NJINJU LABS · GEOSCIENCE ADVISOR DISCOVERY

GeoSciMatcher

THE COMPLETE USER GUIDE

Find your PhD advisor and Postdoctoral mentor...

NJINJU LABS LLC · LAST UPDATED MAY 2026

Why I built GeoSciMatcher

I'm Dr. Emmanuel Njinju, a geoscientist who has been on every side of this problem.

In 2012, I graduated as the best student in Geology from the University of Buea in Cameroon with First Class Honours. I applied to over seven universities in the United States. Despite my grades, I received rejection after rejection. One school, Oklahoma State University, gave me a chance. That single acceptance is the only reason I am writing this today.

At Oklahoma State, I noticed that students with weaker academic records than mine were on full funding. A great GPA was clearly not enough on its own. There was a process I had not understood, a way of finding the right labs, the right advisors, the right moment when a professor needed a student with exactly the skills I had. The students on funding had figured this out. I had gotten lucky.

I went on to complete my PhD in Geophysics and Geodynamics at Virginia Tech. Before starting Njinju Labs LLC, I served as a postdoctoral scholar at Virginia Tech and UC Davis and as an Assistant Professor at Baylor University. At Baylor, I mentored three PhD students and a postdoctoral scholar. I also watched my colleagues struggle with the other side of the same problem: brilliant researchers with federally funded grants, unable to identify the right students to join their labs.

Two pain points became clear to me. Faculty have no systematic way to find the students they need for their funded projects. And talented students around the world finish their degrees every year ready for graduate research, with no idea how the process actually works. They send applications randomly. They write cold emails based on generic advice. Most of those emails go unanswered. Most of those students settle for less than they could have achieved.

GeoSciMatcher exists to close this gap. It is the tool I wish had existed when I was a student in Cameroon scrolling through university websites with no idea how to identify which labs to target. It is also the tool I wish my colleagues had when they were trying to find capable students for their funded projects.

Your academic future should not depend on luck. It should depend on your work meeting the right opportunity. GeoSciMatcher is built to make that meeting happen.

Best,

Emmanuel

What's inside

This guide walks you through GeoSciMatcher from the moment you first open the site through every feature available across the Free, Pro, and Premium tiers. Whether you're considering signing up or you already have an account, the chapters below will help you get more out of what's already built for you.

CHAPTER 1

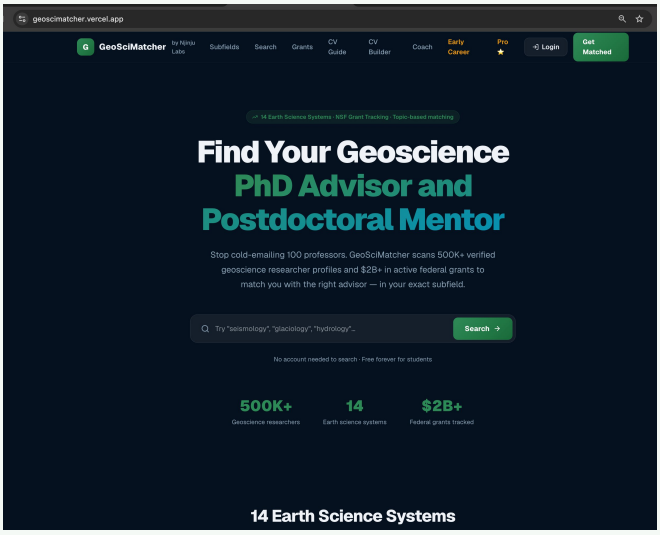
What GeoSciMatcher does

GeoSciMatcher helps geoscience applicants at every academic level find the right research advisors and reach out to them with materials that get responses. Master's, PhD, and postdoctoral applicants are our primary audience. The system also helps those looking for faculty positions identify and connect with the right institutions. It helps professors with funded research projects find qualified students and postdocs who fit their work.

The problem has two sides. Applicants apply to programs and positions without a clear way to identify which labs are actively funded, which professors are accepting students this year, and how to write outreach that demonstrates they have actually read the professor's work. Researchers with federal grants from the NSF, NIH, and DOE need capable students and postdocs for their projects but have no systematic way to find them.

What you get when you use GeoSciMatcher

- **A curated match funnel** of 30 advisors selected from over 500,000 geoscience researchers.
- **Two curated PDF guides** per funnel (Research Fit, Career Stage) plus a separate Active Funded Labs reference where available.
- **A shortlist and top-3 workflow** to narrow 30 candidates down to your real targets.
- **Professional guidance on cold emails** delivered to your inbox so you can send from your own .edu address.
- **The Coach (Pro)**: our Team helps you polish your CV and prepare a 2-minute video pitch.
- **Coach v2 (Premium)**: cold email refinement, SoP drafting, and interview preparation.



The home page.

Start here. Open geoscimatcher.vercel.app in your browser. The home page lets you search 500,000+ geoscience researchers and 14 Earth Science systems without an account.

Tap **Get Matched** in the top right to begin building your profile. Tap **Search** to explore the database freely first.

Who GeoSciMatcher is for

GeoSciMatcher serves applicants across the geoscience academic pathway. The matching, the funnel, the email guidance, and the Coach all support each kind of search. The differences lie in how you describe your goals and what kind of advisor, host, or institution you are looking for.

- **Master's applicants** looking for graduate programs and research-active advisors.
- **PhD applicants** looking for a doctoral home where they will spend four to six years.
- **Postdoctoral applicants** looking for a productive two-to-three-year research engagement that builds toward an independent career.
- **Faculty position seekers.** If you are finishing a postdoc and looking for faculty roles, GeoSciMatcher can help you identify institutions and departments where your research interests and approach fit.

Coming from another physical science or engineering background

Geoscience research draws talented people from a wide range of physical sciences and engineering disciplines. Among the students I have personally mentored, some came in from petroleum engineering, others from mathematics, and many from neighboring fields in physics, chemistry, and computer science. The field rewards rigorous training in any discipline that applies to its problems, and the most interesting research often happens at the intersections where someone with a different background sees a familiar problem in a new way.

If your degree is in a related discipline rather than strictly within geosciences, GeoSciMatcher is built for you too. The matching considers the substance of your training, your research interests, and the specific skills you bring, not just the title on your diploma. When you fill out your profile, describe what you actually want to study and what you have already done. Our Team uses that detail to find

professors whose work would benefit from your specific combination of skills, including labs where someone with your background is exactly what they have been missing.

