

HOW TO WRITE YOUR FIRST E-MAIL TO A GRADUATE PROFESSOR

The first e-mail you send to a graduate professor is the initial contact you will have with him or her. As such, **it should be well-written, to the point, and peer-reviewed/edited**. Most professors are very helpful and happy to help interested students understand more about the program or the professors' particular research interests.

Once you have sent the e-mail, allow up to a week for a response before you send another one. The most common reason the professors do not respond so quickly is because they are very busy with conferences, research or travel, not because they don't want to talk to you.

WHAT DO I INCLUDE?

- A subject in the subject line
- Who you are (an undergraduate student) (Don't include your name at the beginning; they will see it at the end.)
- What you are studying
- Your interest in either:
 - Learning more about the graduate program at the specific university
 - The professor's research projects
- Specific, yet simple questions
- A "thank you" sentence
- Your name
- Your E-mail
- Your phone number

OTHER HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

- Make sure your e-mail address is professional and appropriate. If in doubt, use your *@byui.edu* address.
- After sending a few e-mails back and forth, ask to call them and discuss more in detail over the phone.
- Send an e-mail or two to other graduate students in the program, asking them about their experience either working with the professors or the program in general.

SAMPLE E-MAILS

Emphasis on the graduate program

Dr. _____,

I am an undergraduate student at Brigham Young University-Idaho studying geology. I plan to graduate with a B.S. in Geology next spring and would like to know a little more about the M.S in Geology program at the University of Colorado. With an emphasis in geophysics, I am interested to know what courses you would recommend taking during my first two semesters. In addition, do most of the field work courses occur during the summer or would I be able to have an internship during that time?

Thank you,

John Doe
johndoe@byui.edu
(555)555-5555

Emphasis on their research projects

Dr. _____,

I am an undergraduate student at Brigham Young University-Idaho studying geology with a minor in geography. With this background, I am very interested in the M.S. of Geology program at the University of Utah, especially to learn more about your research projects and opportunities. My senior thesis is correlating the high flood levels along the Snake and Teton rivers with the high snow pack in the surrounding areas using Landsat imagery.

I read your paper on annual snowpack analysis of glaciers in the Rocky Mountains and was really interested in your application of remote sensing techniques. Do you have any available research opportunities using GIS and other tools for analyzing similar geomorphologic processes?

Thank you for your time.

John Doe
johndoe@byui.edu
(555)555-5555

Emphasis on the research projects and graduate program

Dr. _____,

I am a geology undergraduate student at Brigham Young University-Idaho and am very interested in the M.S. in Hydrologic Sciences program at Idaho State University. Your faculty/research page impressed me because of its clear focus on fluvial dynamics. I am interested in learning more about hydrologic modeling and using that as a possible master's thesis. At ISU, would it be better for me to come into the program with my own project idea or work as a research assistant continuing a project which a professor has already begun?

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
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(555)555-5555