



How to Talk

to a Professor About a Research Position

Presented by
Jordan Epp, Undergraduate RSAW Coordinator

October 22, 2025 - 1:30pm-2:30 pm
PHYSICS Rm. 128



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Research Acceleration
and Strategic Initiatives
OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT RESEARCH
RESEARCH.USASK.CA



We are grateful to be learning together today on

Treaty 6 Territory

and the homeland of the Métis.

Coming to Know Indigenous
Research in the University

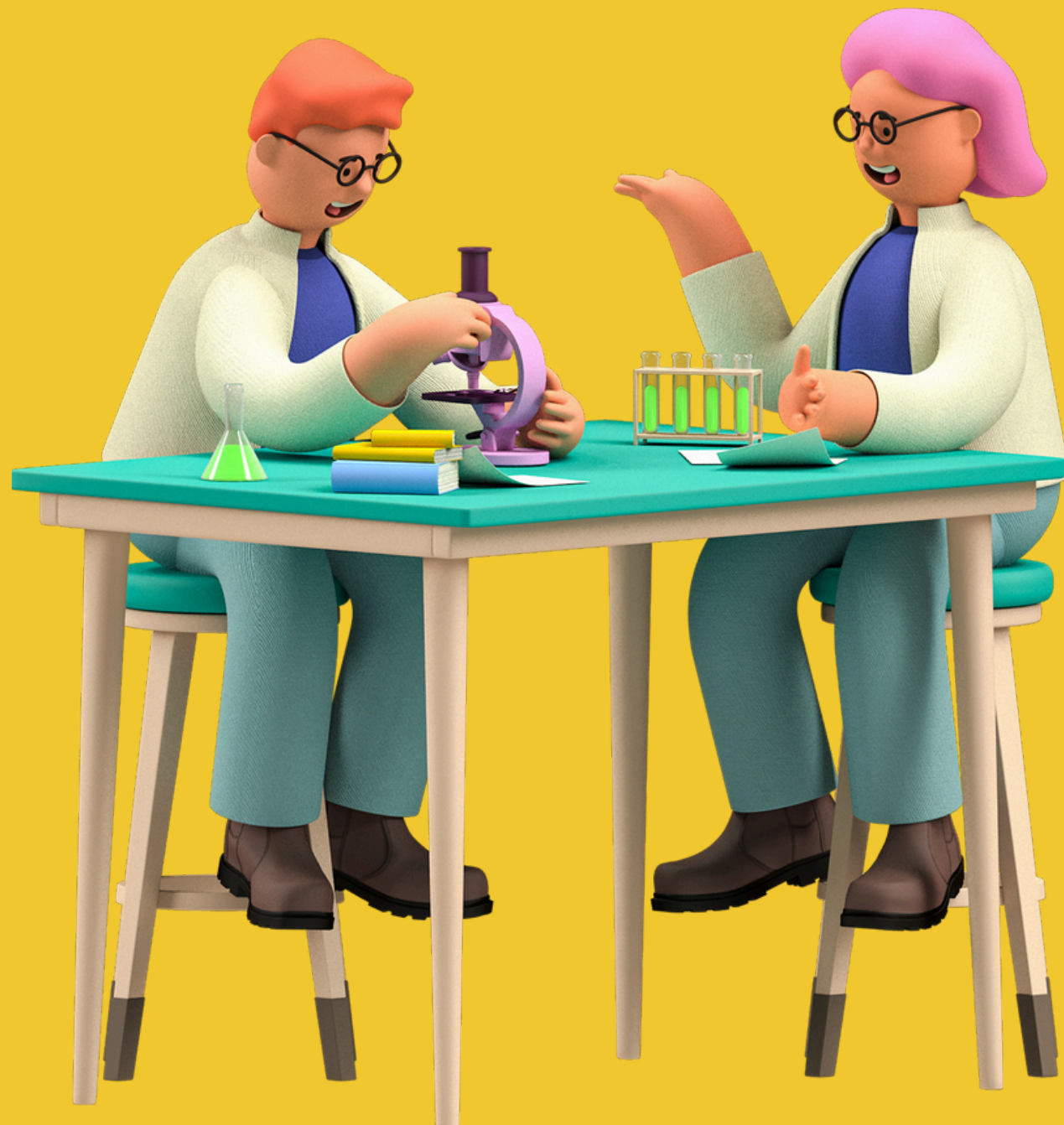
11:00am- 12:00pm
Monday, October 27, 2025

Gordon Oaks Red Bear Centre



RSAW at USask

Research, Scholarly and Artistic Works



Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings.



