



UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH AND INQUIRY
Florida Atlantic University

How to Contact Professors

Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry

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Find a Mentor: Where do I look?

- Departmental Websites
 - Review FAU faculty bios for their research interests and recent publications
 - Don't limit yourself to the department in your major, cross-disciplinary research is common and your interests can be found in a variety of departments
- FAU Research Hub App
 - <https://app.teamsparx.com/auth>
- FAU Experts
 - <http://www.fau.edu/experts/>

What if you don't know who to contact?

- Talk to a professor whose class you're in
 - Preferably in the same discipline as what you are trying to research
 - They might offer you a research opportunity or give you a colleague of theirs to contact

Don't limit yourself to a single method, try multiple methods

Before E-mailing Potential Mentors

- If you're meeting with a current professor you can probably go to office hours – they love hearing from students!
- For professors who you do not know, prior to e-mailing them read a few of their recent publications
 - Why? It shows scholarly interest and sets you apart “less dedicated” students
 - It's OK if you don't understand everything, you just want a general understanding of what they do
 - Pick out 1-2 specific details about their papers that you had questions about for your e-mail

E-mailing Potential Mentors

- Send from your FAU e-mail address

Include:

- Appropriate titles (Professor or Dr.)
- Name, major, current year in college
- Knowledge of your professor's research and why you're interested in their work
- Ask to set up a meeting
 - Ask for a meeting to discuss their research/research in the field generally, rather than outright asking to be THEIR research student
 - Offer 2-3 times during the week when you're available OR offer to meet during their office hours

The good, bad, and unprofessional

pokemonslayer@gmail.com,

Let me in your lab

Hi Paul, whats up? i am a student who wants to get involved in research. I am a psych student and saw that u do resarch in psych.

How can i get involved in your lab?

Thanks dawg,
Jay

The good, bad, and unprofessional

Hello Dr. [redacted]

My name is [redacted] I am a highly diligent and motivated student. I have just completed my first year at FAU and some of my classes began to pique my interest in psychology research.

I have taken General Psychology, Human Development, and Cognition so far and found that I am highly interested in learning more about research in psychology, particularly in close relationships and personality.

I took Psych of Human Development with Karin Machluf as my instructor this past semester, and she suggested I contact you given my particular research interests.

After reading some of the research you have done, I was especially interested in the paper you wrote, "Caring about carelessness: Participant inattention and its effects on research." I found it fascinating how your findings can impact the research done on human subjects and is not limited to research done in psychology. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss your research. I am available to meet with you most Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays this summer. Please let me know what works for you.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

[redacted]
FAU Student

What if they don't respond?

- Feel free to send a follow-up e-mail after 2-3 weeks and continue to e-mail other potential mentors too
 - How? Forward them the previous e-mail with a new e-mail re-stating what you are asking
 - “I e-mailed you two weeks ago about X, so I’m following up to see if you would be available to meet to discuss your research in Y”
- If they still don't respond, try another professor
- Keep in mind:
 - Don't e-mail them during busy times (i.e. midterm and finals week)
 - Understand they have busy schedules and won't get back to you immediately

When They Reply

- Reply back ASAP before their schedule changes again
- If they said yes 😊
 - Thank them for their time & finalize a meeting time/place
- If they said no 😞
 - Don't be discouraged
 - Thank them for their time and tell them you're interested in any future opportunities that arise
 - Ask if they know other colleagues who would be available to chat with you
 - Continue in your search for a mentor

Be Prepared

- Be on time & dress to impress!
- Be ready to discuss your goals or interests (i.e. career aspirations and/or research interests)
- Be ready to discuss the potential mentor's research
- Make sure you ask about expectations and time commitment
 - Prior to the meeting, consider how much time you think you can dedicate to research and make sure this aligns with the professor's expectations
 - Some mentors will be more flexible than others
- It's OK if you don't know what you want to research
 - You can ask general questions about research

Be Prepared (continued)

- Beforehand consider how you can/want to document your research experiences:
 - Directed-Independent Study (DIS)
 - Directed-Independent Research (DIR)
 - Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)
 - Honors Thesis
 - Volunteer Basis
 - Paid Positions – Rare
 - Etc...
- Bring these opportunities up to the potential mentor/current mentor when you feel it's appropriate

Final Tips

- Do not be nervous or intimidated to talk to professors
 - Most professors WANT to help students succeed
 - If you encounter a negative professor do not be discouraged, in hindsight they would not have made a good mentor
- It might take time to find the right research project
- It is OK if you meet a potential mentor and decide you do not want to work with them
 - You will only be dedicated to a research project if you can work well with the professor and enjoy the topic
- This is not the ONLY way to get involved, so feel free to look for unique opportunities on your own too

Reach Out!

- If you are having difficulties finding a mentor or have any more questions feel free to reach out to the OURI staff and Peer Mentors!
- If you want help writing up an e-mail, preparing for a meeting, or anything else related to engagement in research or creative activities feel free to reach out too!
 - Peer Mentors frequently help students with these things
- Find us at:
 - http://www.fau.edu/ouri/peermentor_program.php
- **We look forward to hearing from you!**

Contact Information



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