

# Mastering the Mentor Email: A Student's Guide

After finding a prospective mentor using the various resources, you will need to reach out using a professional email. You only get **one chance** to make a good first impression.

You have written tons of emails, but do you know how to write a professional email?

## ***1. Craft a subject line that is both informative and engaging.***

A well-crafted subject line that clearly conveys the email's purpose can significantly improve its chances of being read and acted upon.

*Example:* “(Freshman) Undergraduate Student Interested in a Research Opportunity”

## ***2. Open with a polite greeting.***

Because the recipient of the email is likely to be a professional acquaintance you have never met, you should maintain a high level of formality in the email's tone and language.

*Example:* “Dear **Dr. X**”

## ***3. Define your objective with a clear purpose.***

When initiating an email, you should begin by explicitly stating your purpose to ensure clarity and avoid confusion. It is important to make your purpose clear early on in the email and then move into the main text. The key is to keep your introductory email concise, ideally limited to no more than about five sentences.

*Example:* “I am writing to inquire about...”

## ***4. Incorporate a personalized touch in your email to establish a connection with your reader.***

Don't send the exact same form letter to every prospective mentor. Demonstrate a sincere interest by referencing specific aspects of their work, such as a notable feature on their website, or relating it to a conversation you had with a fellow student. Indicate something on their website that caught your eye. Explain how the work they are doing ties into your area(s) of interest. If appropriate, share any courses you have taken that might be applicable to the work they are doing.

## ***5. Use a closing that is both memorable and respectful.***

Prior to concluding your email, express gratitude to your recipient and provide courteous closing remarks as a polite gesture.

*Example:* “Thank you for your consideration” and then follow up with “I look forward to hearing from you”

**6. End with a courteous sign-off that expresses gratitude and professionalism.**

The last step is to choose a suitable closing phrase and include your name. Avoid overly informal closings, such as "best wishes," and opt for a more professional sign-off.

*Example:* “Best regards,” “Sincerely,” “Thank you,”

**7. Boost your credibility with a polished email.**

Before sending your email, ensure to proofread it carefully, checking for any spelling or grammatical errors. Remember that you only get one chance to make a first impression!

**Sample Email to a Prospective Mentor**

To: Professor X

Subject: *(Freshman)* Undergraduate Student Interested in a Research Opportunity

Dear Dr. X,

I am currently a *(freshman)* undergraduate student at the University of Kentucky studying *(major)* on the *(pre-medicine/pre-dental/etc.)* track. I am writing to inquire about a potential research opportunity under your mentorship. After *(investigating various research opportunities on the BIO395 mentor list/UKCOM faculty list/speaking with fellow students/spending time on your website)*, I found the work being completed in your lab on *(XXXX)* of particular interest. I am interested in *(XXXX)* because *(provide reason here)*. Would it be possible to schedule a time to meet with you and discuss research opportunities?

I would be happy to provide my resume and additional information as requested. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
*(your name)*