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Signature Areas of Research



Agriculture

Food and Bioproducts for a Sustainable Future



Energy and Mineral Resources for a Sustainable Future

Developing Clean Energy Solutions and Working for Equal Access for All



Indigenous Peoples

Engagement and Scholarship



Synchrotron Sciences

Innovation in Health, Environment and Advanced Technologies



One Health

Solutions at the Animal-Human-Environment Interface



Water

Health, Equity, Access, Security and Sustainability of our Planet's Freshwater Resources



Communities and Sustainability

Exploring the Interrelatedness of Human Communities and Natural Ecologies



Health and Wellness

Combining the Arts, Social and Hard Sciences to Make Canadians Healthier



Quantum Innovation

Creating Big Changes from Tiny Particles



Undergraduate Pathways to Research



Undergraduate Pathways to Research



FYRE Course



Honours
Degree



USRA



Student
Assistantship



Masters
Degree



Doctoral
Degree



Undergraduate Pathways to Research



SURE



Mitacs



Student
Assistantship

Opus



MBA



Entrepreneurship



Undergraduate Pathways to Research



Student Panel on Research Pathways

Nov. 05, 2025 – 3pm-4pm – Murray Library Rm. G3

Should I Consider Research Now?

- It can help you to understand the university.
- Research skills are applicable and beneficial for any career.
- Research skills are different than memorizing information.
- Can help you decide if you like research.
- Meet other students and professors on campus.



Where Do I Find Research Positions?



CareerLink

USask home for student job and volunteer postings, internship and co-op, career appointment booking, event registration, and on-campus recruitment.

USask Careers

Staff and Faculty Link

Dept. /College Announcements

Where Do I Find Research Positions?



Networking

Funding Opportunities are advertised, but it is up to students to find a faculty member to apply with.

Finding a Supervisor/Position



1.) DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Find which faculty are actively working in the research areas you're interested in. Network, attend events, and ask for recommendations from other students and professors. Be strategic and targeted. Use research skills to find the right supervisor for you: do they share your values? Read about their publications and grants, and check if you meet university requirements.

Other ways to research professors?

Finding a Supervisor/Position



1.) DO YOUR HOMEWORK

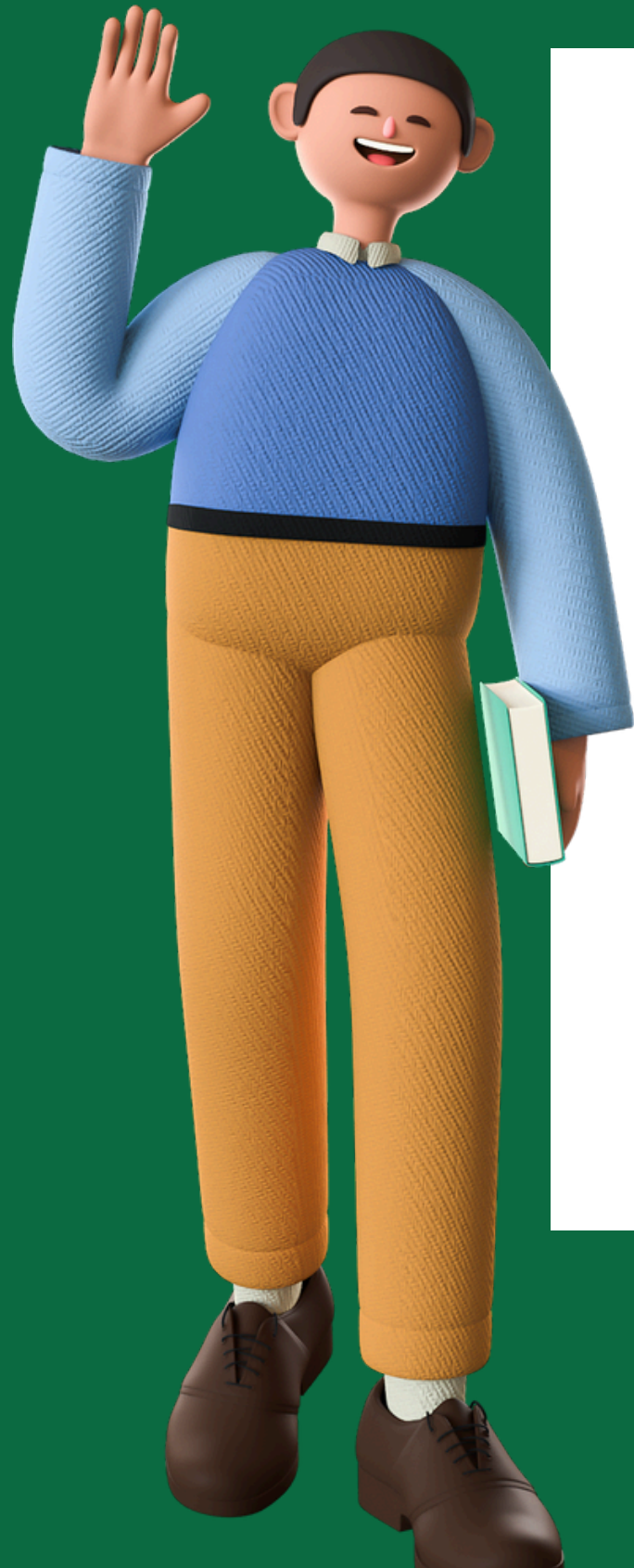
- Are there funding opportunities that you know of that you qualify for?
- Who do you already know? Are there professors that you think you would like to work with and / or that you think would be a good mentor for you?
- talk to other students that have worked as a student assistant about their experiences

