

HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

- Look at department websites. Academic departments have faculty profiles that include background and research foci.
- The [REAL portal](#) has a listing of faculty looking for research assistants
- Contact the undergraduate advisor for the department.
- Once you've found professors you're interested in, prioritize based on your preference, then email them one by one.
- Follow an email up with a telephone call, follow a telephone call with an office visit.
- Be assertive! You are not the only student looking for a mentor—it's very competitive.
- Don't expect the professor to find you, YOU must be motivated and find him or her.

TIPS ON HOW TO CONTACT A POTENTIAL FACULTY MENTOR

When you write a cover letter to your preferred mentor, the professor will be most interested in why you want to work with him/her. It is true that some will just look at your GPA (do not lie about your GPA — they will check), but most people want someone passionate about their research. So read a few papers, look through the faculty member's information on their department page, read their web page, etc. Other things to keep in mind when reaching out to a potential mentor:

- Make sure to provide up-to-date contact information.
- Always be courteous and formal. Double-check your spelling and grammar; always use correct, standard English in your emails.
- Look up the professor's title and refer to him/her by that title. It will typically be as "Dr." or "Professor" + their last name.
- Keep it short and direct, but include all necessary information.
- If you don't hear back right away, wait a week before sending a follow up. Don't wait much longer, or you won't seem committed.

Apply to one position at a time. Then wait a week before sending a follow-up. If you still hear nothing, you can apply to work with someone else. If you really want to work with a particular professor, you may write an email explaining that you're following up on your previous email and wanted to know if you should start applying to other positions.

About half of the FMP students usually find their mentors on their own. Any UC San Diego professor, including those in the School of Medicine, Skaggs School of Pharmacy, and the Rady School can supervise a 199. A few affiliates, such as the Preuss School, VA hospital, and Sanford Burnham Research Institute have some researchers who have teaching privileges at UCSD, but not everyone at these

institutions will, so be sure to check. The professor does not need to be tenured or tenure-track. Lecturers who are under contract (who have what is called “security of employment” (SOE) or senior lecturers) might also be able to be your mentor, but you will need to check with their respective departments. Graduate students and industry partners cannot serve as a mentor.

The faculty member will most likely want to interview you before deciding on the mentorship. In the interview, be sure to clarify your hours, duties, and the professor’s expectations. Ask how much independence you will have and what you will be expected to produce (a paper, report, etc.) beyond just FMP’s requirements. If you do not think you can fulfill the expectations, you can say “no.” Remember that you are making a big commitment and the professor is counting on you. Once you agree to work in the lab or engage in the project, you are committed.

If you get multiple offers, remember that you must choose one. Make sure to respond to both professors.

SAMPLE E-MAIL TO A PROFESSOR

Dear **Professor OR Dr. X:**

My name is **Name**, and I have recently decided to participate in the Faculty Mentor Program. An important component of the program is a two-quarter faculty mentorship during winter and spring quarters 2022. I am very interested in becoming involved in research in **Subject Area**. I am a **X** year student with a GPA of **X**. I have taken **Relevant Courses and Additional Relevant Experiences (brief)**. My goal is to **Goal-brief**. I am aware of the commitment required to complete a two-quarter research project and I am confident that I will fulfill it. I am interested in your project on **brief project description**. Your work interests me because **briefly state why the professor’s work interests you**. I would like to get involved in research in this area because it will help me to better prepare for **Your Professional Goals**.

Would it be possible to meet with you to further discuss your project and my possible involvement in it? I am available at your earliest convenience. For more information about the structure and requirements of the Faculty Mentor Program, please contact Jason Avalos, Program Coordinator at jmavalosmorfin@ucsd.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your email address

Your phone number