What success looks like

Across the applicants we have worked with, success follows a pattern. You arrive at GeoSciMatcher with a research interest and a sense of the kind of work you want to do. We help you turn that interest into a curated list of professors whose funded research matches it. You narrow that list to three professors you genuinely want to work with. Our Team helps you polish your CV and prepare a specific outreach for each professor. You send those outreach emails from your own account, propose a 1-month remote project, and use that project to demonstrate your capability before any formal admission decision is made. By the time you submit your formal application, you have already had real research contact with the labs you are applying to.

CHAPTER 2

Why GeoSciMatcher works for both sides

GeoSciMatcher is built around a specific interaction: a 1-month remote project that a student proposes to a professor and, if accepted, completes during the preparation phase before formally applying. This single mechanic creates value for both sides in ways that traditional cold outreach cannot.

For professors

Funded principal investigators receive dozens of generic cold emails each cycle. GeoSciMatcher changes this in two ways. Students who reach out have already studied the professor's funded research and proposed a concrete project that extends it; the professor reads a substantive idea grounded in their own work. Accepting a 1-month remote project then gives the professor a low-commitment way to evaluate the student's actual research capability before any formal admission decision.

There is also a specific dynamic GeoSciMatcher serves well. Professors who conduct research in a particular country often want to recruit students from that country, for local knowledge and collaboration continuity. Traditionally this means recruiting whichever well-connected applicant reaches the professor through informal networks. GeoSciMatcher changes the inputs: instead of the best-connected student from that country, the professor receives the best-matched one. This serves both sides.

Our matching prioritizes professors with active NSF, NIH, and DOE grants. Departments and professors without current funding who need capable graduate students are encouraged to contact GeoSciMatcher directly so we can extend our services to those labs.

For students

The traditional cold-email process is opaque. A student sends an email, hears nothing for weeks, and has no signal about why. GeoSciMatcher gives the student something concrete to offer: a specific 1-month project tied to the professor's funded research. This dramatically improves response rates, builds real research experience during the project itself, and gives the student firsthand experience of the lab's working style, replacing the imposter syndrome that often accompanies applications to top programs with direct knowledge of the environment.

CHAPTER 3

Free, Pro, and Premium

GeoSciMatcher is structured so that even the free version delivers real value. Most of the core matching and outreach workflow is available to every user at no cost. The paid tiers add depth, speed, and the personalized coaching that turns a good outreach into one that gets responses.

Why even the free version is better than nothing

Most PhD applicants today rely on generic advice from forums, friends, and a handful of blog posts. They have no systematic way to identify which professors are currently funded, which labs match their research interests, or how to structure a first email. GeoSciMatcher's free tier gives every applicant access to the same starting point that well-connected students have always had: a curated list of relevant advisors with their funding status, research topics, and recent publications all in one place.

The free tier includes the full match funnel, both curated PDF guides plus the Active Funded Labs reference where available, the shortlist and top-3 workflow, and cold-email guidance delivered monthly. For many applicants, this alone changes the outreach process from random to strategic.

Why Pro and Premium are worth the upgrade

The free tier helps you identify the right professors. The paid tiers help you actually win their attention. Pro adds the GeoSciMatcher Coach: our Team works with you to polish your CV and prepare a professor-specific 2-minute video pitch for each of your top 3 targets. We help you propose a concrete 1-month remote project based on the professor's currently-funded research, then work with you to write a video script that pitches it.

Premium adds Coach v2: cold email refinement workshops, Statement of Purpose drafting, and interview preparation. These are the same kinds of support that students with personal mentors or expensive consultants have always had. Premium puts them in everyone's hands.

What each tier includes

Feature	Free	Pro ($12/mo)	Premium ($29 / $19)
Professor search & subfield browsing	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Federal grants browser	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Curated match funnel (30 candidates)	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Two PDF guides + Funded Labs reference	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Shortlist & top-3 selection	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Cold-email guidance (cadence)	Monthly	Biweekly	Mon & Thu
GeoSciMatcher Coach — CV polishing	—	**Yes**	**Yes**
GeoSciMatcher Coach — outreach prep + video script	—	**Yes**	**Yes**
GeoSciMatcher Coach — video upload & review	—	**Yes**	**Yes**
Coach v2 — cold email refinement	—	—	**Yes**
Coach v2 — Statement of Purpose drafting	—	—	**Yes**
Coach v2 — interview preparation	—	—	**Yes**

Pro is also available as a $30 three-month bundle for users who prefer a one-time payment over a recurring subscription. The bundle includes the same Pro features for 90 days.

Premium ("Match Plus") is priced at $29/month for users in high-income OECD countries and $19/month elsewhere, reflecting the global cost of academic preparation. Premium subscriptions are capped at 5 months and automatically revert to Pro after that, since most application cycles do not require ongoing Premium-tier support beyond the active application window.

CHAPTER 4

Getting started: your profile

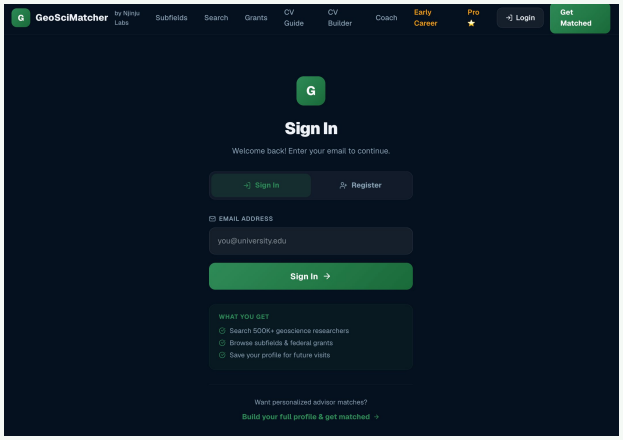
Everything GeoSciMatcher does for you depends on the quality of your profile. The more specific and honest you are about your research interests, background, and goals, the better we can match you with relevant advisors.

Creating your account

Go to geoscimatcher.vercel.app and click "Sign up" in the top right. You can register with an email address only. No credit card is required for the free tier.

