

Cold Emailing Guide



Generic Email Template

Hello Dr. [Last Name],

I hope you are doing well. My name is [Your Name], and I am an undergraduate student at the University of [] studying [your program or major]. I am reaching out to express my interest in getting involved in research within your lab.

I recently came across your work on [specific topic, paper, or project], and I was particularly interested in [one clear reason such as the method, question, or application]. I am eager to gain hands-on research experience and would appreciate the opportunity to contribute as a volunteer research assistant or through an independent project, if possible.

I bring experience in [brief skills such as data analysis, lab techniques, programming, or literature reviews], and I am highly motivated to learn new methods and contribute meaningfully to ongoing research. I have attached my resume or CV and transcript for your reference. I would be grateful for the opportunity to speak further or to learn whether there may be space in your lab now or in the future.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Program and Year]
University of []
[Your Email]
[LinkedIn or portfolio if relevant]

Tips & Tricks

Subject Line

- Keep it clear, confident, and professional. This is your first impression, so make it count.
Let them know who you are and why you are reaching out right away.
- For example, [University] Undergraduate Seeking Research Experience in [Lab Name]

- Avoid using email markers like “URGENT” or vague subject lines. They do not help and can turn faculty off.

Opening Paragraph

- Use the professor’s correct title and double-check the spelling of their name. This shows respect and care. Introduce yourself and your program immediately so they know where you are coming from.
- Do not explain your life story. Faculty decide whether to keep reading within the first two lines, so make those lines clear, factual, and confident. Think of this as setting the stage, not telling the whole story.

Middle Paragraph (Interest in Their Work)

- Mention one specific project, paper, or research theme from their lab. This shows that your email is intentional and not copy pasted. Focus on curiosity rather than expertise. You are not expected to know everything.
- Use language like “I was particularly interested in...” Instead of “I am passionate about...”
- Curiosity sounds thoughtful and professional. Passion without evidence often sounds generic.

Skills Paragraph

- List skills you actually have, even if they feel basic. Everyone starts somewhere. It is completely okay to be early-stage. Labs expect to teach undergraduates.
- Frame your skills in terms of how you can contribute, not what you hope to gain. For example, “I can assist with data cleaning, participant scheduling, and literature reviews.”
- This shows that you understand the realities of research work and are ready to help.

Closing Paragraph

- Ask clearly and politely. Do not hint or dance around the ask. Signal flexibility and openness.
- Faculty are more likely to respond when you give them an easy out. For example, “I would appreciate the opportunity to learn whether there may be space now or in the future.”
- This removes pressure while keeping the door open.

Attachments

- Always attach your updated CV or resume unless explicitly told not to. Attach your transcript unless they say otherwise.
- Name your files professionally so they are easy to find and save. Some examples include FirstLast_CV.pdf, and FirstLast_Transcript.pdf
- These small details show your professionalism.

Follow-Up

- Wait 10 to 14 days before following up. Faculty are busy and missed emails happen.
Send only one follow-up.
- Reply to the same email thread rather than starting a new one. This keeps everything in one place and makes it easier for them to respond.

Good Luck! We’re rooting for you!

Sincerely, the Under the Scope BC Team