Student Panel on Research Pathways
Nov. 05, 2025 - Murray Library Rm. G3

Speed Networking for Faculty & Undergraduate Researchers
Nov. 19, 2025 - 4pm-5:30pm - Louis' Loft



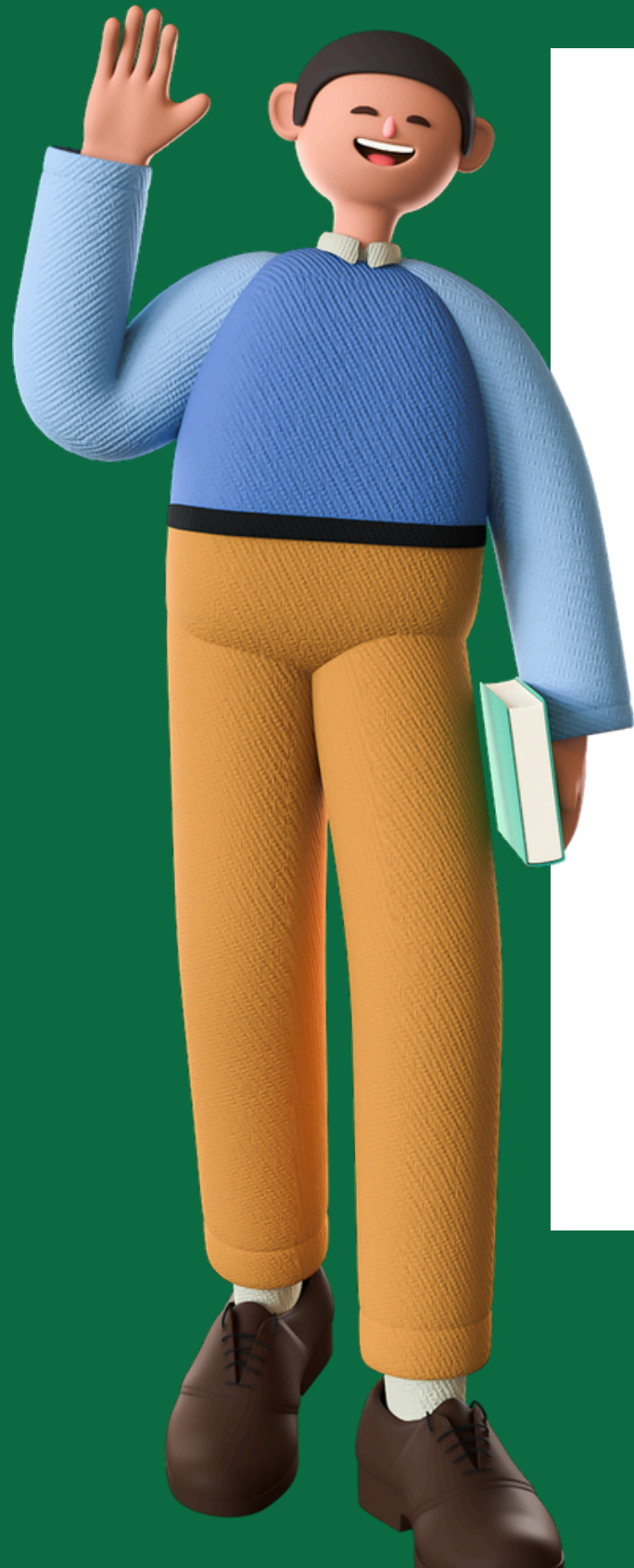
Finding a Supervisor/Position



2.) INTRODUCTION-CONNECTION

Send from a professional email address (not granny@hotmail.com). Use proper salutation (Dear Professor Smith). Introduce yourself: who are you, and what do you study? Be clear and target your pitch for that particular faculty member; form, mass-mailed emails are discouraged. Craft an error-free message (no typos, misspelled names, use excellent grammar). Attach an up-to-date resume. Ask the Writing Centre for help!

Finding a Supervisor/Position



2.) INTRODUCTION-CONNECTION

Craft a professional email and resume

- Addressed to right person – do your homework
- From a professional email account
- Introduce yourself: who are you?
- Why are you writing this email? Be specific. What do you want?
- Why do you want to work with this professor? - target
- Create a draft email and resume. Work with the Writing Centre to make sure it's clean and ready

Advanced Strategies for CVs & Applications
Thurs. Nov. 06 – 3-4pm – Murray Library Rm 102



Finding a Supervisor/Position

3.) KNOW YOUR GOALS AND TIMELINES

What are you asking for? Be direct (a four month full-time paid internship; honours supervision; a graduate student position; a part-time assistantship during the school year; a volunteer opportunity; field experience...) and know your timelines ("I'm available to start on [date]").



Finding a Supervisor/Position

4.) KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS

How do you stand out? What do you bring that is helpful or unique? Everything from enthusiasm for the specific research project, ability to handle adversity, multiple languages, community or volunteer experience, to Python programming skills fits here. What is your passion, and what would you like to learn?

Talk about the SURE and FYRE programs here as an example of your interests



Finding a Supervisor/Position



