

Coffee Counsel Presents: How to write effective 1st emails

The Science Communication Lab

CommLab



The information below was written by the [Brandeis Science Communication Lab](#).

What is the goal of this email?

When looking for undergraduate research opportunities, many people find themselves unsure of how to draft a personalized email to a professor. This is your opportunity to make a good first impression with your potential boss. While a good email alone will not be enough to guarantee a successful job search, there are specific steps you can take to improve your chances.

Checklist:

- Use your school email
- Include an informative subject line
- Start with a polite greeting and introduce yourself
- State your credentials (year, area of study)
- Describe your purpose and interest in the opportunity (unique to the lab in question)
- State your funding sources (e.g. fellowships, work study) **not everyone will have this*
- Describe what you can contribute to the lab
- Thank them for their time/consideration
- Include an email signature
- Attach your CV (PDF)

Content Pro-tips:

- Use standard punctuation, fonts, and colors.
- Make your email concise and pertinent. PIs receive many emails every day. Get to the point quickly and clearly.
- Identify a meaningful purpose for you to engage in research that is more than just something that “will be great for me” or “my career” or “I need this (or think I do) for medical/dental school.”
- Be open to any research opportunity. You may start off working menial tasks, as part of a larger group, and/or under close supervision. Be patient as this is all part of the learning process.
- If you cite a paper as part of your “lab interest” make sure you can discuss it with the professor.
- Describe your level of commitment (how many hours/week you are available to work in the lab, if you are able to stay over summers, and if you are interested in potentially doing an honors thesis).

Before you click “Send”:

Read through your email out loud one more time.

- Did you spell the professor’s name correctly?
- Are there any typos?
- Does this sound like you?
- Did you attach your CV?

After you click “Send”:

- Be patient. Most PIs receive dozens of requests every semester. If they don’t immediately answer within the week, follow-up with a reminder email. (see back page)
- Be resilient. While everyone fails, a smaller number keep getting up and trying again. If a professor doesn’t email you back, make a CommLab appointment to help figure out why. <https://brandeis.mywconline.com/>



No Response Email Template

SUBJECT: Student Research Position Request

Dear Prof. [Name],

My name is [Name] and I recently emailed you regarding a potential position as an undergraduate researcher in your lab. As I mentioned in my previous email, I am a [year and major] interested in [why you want to join this specific lab.]

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the research positions available in your lab. Attached is a copy of my CV, but please let me know if there are any additional materials I can provide to facilitate this process. Thank you for your time and consideration; I look forward for your reply.

Best,

My Name

Brandeis University, class of 'XX

818-555-1234

my.school.email@Brandeis.edu