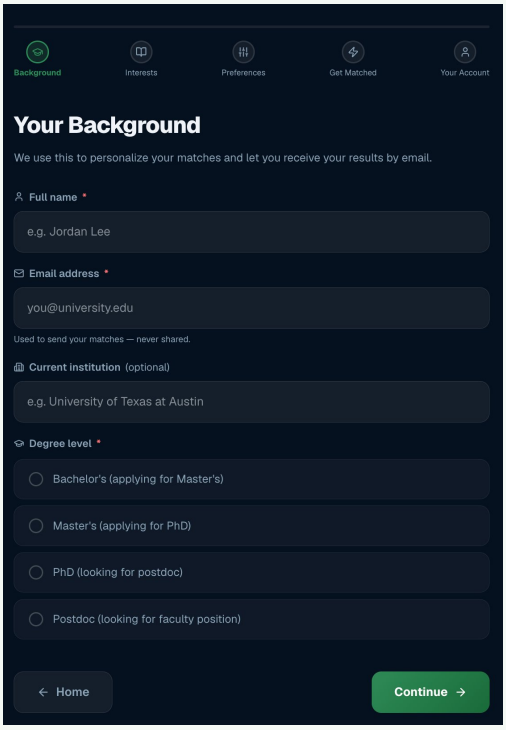
Once you confirm your email, you will be guided through the onboarding flow. The whole process takes about three minutes and you can return to edit anything later.

We send your matches to the email you register with. We never share your email with professors or any third party.



The sign-in page.

Filling out your profile



Onboarding step 1.

The onboarding flow asks for several pieces of information. Each one shapes the matching. The form is in five steps, starting with your background and moving through your research interests, preferences, and account setup.

On the first step, choose your degree level: Bachelor's applying for Master's, Master's applying for PhD, PhD looking for postdoc, or Postdoc looking for a faculty position. This shapes which kinds of advisors and institutions you'll see in your matches.

The remaining steps capture the substance of your research direction:

- **Subfields:** Select the geoscience subfields you want to pursue (seismology, geothermal, atmospheric chemistry, planetary science, etc.). You can choose up to three. Be specific. If you select "seismology" but your real interest is volcano seismology, the matching will include broader seismology than you want.
- **Research interests:** A free-text description of what you want to study. Write 2-3 specific sentences. Generic statements ("I want to study earthquakes") match fewer relevant professors than specific ones ("I want to study the source mechanics of slow slip events using geodetic and seismic data").
- **Ideal project:** Describe what you would actually want to work on for a 4-6 year PhD. This is one of the strongest signals our Team uses to find your best matches.
- **Career stage and background:** Your degree, institution, and any prior research. This helps match you with advisors whose lab culture fits your experience level.
- **CV:** Optional at signup, required for the Coach. You can fill this out in the CV Builder later or upload an existing CV.

CHAPTER 5

Your match funnel

Once your profile is complete, you can generate your match funnel. This is GeoSciMatcher's core workflow: a curated set of 30 advisor candidates selected from the global geoscience research community, presented through two curated PDF guides plus an Active Funded Labs reference.

How the funnel works

When you click "Generate funnel" from the funnel page, our Team reviews your profile against a curated network of 500,000+ geoscience researchers. Each candidate is scored against your research interests, ideal project, subfields, and career-stage preferences. The top 30 candidates are organized into two curated PDF guides and delivered to your email within about a minute. A separate Active Funded Labs reference is generated alongside the guides when your subfields have current grant coverage.

Your two curated PDF guides

Research Fit

The top 10 candidates from your 30 ranked by topic overlap with your stated interests. Each entry includes the professor's institution, their three most relevant research topics, their h-index, and their most-cited recent publications. This is the lens to use when your priority is finding advisors whose current work most closely matches what you want to study.

Career Stage

The same 30 candidates grouped by career stage: early-career assistant professors, mid-career associates and full professors with active groups, and senior figures with established programs. Each group has different application dynamics. Early-career professors are typically more available and growing their labs aggressively. Senior figures often have established processes but may have less time for unconnected applicants.

The Active Funded Labs reference

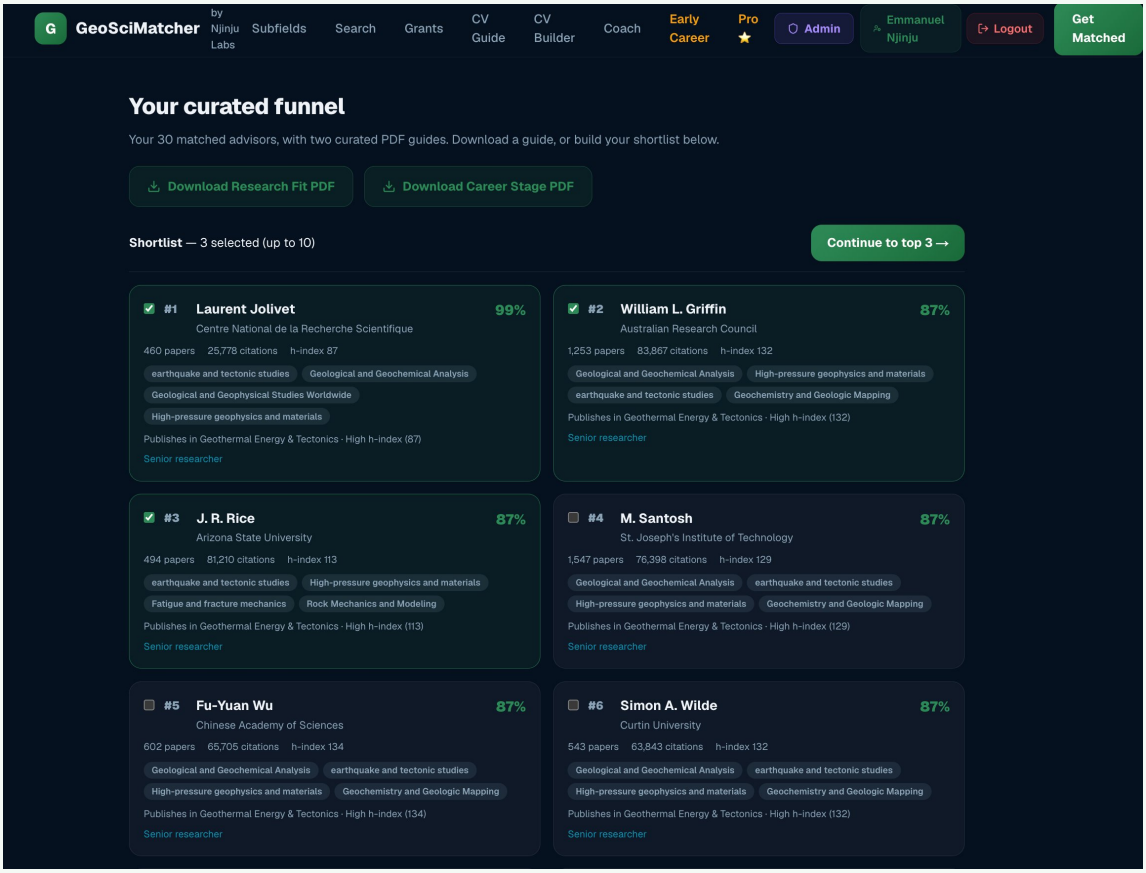
Separate from the two curated guides above, the Active Funded Labs reference is an independent list of geoscience labs in your subfield that currently hold active NSF, NIH, or DOE grants. Unlike Research Fit and Career Stage, which both work over the same 30-candidate shortlist, Active Funded Labs is its own pool drawn directly from federal grant records. These are professors who have already secured the funding to support new students; reaching out to them when their grants are mid-cycle is

