

Job Search Correspondence Handbook

Information provided by:

Career Development Center

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Job Search Correspondence: Getting Started

The examples of professional correspondence provided in this handout should be used as just samples. The Career Development Center is here to help you craft your original business correspondence that highlights your unique writing style.

In addition to writing with your unique style, all correspondence should be tailored to the employer. If you met several people on your interview, consider crafting a genuine and distinctive letter to each person to show thoughtfulness and effort.

Just like your resume, there are no straight cut rules about what to write in a letter. You must, however, be knowledgeable about guidelines and etiquette of business correspondence. Some guidelines, such as formatting for a cover letter, salutations and follow up procedures, are important to consider.

Handwritten notes are personal and can offer an employer a glimpse into your personality, far more than a typed document. A handwritten note might appear very thoughtful to an employer when most of communication is electronic in this day and age.

A typed thank you note needs its own praise. A typed thank you note or thank you e-mail allows the job searcher to be prompt with showing appreciation, as well as provides a formal and professional tone (if done correctly).

The Career Development Center is able to help you decide which mode of communication is best for your job search.

WRITING COVER LETTERS

The purpose of the cover letter, like the resume, is to make a prospective employer want to interview you. Think of these topics while writing your letter:

1. The letter should introduce you to the employer.
2. The letter should highlight experiences in the resume and how those experiences can meet the organization's needs.
3. The letter should show that you are interested in the position.

**** AN EMPLOYER WILL USUALLY READ EVERY WORD OF A WELL-WRITTEN COVER LETTER, BUT NOT NECESSARILY EVERY WORD OF YOUR RESUME. ****

A Standard Cover Letter Format

- First paragraph:** Identifies the job and you. Brief, to the point, and direct. Express your genuine interest in the position.
- Second paragraph:** Identifies some special skills, attributes, or experiences that make you the right candidate, unequaled by peers, and worthy of consideration by the employer.
- Last paragraph:** Identifies a time frame, a measure of assertiveness about getting an interview, and your eagerness to pursue this position. Your telephone number and/or e-mail address will be included in-text in the last paragraph.

Cover Letter Tips:

- Keep the letter brief.
- Include the name of the Hiring Manager whenever possible.
- Elaborate on what distinguishes you from the other applicants.
- A cover letter is not a memoir, but rather a glimpse of what you can offer an organization.
- Use a block format for your letter. (See page 3)

Cover Letter Sample

Your Street Address
City, State Zip

January 17, 20XX

Full name
Hiring Manager
Facility Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear [enter full name]:

This letter is in reference to the Occupational Therapy position listed on the [enter facility]'s Human Resources website. I am a senior Occupational Therapy student at Thomas Jefferson University, and I am seeking full-time employment upon graduation in May 20XX.

The position you outlined would allow me to contribute my clinical education, research skills, and volunteer experience I have gained as an Occupational Therapy student, as well as my past work experience that has involved a great deal of organization, discipline, and responsibility. My active leadership and service roles, such as my participation in Leadership LIVE, have also helped me develop strong interpersonal and communication skills, which I believe would make me an asset to your organization.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you how I might meet your needs. You may contact me anytime at [enter phone number], or [enter e-mail address].

Sincerely,
[4 spaces if mailed or faxed, 2 spaces if e-mailed]
[Handwrite signature if mailing or faxing]

Your Typed Name [include for all formats- mailing, faxing or e-mailing]

WRITING THANK YOU LETTERS

Although often overlooked, thank you notes are just as essential as any other part of the interview. Thank you letters are an extra element of exposure during the interview process. Thank you notes are most effective if written within 24-48 hours of the interview.

The decision to hand-write or type your thank you note will depend largely on your handwriting. Handwriting can add a personal touch; however, a typed note may be easier for the employer to read. This decision will be based on your own preference.

Things to consider as you begin to write thank you notes:

- Write a separate note for each person you met with on your interview.
- If you feel insecure about how you answered a question, a thank you note gives you the opportunity to articulate and/or clarify your response.
- Be future focused i.e. "I look forward to hearing from you."

