

CONTACTING POTENTIAL MENTORS*

While each request you send will be personalized to the specific mentor you would like to speak with, keep these basic components in mind while crafting your email. Additionally, you may not want to immediately request mentoring from someone you are contacting for the first time - requesting an initial meeting to determine if there is a potential mentoring fit, may garner more positive results and higher response rates. Remember to keep your entire message succinct.

1. Introduce Yourself

If you are reaching out to someone who you have not spoken to before, go for an introduction, along with any commonalities, specific interests, or discussion points. Try to make a quick connection to spark their interest in meeting with you. If you were referred to your potential mentor by a peer, professor, staff member, or another individual in your network, mention their name and referral here.

2. Clearly Describe Your Goals

This is where your preparation using the [Personal SWOT Analysis](#) and [Pre-Mentoring Reflection for Mentees](#) will come in handy. These documents will help you articulate exactly what you are seeking from a mentor and for what purpose. Examples for what you are looking for from a mentoring relationship include navigating departmental politics, gaining lab experience, completing a thesis, career transition advice, assistance with graduate school applications, and more.

3. Demonstrate Your Research

Briefly mention why you believe your potential mentor would be a good fit for the relationship; perhaps they have been in your department longer or their research area aligns with your own. The point of this short section is to demonstrate that you have thought in detail about who you would like your mentor to be, and are not simply selecting them randomly.

A Note on Follow-Up:

If you don't hear back within two to three weeks, send a follow-up email. If you do not hear back after a few weeks, you need to assume that they do not have the time to meet with you right now. It is time to focus on others on your list of potential mentors.

→ [MENTOR.UIOWA.EDU](https://mentor.uiowa.edu)

* Adapted from [It's Your Yale](#)

4. Display Your Motivation

Make it clear to your potential mentor that you're ready to commit the time, energy, and effort needed to properly invest in the mentoring relationship and make full use of their guidance.

5. Schedule a First Meeting

Ask your potential mentor if they can make time for a conversation, about thirty minutes to an hour in length, with you about entering into a mentoring relationship. Provide two specific time frames which work within your schedule to make checking calendars easier.

6. Respect Their Time

Most people who are asked to become mentors are highly successful, and therefore, in high demand. It is important for you to acknowledge that reality and clearly express how much you appreciate their consideration of your ask. This is also a way to provide a graceful "out" for those who may decline your request.

7. Thank Them

After your meeting, send your potential mentor another email thanking them for their time and for the conversation.

Reaching Out To Someone You Know - Email Example

Dear Dr. Haider,

Over the past semester, I have greatly enjoyed your psychology seminar course – the clinical anecdotes that you shared were always interesting, particularly those focused on assisting clients with trauma recovery through holistic techniques. As I approach my junior year, I am planning to pursue an undergraduate honors thesis focused on how meditation can aid the recovery of middle-aged patients with complex medical trauma. After graduation, I plan on becoming a clinical psychologist specializing in this area of treatment, and sharing my own anecdotes with students someday as a professor.

To achieve this goal, I have to finish my thesis, and I need a mentor to support me throughout this process. This kind of relationship would involve assisting me with navigating the IRB, structuring my research, and writing up my findings. Would you be available for about 45 minutes sometime within the next month to discuss my current research goals, as well as if acting as a research mentor was something you are interested in? I am typically available on Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings, although please let me know what days/times work best for you.

I know that your schedule is busy, so if it simply isn't possible to balance mentoring alongside your other commitments I understand. Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to our future conversations!

All best,

Radhika Singh

BS in Psychology and Pre-Medicine | University of Iowa Honors Class of 2022

Reaching Out to Someone You Don't Know (Referral, New Contact, etc.)

Dear Masatoshi,

My name is Emily Simpson, and I am currently a fourth-year English student here at the University of Iowa. Dr. Kowalski in the department recommended that I contact you, as I am seeking out guidance from graduate students about navigating the graduate application process and the pros/cons of taking a gap year. She mentioned that you were an expert in this area and had even led a discussion circle for other students with my inquiries last year.

Would you be able to meet for about 30 minutes sometime within the next two weeks to discuss your own experiences with graduate school applications and timelines? I am usually available Monday afternoons and Wednesdays all day, but please let me know what days/times work best on your end, as my schedule is flexible.

I understand if your schedule is busy, so if this isn't doable I understand. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Best regards,

Emily Simpson

BA in English and Creative Writing | University of Iowa Class of 2021