5.) BE SINCERE, HONEST, SPECIFIC

Being dishonest or exaggerating your abilities or knowledge will damage your credibility. Likewise, being too broad ("I'll research anything! I just want a job!") is a problem. Be specific about your own interests, and think hard about long term research direction. Why do you want to do research?

Finding a Supervisor/Position



6.) BE PERSISTENT

It may take time to find a supervisor who is the right fit and has funding and space to support you. You may be a superb student, but they may just not have room. Be persistent in your search, but try not to be a nuisance. Be professional, improve your focus and approach, and try again. Move on with grace.

Finding a Supervisor/Position

7.) KNOW WHEN TO SAY YES

Finding the right supervisor for you is key. If something about the conversation or offer feels wrong, listen to your instinct. You can negotiate, or decline. You are your own best advocate; you also know what you will need to make a situation work for you. The supervisor-student relationship needs to be built on trust and mutual respect. Always start there.



Emailing your Professor

FROM: wheelieking77@gmail.com

TO: professor.name@usask.ca

Subject: Research

Hi.

I'm a 3rd year Biology student looking for a summer research position. I'm wondering if you know of any research positions within the Department. I am wanting to apply for NSERC.

Sincerely,
Brad



What do we think about Brad's email?
What would you change?

Emailing your Professor

FROM: ncg346@usask.ca

TO: professor.name@usask.ca

Subject: Supervisor for NSERC Application

Dear Professor,

How are you? I am a student in your BIO 210 class. I love science and have a passion for research. I am preparing to apply for NSERC USRA funding, and I'm wondering if you would be interested in being my supervisor. I have attached a copy of my resume. Let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks in advance,
Nitanis Greyeyes
3rd Year Biology Student
University of Saskatchewan
306-555-1234

What do we think about Nitanis' email?
What would you change?



