

Introductory request cover letter and/or email

Appropriately address the person

“Dear Dr. ABC,”

It is important to check websites for degrees and gender pronouns.

Conventions: those who hold MD or PhD are to be addressed as Dr. (or Prof. if the person has a professor title)

those who hold Bachelor’s or Master’s Degrees are addressed as Mr., Ms., or Mx.

Introduce yourself – where are you in the path?

“I am a second year college student at XZY University”

State your request/reason for emailing –

“I am emailing you to ask if you have a position in your lab for the Summer of 2021”

“I am inquiring if you are taking new PhD students starting the Fall of 2021”

State why you are interested & what experience, skills (don’t forget “soft skills”) you bring to the lab, even if you didn’t demonstrate them in a lab setting – think about jobs you had where you worked independently or well with a diverse team, problem-solved, showed up on time/were reliable, were given extra responsibilities, took on a crucial piece of a larger effort, etc. –

“My interest in [e.g. biological psychology] began when I [had this experience]. From there, my motivation to [state again essentially what your “ask” is] grew based on [this additional experience/information you obtained – here, if you have prior lab experience, state it. If you do NOT, state what kinds of other experiences you have that make you want to work in a lab – be honest and genuine without over- or under-selling]. From these experiences, I have learned XYZ [XZY = skills either techniques and strategies from research or outside of research].

Make it clear that you have done what you can to learn about the research –

“From your lab website and after reading the 2020 publication titled “Yay science”, I am particularly interested in getting involved in {a specific question} or {a specific method/technique}”

Repeat your request and perhaps add some information if it is relevant –

“Would it be possible for me to get involved in such projects [as stated in previous section] during the Summer 2021?”

“I am open to working as a volunteer if I can find paid part-time work outside of lab”

“I am a work study student”

“I can apply for XYZ fellowships to help support my efforts in the lab”

Offer more information or to talk further –

“Please let me know if I can provide any additional information, and if we could talk further about possible opportunities.”

Attach your CV –

“My CV [and sometimes transcript if you want] is attached here.

End

“Thank you for your consideration.

[your name/pronouns]”