often well-timed. The reference is available when your selected subfields have current federal grant coverage. Some narrow subfields may not have an active funded-labs list available, in which case the funnel will show only the two curated guides — reported honestly on your funnel page rather than padded with weaker matches.

Reading the results

The funnel page shows your two curated guides and the Active Funded Labs reference where applicable, with download links for each PDF and a live view of all 30 candidates. You can click into any candidate to see their full profile, recent publications, and topic breakdown. The on-page version updates if you regenerate the funnel; the PDFs are snapshots you can save and reference offline.

If a section shows partial or empty results, this is usually because our Team could not find sufficient matches in that lens. For example, very narrow subfields may have fewer than 10 actively-funded labs. We report these cases honestly rather than padding the results with weaker matches.



Your curated funnel page with shortlist progress.

CHAPTER 6

Shortlist and top 3

Thirty candidates is a starting point. You probably will not pursue all of them. The shortlist and top-3 workflow helps you narrow down to the advisors you actually want to reach out to.

Building your shortlist

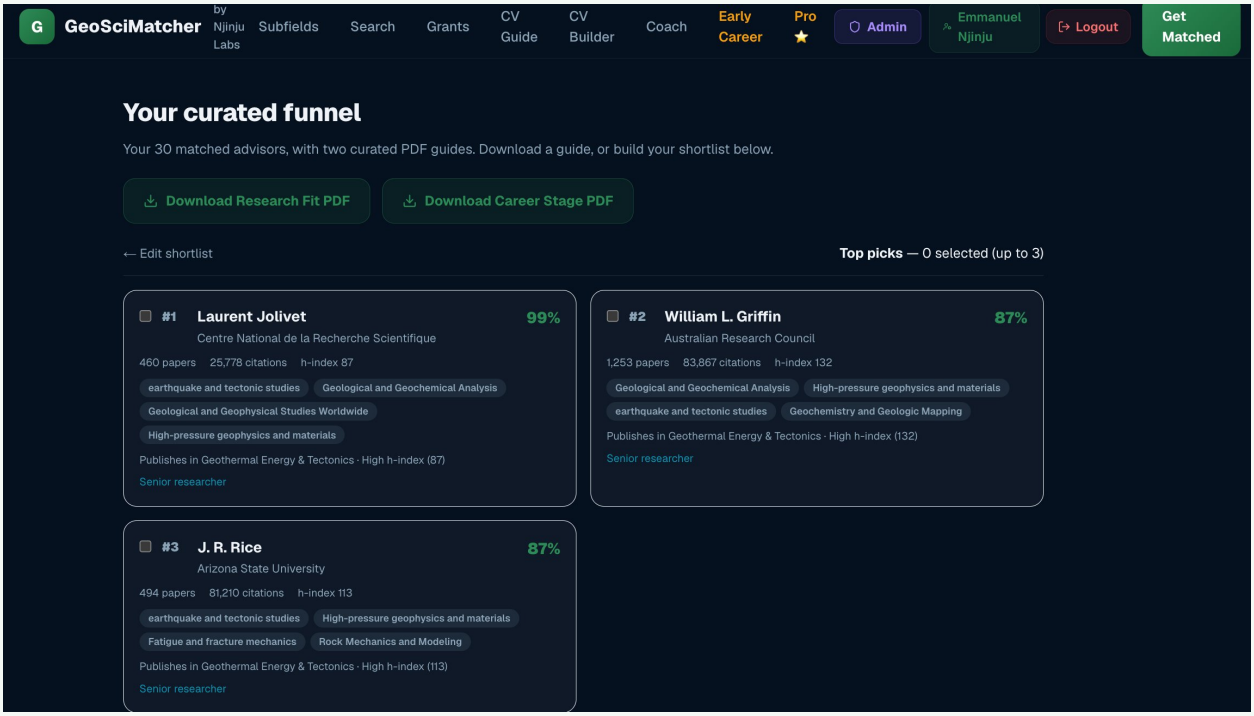
From the funnel page, you can mark candidates as shortlist entries by clicking the shortlist icon on each candidate card. The shortlist holds up to 10 candidates: the professors you find interesting enough to research further but have not yet committed to contacting.

Use the shortlist as a holding space. Read each candidate's recent publications, check their lab website, and see if their work resonates beyond the topic-match score. Some candidates look great in the funnel but have moved away from the topics you care about; others look less prominent on paper but turn out to be excellent fits when you read their actual work.

Selecting your top 3

From the shortlist, choose three advisors as your top 3. These are the professors you commit to reaching out to. The top-3 selection drives the rest of the workflow: cold-email guidance, Coach sessions, and outreach materials are all generated specifically for these three.

Choosing the right three matters. Pick advisors whose current work genuinely interests you, whose labs are funded and active, and where you would actually go if accepted. A focused top 3 produces better outreach than a scattered one.



The top-3 selection view after shortlisting.

