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## Finding and Contacting Potential Faculty Mentors for a RESEARCH Connecting Experience

### Reflect on what you want in a faculty mentor:

How much guidance do you need? Is this your first time conducting independent research of this size? What kind of expertise are you looking for? Is it disciplinary expertise? Expertise related to the BDP topic area? Expertise in a particular cultural context? You may not find a faculty mentor who specializes in exactly what you want to do, so think about what kind of guidance is most important to you.

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### Search for a faculty mentor:

- Consider current and previous course instructors.
- Review BDP faculty panel lists (you can find a list of faculty panel members for your BDP on the BDP website)
- Consider relevant disciplines and then review department websites.
- Go to campus events where you can meet faculty.
- Talk to your BDP Advisor.
- Search Eureka for faculty whose interests match your own.

Faculty mentor ideas:

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### Email a potential faculty mentor to schedule a meeting:

- Be brief
- Use formal title: Dr. or Professor
- Use UT email address if at all possible
- Subject line should be descriptive: research inquiry on humanitarian aid
- The goal with your email is to introduce yourself, state your research interest, and make a connection.
- Do some research on the faculty mentor and let them know that why you are interested in working with them as your faculty mentor.

### Sample Email:

Dear Dr. Smith,

My name is Ally MacBeal and I am a History Junior as well as a Human Rights & Social Justice student in the Bridging Disciplines Programs. I am very interested in conducting independent research on the history of humanitarian aid in post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo.

I read your article on humanitarian aid and I found your comparison of governmental and non-governmental aid very interesting. I would like to speak with you about your research and the possibility of having you as a faculty mentor for my independent research project.

Is there a convenient time when I could stop by your office to speak with you?

Thank you for your time.

Best,  
Ally MacBeal

### Prepare for your meeting with a potential faculty mentor:

Be prepared to discuss the kinds of mentorship, expertise and guidance you will need.

Are you new to independent research? If so, let the faculty person know that you need guidance in conducting research.

Be prepared to discuss your research question and how you would like to answer this question.

Be prepared to discuss the BDP program.

Know something about the faculty person- what are their research interests? You may even want to read an article they have written.

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### When you establish a faculty mentor, consider discussing these items as grading requirements:

**Reflection Essay-** Every time you complete a BDP Connecting Experience you are required to write a 3-5 page Reflection Essay to be turned in on the last class day of the semester. Consider including the Reflection Essay as a grading requirement.

**Academic Poster-** Consider making a poster about your research to present at the BDP Poster Session and/or the Office of Undergraduate Research Bazaar. You can discuss the poster as a grading requirement for your Connecting Experience.