

# Finding a PhD/PsyD Research Mentor

## Step 1: Identify Your Research Interests

The first step in seeking out a PhD/PsyD research mentor is to identify your interest(s).

Some places to start:

1. Current interests
  - a. Are you currently working on a thesis or research project?
2. Opportunities to assist with research
  - a. Can you assist researchers in your department currently working on projects that interest you?

## Step 2: Identify a PhD/PsyD Advisor

Once you have determined your research interests, the second step is to identify a PhD/PsyD advisor that matches those interests.

Some questions to consider (in no particular order):

1. Geographically, where would you be willing to locate to, and are there PhD/PsyD programs in that area?
2. Do those faculty members' research interests match your own?
3. Does your academic advisor know of anyone at other institutions with similar research interests?
  - a. Look at the authors who are publishing research articles in a topic you are interested in.
  - b. Do some names keep coming up?

## Step 3: Contacting a PhD/PsyD Research Mentor

The final step is contacting your potential mentor. It is important to be professional and concise.

Some points to include:

1. Introduce yourself
  - Name
  - Year in school/Major
  - Current Master's advisor (if you have one)
  - Research you're working on currently
2. Make a connection
  - What work of theirs have you read?
  - What projects have you heard about?
  - How do your interests align with theirs?
3. Plan a visit
  - When would be the best time to visit?
  - Can you meet all faculty/students?
4. Add a closing
  - Your contact information
  - Thank you

## Additional Tips

1. Having a basic understanding of some of the work your potential mentor has done is also important.
  - a. It may be helpful to conduct a brief literature review on the topic of interest *prior* to contacting your potential research mentor. Doing so could allow for a more directed conversation.
  - b. Specifically looking at the "future directions" portion of the discussion may help give you an idea of where they are going next with her/his research.

## Example Graduate Email<sup>1</sup>

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a second year Master's student at \_\_\_\_\_ University in \_\_\_\_\_. I am currently working on my Master's thesis titled, "\_\_\_\_" with my advisor, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_. I am also currently working on a few other research projects with colleagues and faculty in my department.

I recently read your article titled, "\_\_\_\_\_" and was really intrigued by \_\_\_\_\_. I am also interested in this area of research, and want to look at \_\_\_\_\_, which I think could fit very well with your research. Will you be taking any students for your lab this coming year?

I would love the opportunity to speak with you and other faculty/students in your department about your program/university. When would be the best time to schedule a visit?

Please feel free to contact me via email (\_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_) or by phone (\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_) at anytime.

I look forward to speaking with you more.

Thank you for your time,

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<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: Some faculty members may not want to speak with you more about their research. This does not necessarily mean that they are not interested. Some faculty may want to omit their research interests to keep it "fair" for all applicants.