

Tips for Making Contact with a Potential Faculty Research Advisor

1. Be aware of the recruitment timeline and when faculty will know if they have openings. Align your outreach with the application timeline and review process.
2. Use an appropriate salutation. Identify yourself in a professional manner. Avoid nicknames or unprofessional names in your email address.
3. Give your email a descriptive subject line.
4. Do not "mass email" and bcc multiple faculty members. The email to a specific faculty member should be personalized and show that you are familiar with their work/research and the university. Address them with their appropriate title.
5. Introduce yourself with something of interest. Let them know right away why they might be interested in you. Indicate your interest in applying to the doctoral program or that your application has been submitted. Be concise.
6. Keep messages short and to the point. Don't ask if you're admissible. Do not send a lengthy email with attachments. Keep it to a short paragraph or bullet point list highlighting your main accomplishments and why they should consider you for their research project. If they are interested, they will reach out to request more information.
7. Do your research first, i.e. what research are they doing? Does it match your research? Don't ask them if your research is in line with what you are doing...you should know this already based on your research of them. Indicate how your interests align and what you could bring to the program/their research.
8. Be specific. For example, ask for information that may better help you to understand their work and if it is a good fit with your goals. Or, ask to schedule a meeting (suggest dates/times you are available) and indicate you will adjust based on their availability.
9. Indicate that you will follow up with them. Provide an alternative way for the person to contact you. Ask if they would prefer some other form of communication. Include a phone number where they can reach you. Suggest a Zoom appointment.
10. Check for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Be polite. Be honest. Be professional. Attach your CV/resume.
11. If they are difficult to reach, send a 2nd email (after 2 weeks) and mention the 1st email. Suggest that you are willing to meet at their availability. It can take different faculty varying amounts of time to get back to a student. It's your responsibility to attempt to make a connection. Again, if they are interested, they will follow up. A third email is not recommended. Move on to other faculty. Be patient.
12. Use an appropriate/professional closing and signature. Make sure the name on your application matches the name in your correspondence.