Emailing your Professor

FROM: maliq.thomson@usask.ca
TO: professor.name@usask.ca
Subject: Student interested in NSERC USRA

Dear Professor Gray,

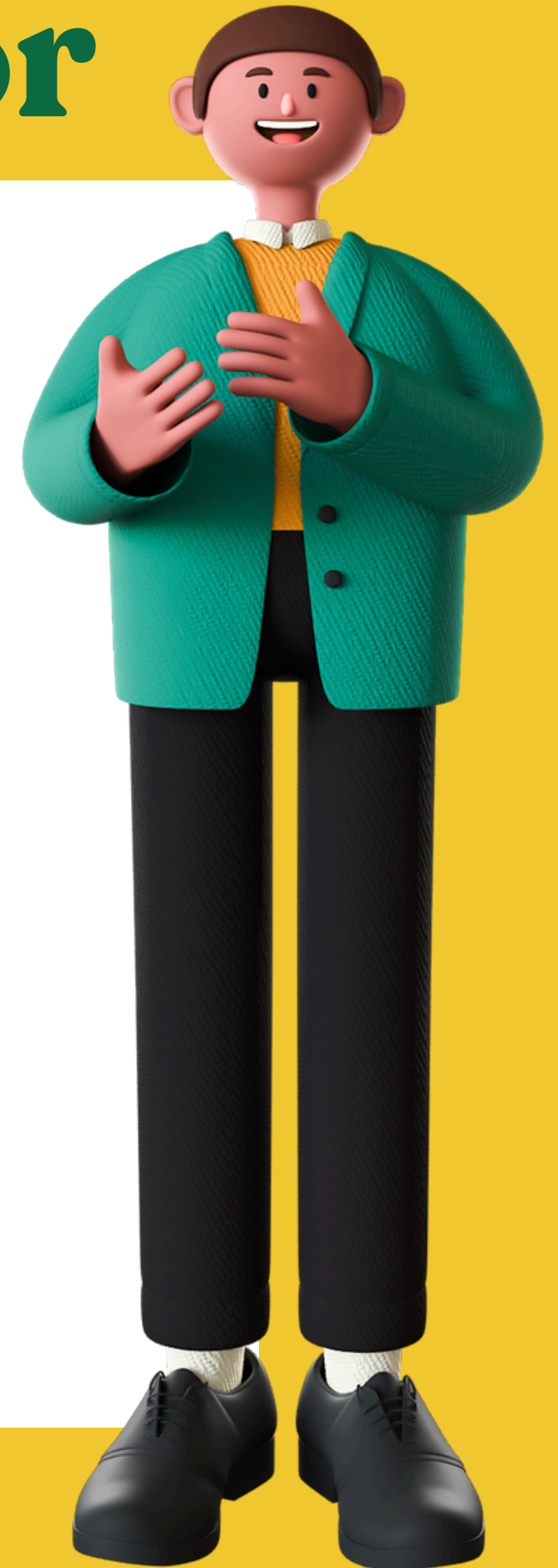
How are you? I am a student in your BIO 317 Fundamentals of Animal Physiology class and I was very interested to learn about the research you do on pesticides and the impact of behaviours at Gray Lab. I am interested in applying for an NSERC USRA for Summer 2026 and continue to build my research skills through the uRSAW SURE program. I was wondering if you are accepting new student assistants in your lab and if you might be interested in meeting with me to discuss potentially being my research supervisor.

Would you have time in the next few weeks to meet before the NSERC deadline at the end of January?
Attached is a copy of my updated resume for your review.
Looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Maliq Thomson
3rd Year Biology Student
University of Saskatchewan
306-555-1234

What do we think about Maliq's email?



Emailing your Professor

Subject Line:

Dear/Hello **[Insert Professors Name]**,

Intro/Context: Who are you and why are you emailing?

The why: Why are you emailing this specific professor? Why are you interested in working with this professor? What skills/experiences would you bring and / or want to develop.

The ask: Be direct about what you are interested in (for example a supervisor for an NSERC USRA), but ask for a meeting as a next step.

Thanks in advance/Thank you for your time.

Salutation/Signature: Sincerely/All the best,
[Your Name]

Subject Line:

