



## **How Do I Get Involved in Research?**

This resource covers where to find professors, how to contact them, and what to expect out of an interview. We collaborated with *I wish I knew* to create an informational video based on this document: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNYzaryZjDk>

### **Where to find profs?**

- You can look through faculty websites to see a list of professors and their research focuses (ex: [physiology professor directory](#)).
- You can find research assistantships on Facebook pages (ex: Jobs & Internships).
- Attend events such as Soup & Science, department wine & cheeses, etc...

### **What time of year should I apply?**

- It never hurts to send research emails out early; they might tell you to apply again later if they're not currently accepting students.
- Check their website (if applicable) - sometimes professors specify when they accept applications & what email to send it to.

### **Short and sweet**

- Ideally, no longer than 3-4 paragraphs, each with 2-3 sentences.
- Show interest but don't bombard them with too many details. Technical skills can be reflected in your CV and transcript.

### **What to include in the email?**

- You can attach your CV and transcript initially, or state in the email that you can send them later if they'd like to take a look.
- Make it clear what you want - Honours project? Research course? Volunteer experience?

### **Should I read their research?**

- Being knowledgeable about what the professor studies is beneficial. Think about why this is something you want to study.
- Make a connection between their work and your own interests. If you are unsure how to do this, refer to a paper they recently published.

### Should I talk about my previous experiences & skills?

- Discuss your experiences with research or academics. However, don't overwhelm them with information. Keep it short and sweet, and only write what's necessary.

### Other tips

- Use your McGill email to appear more professional and avoid the spam folder.
- Schedule your email to send in the morning of a weekday (e.g. 9am on Monday). Most professors check their email in the morning. This ensures that the email will be at the top of their inbox when they check their email that day.
- If your email is in response to an ad, be sure to highlight how your skills fit into the position's description.
- Feel free to follow up (after at least a week) if you haven't received a response. No response doesn't necessarily mean a rejection!

Subject Line: Interested in PSYC 396 for Winter 2021

Dear Dr./Professor,

My name is McGill Student, and I am a U2 student majoring in Psychology and minoring in Sociology. I am interested in completing a PSYC 396 research course in the Winter 2021 semester and was wondering if you had any openings available in your lab.

I recently read your paper, ["Name of Paper"] in [Journal XYZ]. I found your research on [Topic] to be fascinating, especially [Give an example]. I am interested in learning more about [Topic] and possibly contributing to this research.

I have experience on an academic committee and journal club, where I presented and discussed related research topics with students and professors at McGill. I also have [List specific related experience], which relates to your research through [X, Y, and Z]. Attached is my CV and unofficial transcript. Please let me know if you have any opportunities available. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time.

Best,  
McGill Student

## **Congrats, they replied! What now?**

The professor of interest replied and wants to meet you!

### What to expect for the interview

- Usually, interviews with the professor consist of talking about the professor's research, discussing your expectations and goals for research, and getting to know each other.
- Come with questions about their papers and research interests.
- You definitely aren't expected to know everything (especially since most of you reading this are undergrads!). Instead, show that you are willing to learn.
- In our experience, if the prof gives you an interview, it's a promising sign!

### Some sample questions you can ask professors:

- What are your expectations for this position?
- What is the team environment like?
- Are there opportunities for growth in this position?
- What laboratory skills do I need to know / will I be learning?