CHAPTER 7

Professional guidance on cold emails

Our Team provides personalized guidance on cold emails for each professor in your top 3. You receive a tailored message in your inbox that you can review, refine, and send from your own email address. The result reads as a thoughtful, individually-crafted email rather than a templated outreach.

Why guidance is sent to you, not directly to professors

Cold emails sent through a third-party service land in spam. Cold emails from .edu addresses land in inboxes. We made a deliberate decision early on that GeoSciMatcher would never send emails on your behalf to professors. Our Team prepares the guidance; you send the email from your own account. This is better for deliverability, more honest in its representation, and respects the relationship between you and the professor as a real person-to-person communication.

Per-tier guidance cadence

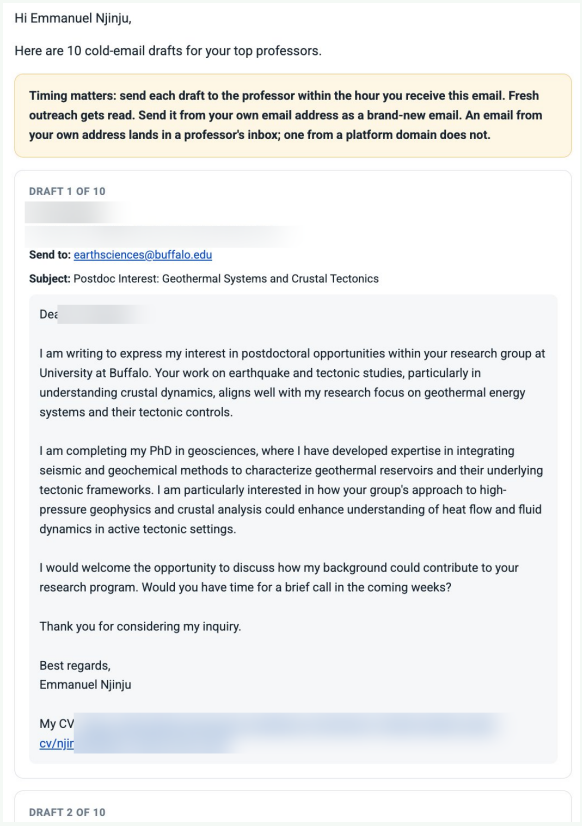
- **Free:** One round of guidance per month, covering all three of your top-3 professors.
- **Pro:** One round every two weeks. This higher cadence allows for follow-up messages and refined wording based on what is and isn't working.
- **Premium:** Two rounds per week (Monday and Thursday). For applicants in the active application window, this cadence supports rapid iteration.

Sending the email

When a round of guidance arrives in your inbox, open each message, review it, make any adjustments that reflect your voice, and send it to the professor from your own email. We recommend doing this within an hour of receiving the guidance; the freshness of the message matters less than the consistency of your outreach pattern. Sending soon after also means the research context referenced in the message is most current.

You can also request guidance on demand from the /matches page in your account, independent of the cron cadence. This is useful when you want to follow up after a professor has responded or when you want to refine an earlier message before sending.

What makes this guidance different


Hi Emmanuel Njinju,

Here are 10 cold-email drafts for your top professors.

Timing matters: send each draft to the professor within the hour you receive this email. Fresh outreach gets read. Send it from your own email address as a brand-new email. An email from your own address lands in a professor's inbox; one from a platform domain does not.

DRAFT 1 OF 10

Send to: earthsciences@buffalo.edu

Subject: Postdoc Interest: Geothermal Systems and Crustal Tectonics

Dea

I am writing to express my interest in postdoctoral opportunities within your research group at University at Buffalo. Your work on earthquake and tectonic studies, particularly in understanding crustal dynamics, aligns well with my research focus on geothermal energy systems and their tectonic controls.

I am completing my PhD in geosciences, where I have developed expertise in integrating seismic and geochemical methods to characterize geothermal reservoirs and their underlying tectonic frameworks. I am particularly interested in how your group's approach to high-pressure geophysics and crustal analysis could enhance understanding of heat flow and fluid dynamics in active tectonic settings.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my background could contribute to your research program. Would you have time for a brief call in the coming weeks?

Thank you for considering my inquiry.

Best regards,
Emmanuel Njinju

My CV
cv/njir

DRAFT 2 OF 10

Example email draft.

Our Team prepares each email referencing the professor's specific recent publications and funded research. The guidance names a concrete area where your interests overlap with the professor's and proposes a specific reason for the conversation.

We do not use generic templates. The aim is outreach that demonstrates you have actually read the professor's work, which is the single most reliable signal that an applicant is worth responding to.

Each draft is a complete, send-ready email. You read it, adjust where needed to fit your voice, and send from your own .edu address. The draft includes the recipient, subject line, body, and signature.

CHAPTER 8

The Coach (Pro)

The GeoSciMatcher Coach is the Pro tier's signature feature. It is a guided conversation with our Team that walks you through preparing your outreach materials end-to-end: polishing your CV, brainstorming a specific project to pitch each of your top-3 professors, drafting a 2-minute video script, and reviewing your recorded video for delivery quality.

