

PHYS 220 – Feedback from Physics Professors on the D&I Committee
Winter 2019

Department faculty tend to use email as a mode of communication, and this can be a good way to reach out to a professor when inquiring about possible research with them. Below are 10 general suggestions to help you get started. Once you send the email, make sure to check for a response regularly (each day). If you do hear back from the professor, you want to reply to them in a timely fashion.

1. **Be conscious of length.** There should be a balance between answering the prompts – getting to the point and showcasing your abilities and passion. If you have more than a couple of paragraphs to write, try putting the information in an attachment (as part of a CV) or suggest discussing details in a face-to-face meeting.
2. **List only the most relevant classes** in your email. No need to list all of them. Consider sending a full list in an attached CV.
3. **Be brief and specific** about why you are interested in working with the group. Try to capture the information in about 2 sentences. It is okay to show that you are familiar with the research (reading their webpage), but be specific in *why* you are interested in working in that lab. Have you read about the subtopic? Was the topic covered in a class you particularly enjoyed? Do you have a career plan for which the experience would be ideal?
4. **It is also okay if you don't know** what their research is, but want to know more. Asking to learn more in an in-person meeting is a great way in the door.
5. **Focus on your interests**, rather than what the professor does. For example, write “I am interested in cosmic origins because...” rather than “I know you study cosmic origins”.
6. **Have someone else** (a mentor or friend) read your email for typos, spelling, formatting (use multiple paragraphs), formality and tone.
7. **Be brief, but specific in the skills** and experiences you have. If you have previous experience in a STEM field or educational setting, state it. If not, show how any other jobs you may have held are relevant. Are you well organized from previous work in an office? Do you have basic computer skills from a course you took? Do you work well in a group setting because of playing team sports?
8. **Be open with meeting times.** Suggest at least 3 times that are between 9am-5pm during the weekdays.
9. **Relate the experience you hope to** gain in the lab to how it will advance your goals while at Cal Poly, and beyond in your career.
10. **Send the message from** your official Cal Poly email account. There is no need to add your contact email address at the bottom of the letter.