipient with the correct title-- Professor or Dr. for professors! Never address a professor by their first name.*
- ✓ **Follow up with the professor/lab accordingly.** Remember that faculty members are busy, and you may have to send a follow up email or reach out to another professor instead. After your appointment, keep in contact with the professor as requested.

CONTACT US

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SAMPLE EMAILS

Asking a Class-Related Question

Subject: Lab Report 5 Question - CHEM 12107

Message:

Hi Dr. [Professor's Last Name]/Professor [Professor's Last Name],

My name is [Your Name]. I'm currently enrolled in section 7 of your CHEM 121 course (MTh 4PM-5PM). I had a question about our assignment (Lab Report 5) due on Thursday, February 13. You mentioned that we did not need to include the table completed in class in the lab report; I just wanted to confirm this with you. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your response!

Best,
[Your Name]

Inquiring About a Professor's Lab

Subject: Meeting to Discuss Undergraduate Research Opportunities

Message:

Dear Dr. [Professor's Last Name],

I am a junior at Hunter majoring in Human Biology. I first came across your research while finding information on brain development in teenagers for my PSYCH 150 course last semester. Since then, I have been particularly interested in your lab's work regarding the influence of social media use on teens' brain development. I would appreciate the chance to talk with you about your research and about possible undergraduate opportunities in your lab. My experience working with teenagers in educational settings confirms my interest in this field, and I am looking to further develop my research skills. If you are available, I would appreciate if we could meet to discuss this further. I am available on Mondays between 2PM and 5PM, and all day on Fridays. I have attached my resume, and my unofficial transcript is available upon request. Please let me know if there is any other information I can provide. I look forward to talking with you soon!

Best,
[Your Name]

*credit for this email format goes to the University of California, Santa Cruz

C O N T A C T U S

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