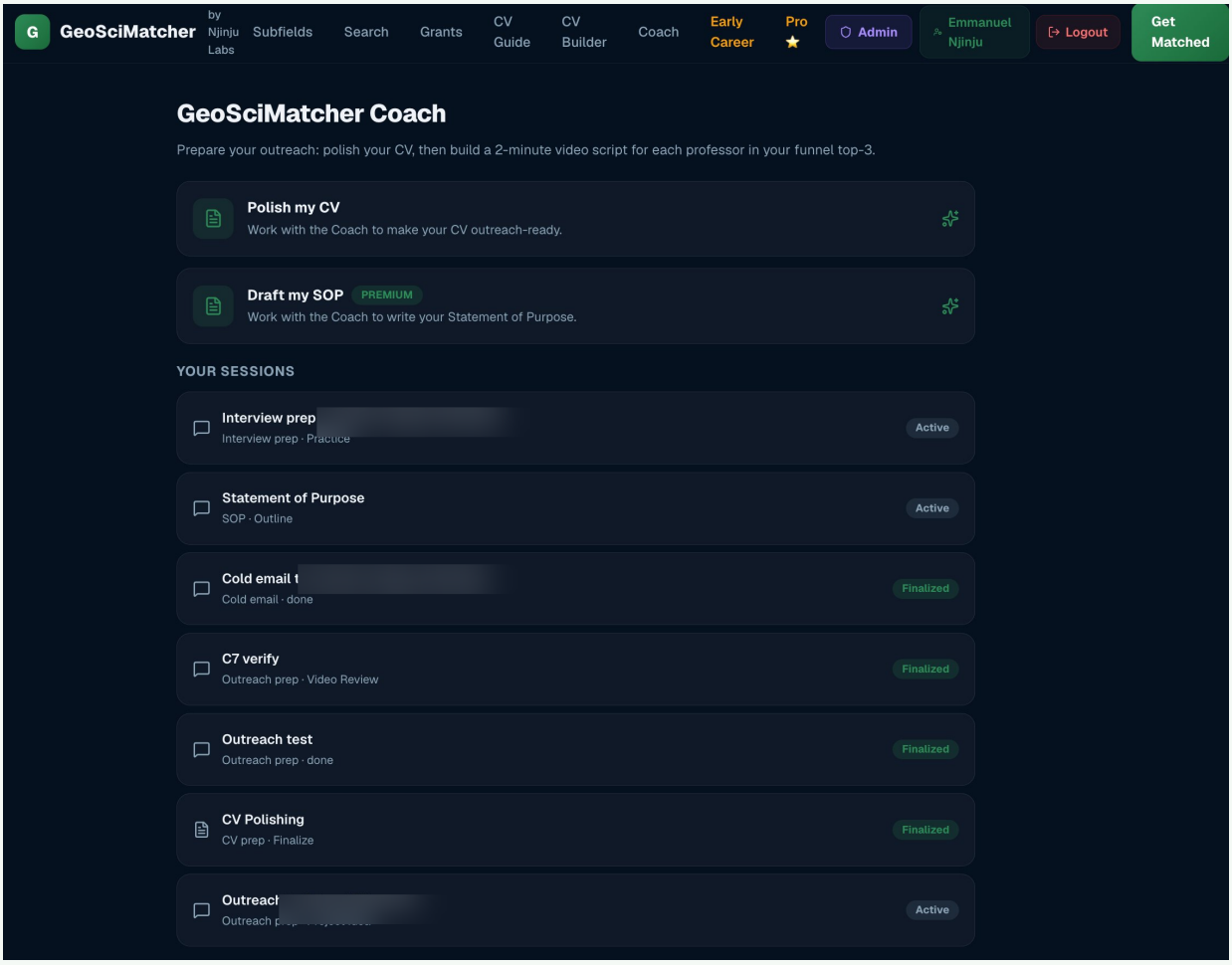
How you enter Coach sessions

The Coach has two distinct entry surfaces, reflecting the structure of the workflow. CV polishing is something you do once before reaching out to anyone, so it lives on the Coach landing page at /coach as a top-level workflow. Outreach prep is professor-specific — a different project, video script, and pitch for each professor you contact — so it starts from the funnel page where you have selected your top 3, not from the Coach landing.

From the Coach landing page, you start CV polishing by clicking **Polish my CV**. Premium subscribers also see **Draft my SOP** for Statement of Purpose work. Outreach prep does not have a button on the Coach landing; you start an outreach prep session by going to your funnel, entering the top-3 selection stage, and clicking **Coach this outreach** on a selected candidate. Each top-3 selection gets its own outreach prep session.

CV polishing

When you open a CV prep session, our Team reads through your existing CV and proposes concrete, sectioned revisions. We suggest stronger wording for your research summaries, identify experience worth emphasizing, flag gaps that need filling, and propose formatting improvements. You accept each revision or push back; accepted revisions are saved directly to your CV in your account.



The Coach landing page: Polish my CV (Pro) and Draft my SOP (Premium). Outreach prep is entered from the funnel top-3.

Outreach prep: the 4-step workflow

Each outreach prep session walks through four steps for one professor:

Step 1: Grant context

We surface the professor's currently-funded research, drawing from NSF, NIH, and DOE grant records. We summarize what the professor is actually working on right now, not just what they have published in the past. This is the foundation for everything else.

Step 2: Project brainstorm

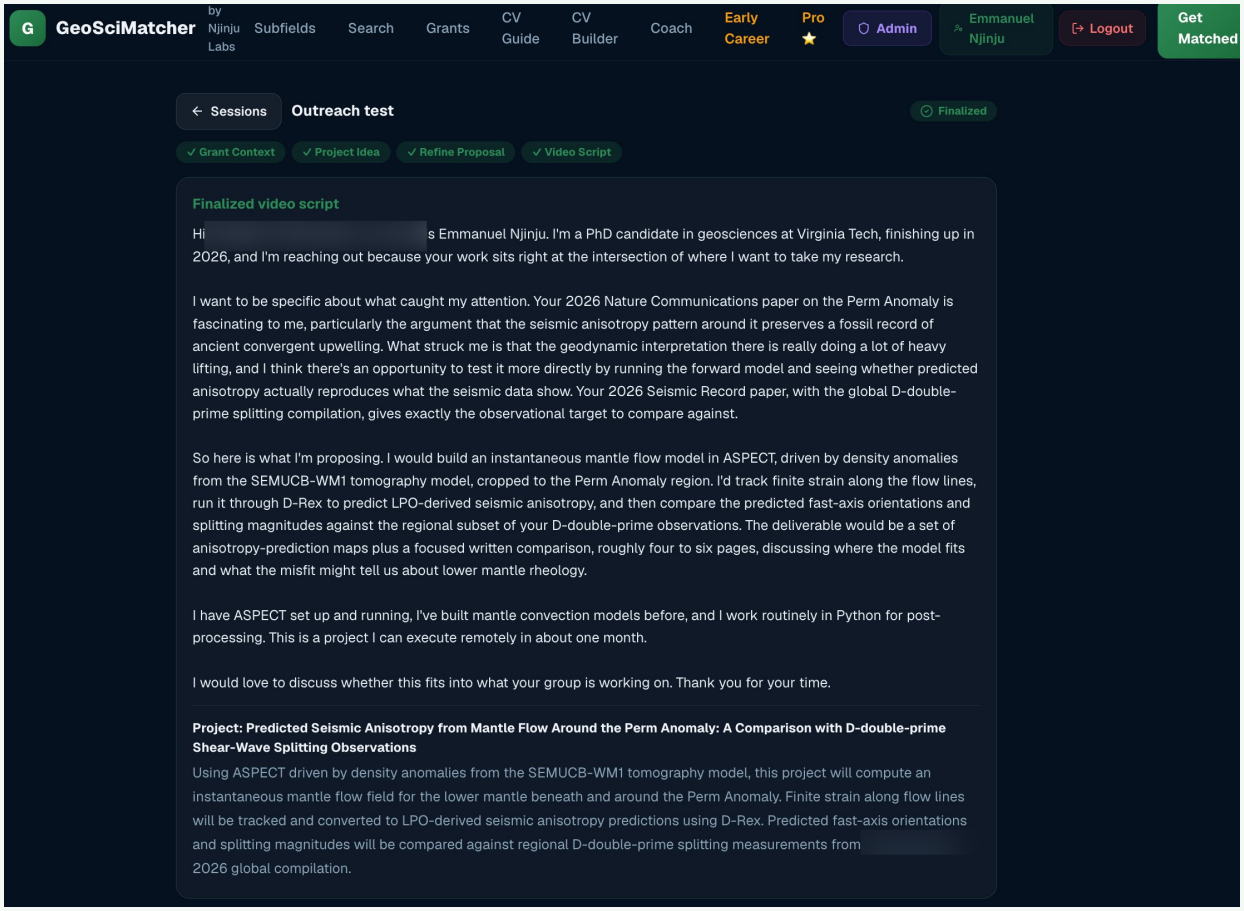
Based on the grant context, our Team helps you brainstorm a specific 1-month remote project you could propose. The project should fit the professor's funded research and be something you can credibly deliver remotely in a month. We ask questions about your skills and steer you toward a project that demonstrates relevant capability.

