**Best Practices for Contacting Faculty for Research Positions**

Below is an example email. This is not necessarily a one size fits all template. You should develop a unique email but include the similar information/elements. Examples and other suggested text is include in the parentheses.

[Address the faculty as Dear/Hello Dr. X or Professor X. Don’t use “hey”]

Dear Dr. X,

[Introduce yourself}

*My name is X. I am an undergraduate at X institution and majoring in X.*

[State why you are contacting the professor]

*I am currently looking for an opportunity to conduct research in the field of X (pharmacology, neurobiology, etc.) and have submitted an application for the BUILD/ RISE/MARC program. I am looking to gain some research experience since I am interested in pursuing [describe your educational goal]. (If you already have research experience: I have some prior research experience in X and am looking to expand my research experience.)*

[Describe what you already know about the professor’s research]

*Your recent publication/work investigating X (ex. the effects of nicotine exposure in adolescent rats) really interested me because I have an interest in X (ex. the neurobiology of drug addiction).*

[Describe your educational and career goal]

*I plan to pursue doctoral degree after completing my undergraduate degree. My long-term goals are to be research/faculty member in the field of X and research experience in your lab will help me to develop/further develop the skills needed to a research career.*

[Ask whether professor is interested and available to take on a trainee and request for a meeting to find out more about the professor’s research]

*I would like to meet with you at your convenience to discuss about the possibility of joining your research lab and be your mentee in [MARC/RISE/BUILD – if you have a preference].*

[Let professor know how to contact you, thank for his/her time, and sign off with your full name]

*Please feel free to contact me via X (email/phone) if you have any question. Thank you for your time and consideration.*

*Sincerely,*

*Your Full Name*

**Some Do’s and Don’ts**

**Do’s:**

* Visit the faculty’s website and read up on his/her research. Also, if you really are interested in his/her work, read the last 1-2 publications of the faculty you interested in working with to familiarize yourself their current research. Add a specific finding that you found interesting or made the connection with their research and the bigger picture (Ex. Your finding that adolescent rats are more susceptible to the rewarding effects of nicotine than adults, highlights the vulnerability of the developing brain to the effects of nicotine. This interests me because many of my peers use vaporizers believing they are a safer alternative to cigarettes.)
* In your email explain why you are interested in their research and how working in their lab will help you achieve your goal (i.e. graduate school, a research career in X field, learning more about research in field X, new research techniques, better understanding of the research process).
* If you have any special skills or techniques you have learned during your previous research experience that might be useful or relevant to the faculty’s current research, include that in the email.
* If you have prior research experience in a different field, you can discuss you are familiar working in a lab and how this will aid you in learning a new project.
* Discuss courses that might be relevant or provide a foundation for the faculty’s research area. Include your grades in these courses if they are A’s.
* Be succinct in your email, no more than a couple of paragraphs, but provide enough relevant information so the faculty you are contacting can assess that you would be a good candidate to consider. Choose your words carefully.

**Don’ts**

* Do not be casual with your language. No lol’s, omg’s, or slang terms. Be formal and polite.
* Do not be to forward or brag about your accomplishments.
* Check your grammar and spelling before sending. Have a peer review your email.
* Make sure you can articulate or correctly summarize their research. Incorrectly interpreting their research is a red flag.
* Do not use their campus faculty profile as a reference for their current research projects. These can be out of date and make you appear lazy. Rather, look over their profile and the last couple publications to get a sense of their current research areas/interests, which demonstrates initiative.
* Don’t use terms in the field incorrectly.