Hello Dr. Nye,

I am a student ... **[the who]**

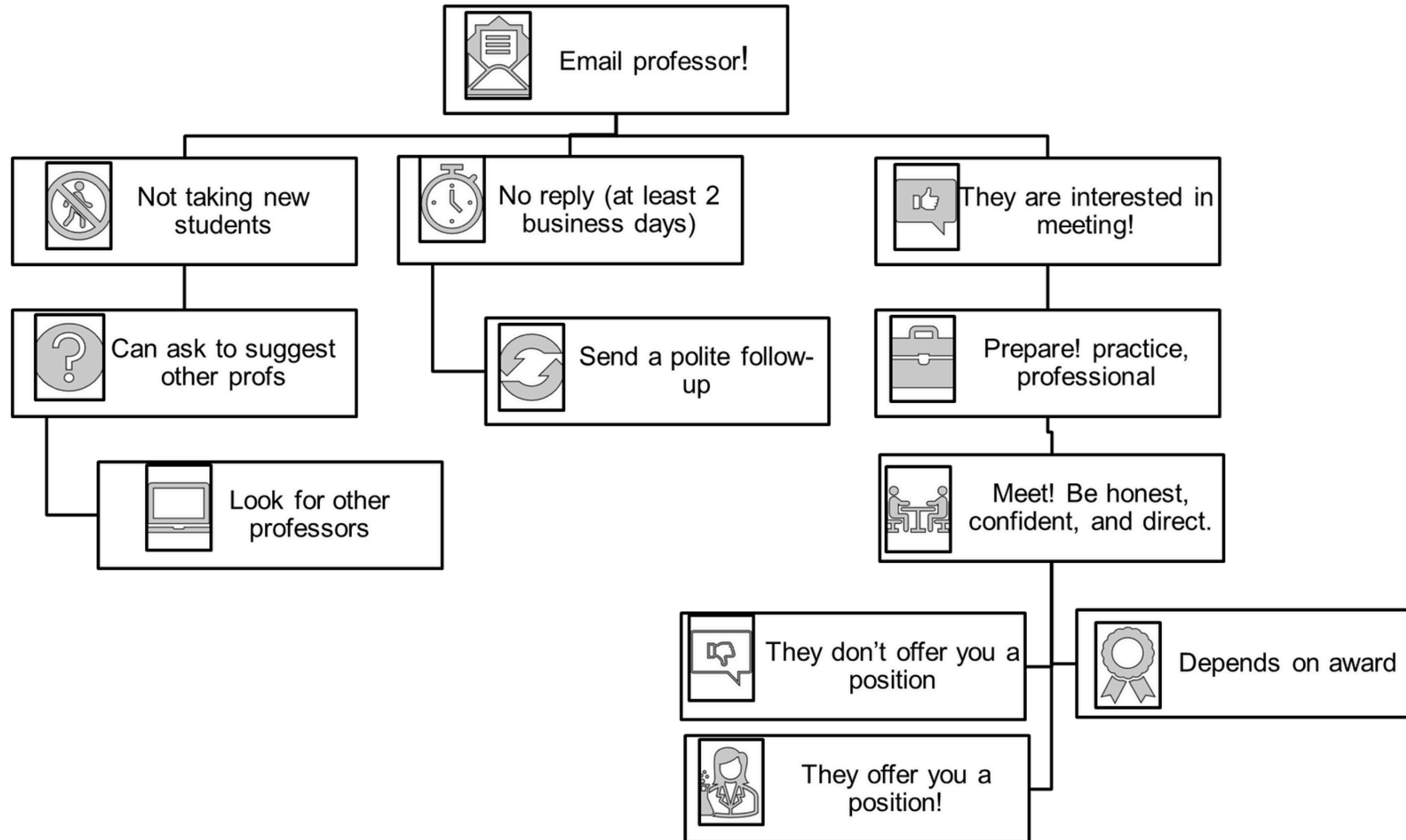
I am interested in developing my skills as a researcher... **[the why]**

Would you be available to meet to briefly discuss my potential candidacy as a research assistant.. **[the ask]**

Thanks in advance.

Sincerely,
[Your Name/Signature]
2nd year Biology Student
University of Saskatchewan
306.123.4567

Emailing your Professor



Upcoming Tri-Agency Funding



NSERC (Natural Sciences and
Engineering Research Council of Canada)
USRAs

SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council) USRAs

CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health
Research) USRAs

Upcoming Networking Opportunities

Student Panel on Research Pathways

Nov. 05, 2025 - 3pm-4pm - Murray
Library Rm. G3

Speed Networking for Faculty & Undergraduate Researchers

Nov. 19, 2025 - 4pm-5:30pm - Louis' Loft

Turning Research into Opportunity: Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Graduate Pathways

Nov. 27 2025 - 5:00-6:00 PM
Opus Collider Hub at 230 Galleria, 15
Innovation Boulevard