Step 3: Proposal refinement

You iterate with our Team until your proposal is concrete and compelling. We push back on overly broad ideas, suggest tightenings, and help you articulate why this specific project would extend the professor's work.

Step 4: Video script

Once the proposal is refined, our Team works with you to write a 2-minute video script that pitches your project to the professor. You can request revisions until the script reads in your voice. When you finalize the script, it is saved as the session deliverable.



A finalized outreach_prep session: the video script and the structured project proposal.

Recording your video

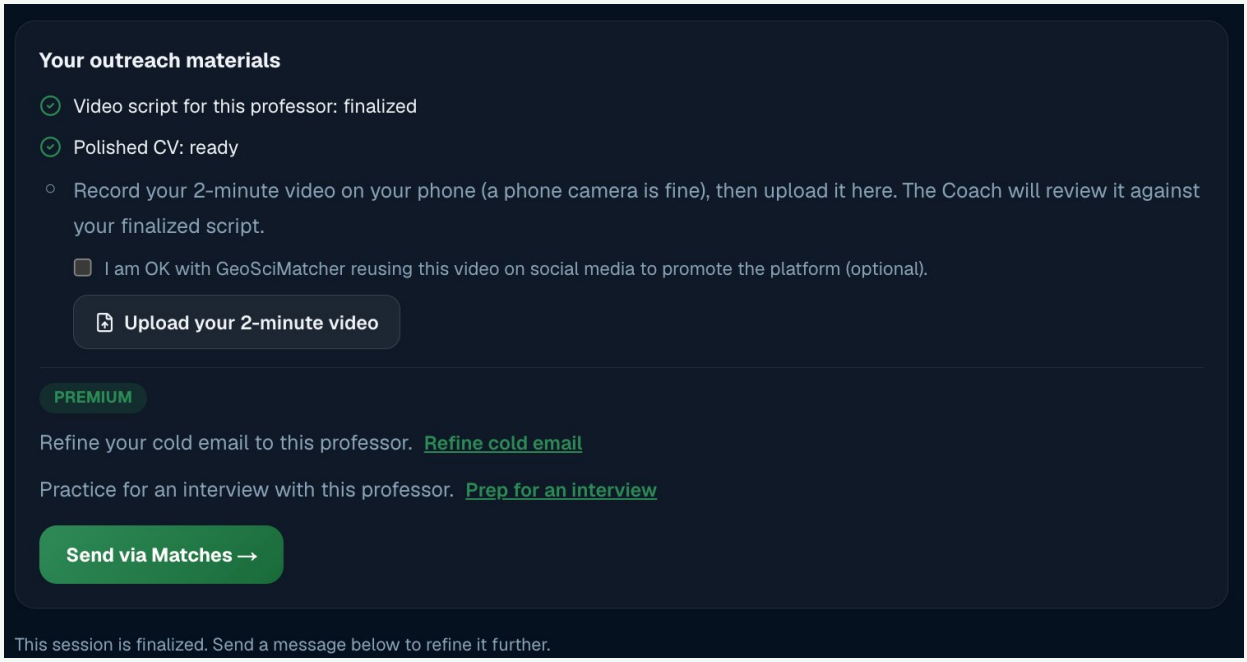
After finalizing the script, you record the 2-minute video yourself on your phone or computer and upload it to GeoSciMatcher. Our Team transcribes it and reviews the recorded delivery against your finalized script.

Team review of your recording

We compare your spoken delivery to the script you finalized. We flag any major departures, identify sections where you might have rushed or hesitated, and surface suggestions for what to fix before sending the video to the professor. Common feedback includes pacing issues, missing key talking points from the script, awkward phrasing in the recorded delivery, and opportunities to strengthen the proposal pitch.

Social media reuse (optional)

When you upload your video, you have the option to opt in to letting GeoSciMatcher feature it as social media content (with your name and consent). This is entirely optional. Opted-in videos may be shared on the GeoSciMatcher social channels to help other applicants see what good outreach looks like.



Your outreach materials card with the video upload step and Premium next-steps.

CHAPTER 9

Coach v2 (Premium)

Premium subscribers unlock Coach v2, which adds three new session types to the Coach: cold email refinement, Statement of Purpose drafting, and interview preparation. These are the kinds of support that have traditionally only been available to students with personal mentors or paid consulting services.

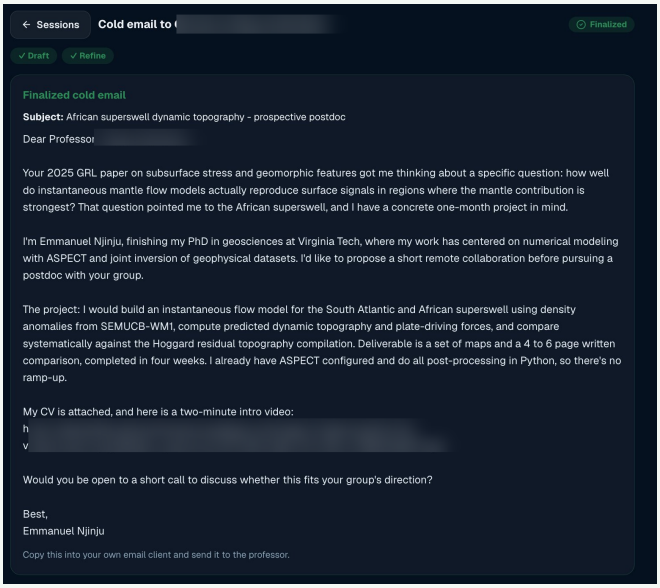
Each Coach v2 session type has its own natural entry point. Statement of Purpose drafting starts from the Coach landing page at /coach via the **Draft my SOP** button. Cold email refinement and interview preparation are accessed from inside a finalized outreach prep session for a specific professor — once you have a completed video script and project proposal for that professor, the **Refine cold email** and **Prep for an interview** buttons appear within that session. This keeps the professor's context attached to each Premium workflow rather than requiring you to re-enter it.

Cold email refinement

Cold email refinement is a per-professor workshop. Each session is attached to one specific professor from your top 3 — the professor whose outreach prep session you just completed — and refines the cold email you will send to that professor specifically.

The session opens with the professor's name, funded research, and the 1-month project proposal you developed during outreach prep already in context. Our Team works with you to tighten the email: sharper opening, more specific reference to the professor's recent work, clearer articulation of why this project would extend their research, and a stronger close that invites a reply.

Because the session is professor-specific, each top-3 professor gets their own refinement workshop. The refined output reads as a substantive research overture grounded in that professor's funded work, with the specific 1-month project proposal you can credibly deliver.

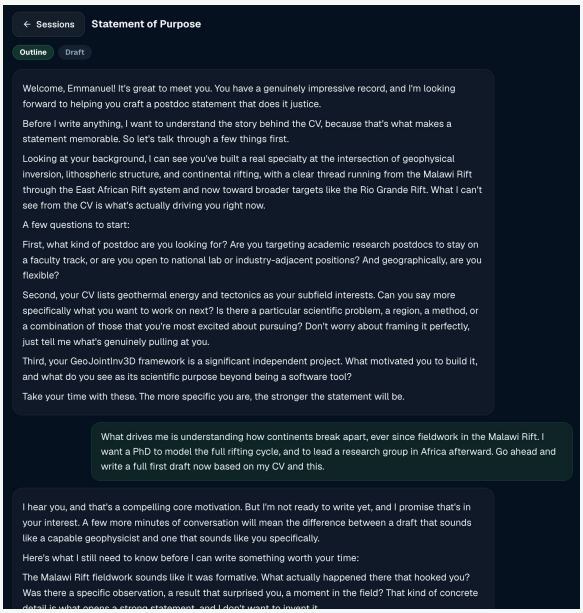


A refined cold email for one professor.

Statement of Purpose drafting

The SoP is the single most important written component of a PhD application. In Coach v2, our Team walks you through structuring an effective SoP: your research motivation, your specific preparation, your fit with the target program, and your plans for the doctoral work. We help you articulate each section in language that demonstrates research maturity and clarity of purpose, rather than the generic language that fills most SoPs.

Interview preparation



A Statement of Purpose session.

Once professors begin responding, you may be invited to interview. Our Team walks you through likely questions, helps you craft strong answers grounded in your actual research interests, and coaches you on the technical questions specific to your subfield.

Sessions can be repeated as interviews approach, with each round refining your preparation. SoP and interview preparation use the same conversational approach: the Coach asks clarifying questions, pushes back on generic framing, and helps you articulate your motivation in a way that sounds like you specifically rather than a generic capable applicant.

Premium subscriptions are capped at 5 months and automatically revert to Pro afterward. This reflects the typical application cycle: intensive preparation during the active window, then continued access to the core Pro features (CV prep, outreach prep) once interviews are concluded.

How to get the most from GeoSciMatcher

Across hundreds of applicants and dozens of advisor interactions, a few patterns have emerged for what separates the applicants who get strong responses from those who don't. We give you the tools; how you use them matters.

Be specific in your profile

The single biggest determinant of match quality is the specificity of your research interests and ideal project descriptions. Write like a senior undergraduate or early-career researcher, not like a high-school student exploring a hobby. Specific phrasing produces specific matches.

Read each professor's recent work before reaching out

The email guidance our Team provides references each professor's recent publications. Read at least one of those papers before sending. When the professor responds and asks why you're interested in their work, you should have a real answer that goes beyond what the message says.

Send outreach from your own .edu email

Cold emails from .edu addresses get inbox placement; cold emails from generic addresses go to spam. If you do not yet have a .edu email, use the most professional address you have. Always send from your own account, not from a third-party service.

Follow up after 10-14 days

Most professors do not respond to the first email. A short, polite follow-up after roughly two weeks often gets a response. Do not follow up more than twice; if there is no response after the second attempt, move on to other candidates in your shortlist.

Invest in the Coach if you can

The free tier gets you to the doorstep. Working with our Team through the Coach helps you walk through it. If your application matters to you, the Pro subscription is the highest-leverage investment you can make in the preparation process.

Getting started today

The hardest part of the PhD application process is starting. GeoSciMatcher is designed to make starting straightforward, no matter where you are in your preparation. If you are six months out from your application deadline, you have time for the full workflow. If you are six weeks out, you can still get meaningful matching and outreach support.

Start your account at geoscimatcher.vercel.app

Free forever for students · No credit card required · Sign up with your email and begin the onboarding flow.

A note on the application cycle

PhD application deadlines in the United States typically fall between November and January for fall admission. Many top programs have deadlines as early as December 1st. Most international applicants are advised to begin outreach 4-6 months before the application deadline, which means starting in the summer for the following fall's applications.

Stay in touch

GeoSciMatcher is built and maintained by Njinju Labs LLC. If you have questions, encounter issues, or want to share your application outcomes (we love hearing where our users land), reach out through the contact form on the website. We read every message.

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