Upcoming Funding Support Workshops

Advanced Strategies for CVs & Applications

Nov. 06, 2025 - 3pm-4pm - Murray
Library Rm. 102 (Hybrid)

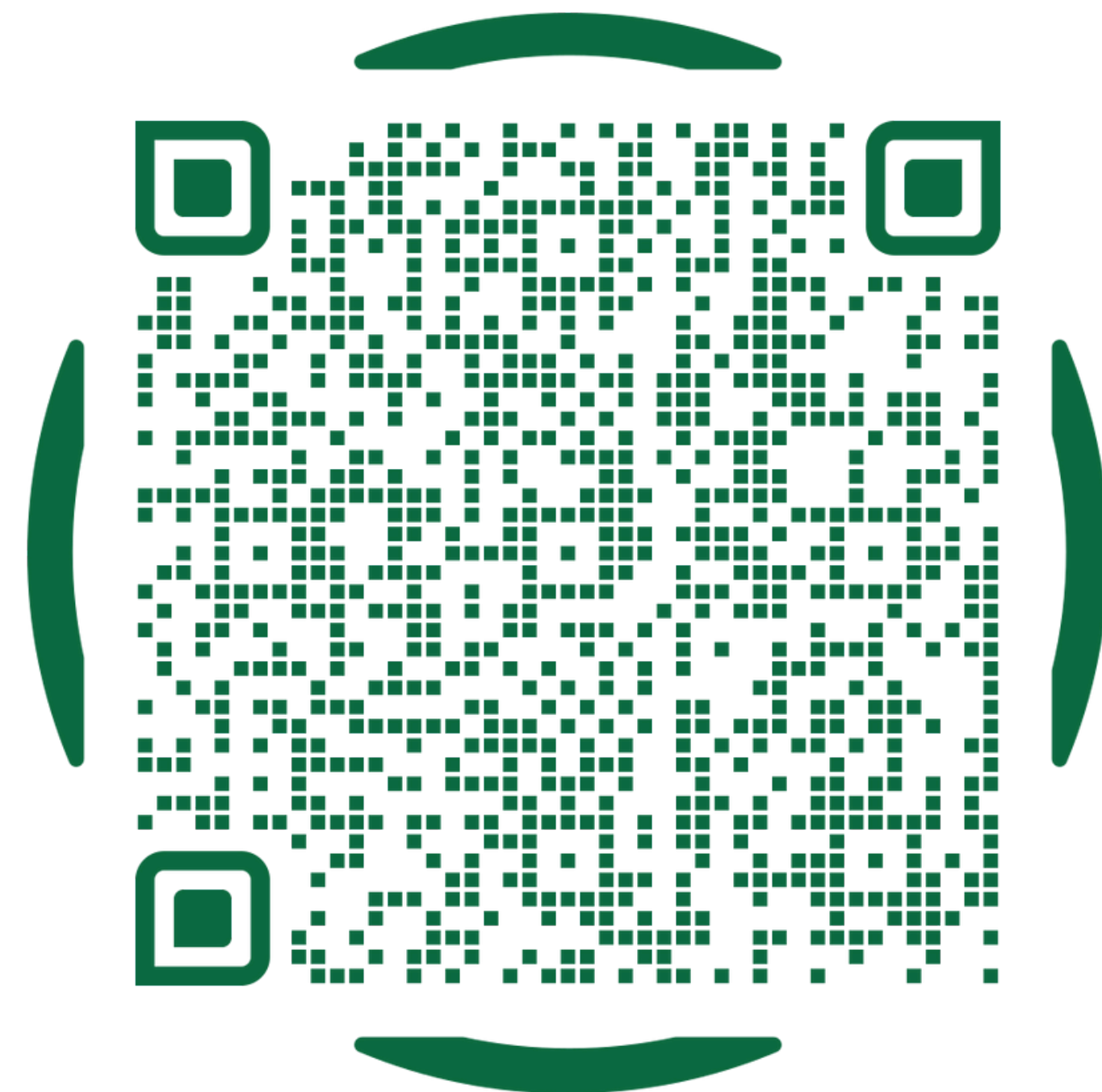
Undergraduate Students' Introduction to the Tri-Agency USRAs

Nov. 12, 2025 - 1:30pm-2:30pm
Online, via Zoom

Tri-Agency USRAs 2026 Application Process: Faculty and Student Roles

Nov. 26 2025 - 1:30pm-2:30pm
Online, via Zoom





Thank you!



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