Thank You Letter Sample

Your Street Address
City, State Zip

January 17, 20XX

Full name
Hiring Manager
Facility Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear [enter full name]:

Express your appreciation. Individualize this letter; employers will sense if you are using a template for a thank you letter.

Refer to something that was discussed during the interview. Reiterate your interest in the position/organization.

Provide any other information that wasn't previously given. This is an opportunity to redeem yourself if you did not answer a question or articulate your thoughts properly in the interview.

Sincerely,
[4 spaces if mailed or faxed, 2 spaces if e-mailed]
[Handwrite signature if mailing or faxing]

Your Typed Name [include for all formats- mailing, faxing or e-mailing]

WRITING WITHDRAWAL LETTERS

As a job seeker, you are encouraged to follow ethical guidelines in your job search. One important ethical guideline is to withdraw from interviewing when your job search is completed. Inform other employers that you are out of the running by sending a letter.

Withdrawal Letter Sample

Your Street Address
City, State Zip

January 17, 20XX

Full Name
Hiring Manager
Hospital Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear [enter full name]:

Concisely state your decision with a brief explanation. (i.e. "I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application for the [job title] at [enter organization]"). I have accepted a position at [enter organization]. It was a difficult decision for me to make as I enjoyed meeting with you.

End on a positive note. Remember, you will most likely work with or encounter this organization again!

Sincerely,
[4 spaces if mailed or faxed, 2 spaces if e-mailed]
[Handwrite signature if mailing or faxing]

Your Typed Name [include for all formats- mailing, faxing or e-mailing]

WRITING ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE

Using LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an online networking tool that many professionals use to expand relationships and keep current in a field. You may use LinkedIn to your advantage by reaching out to people that might have information about jobs in your field. It is important to remember that you must not bug people to get information about a job; the best way to network is to ask general questions about someone's profession and how you can help them in their field as well.

Be sure to check out the LinkedIn tutorial at: <http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-1/>

For example:

_____ - good afternoon. I came across your background on LinkedIn and noticed we have a few things in common including our time at TJU and a shared interest in Habitat for Humanity. I would like to connect with you by phone this week to see if we might be able to help each other. How is the best way to reach you and what days can you chat for a few minutes?

Sincerely,
John Smith

Using Facebook

To play it safe, avoid contacting potential employers using Facebook. Any public information employers find out about you on the internet can be used against you in an interview and throughout the hiring process. For more information on creating a good online presence, reference the Digital Dirt packet in the Career Resource Library.

Using Email

- Use a specific subject header for your email.
- Be brief in your communication. Save your questions for the interview.
- Do not use emoticons ☺ or slang (i.e. lol).
- Avoid multi-colored backgrounds, fancy fonts and clip art.

A minor mistake in an email will set a bad impression in your job search. Mistakes and poor formatting send a message that you might be unqualified and unprofessional.

WRITING PROSPECTING LETTERS

Reaching out before a position is posted in an organization gives you an upper hand in regards to your exposure and knowledge about departmental trends in the organization.

Prospecting Letter Template

Your Street Address
City, State Zip

January 17, 20XX

Full Name
Hiring Manager
Hospital name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear [enter full name]:

I noticed that you have visited my campus twice in the past year at Thomas Jefferson University's Career Fair. I am writing to inquire about employment opportunities within your hospital. Next May, I will graduate with a BSN in Nursing.

During my externship at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, I worked with experienced nurses and hospital staff for eight weeks. This work experience exposed me to the many job duties of nursing well beyond the scope of my nursing clinicals. One aspect of my externship that has prepared me as a qualified professional was [enter event, story or situation].

In addition to my externship and clinicals, I am very active on campus through [enter organizations]. These activities have developed my leadership, teamwork and time-management skills.

I recognize that you are very busy, but I am hoping that I can speak with you about opportunities within [enter organization]. If you have any questions about my qualifications, please don't hesitate to contact me at 215-555-6666 or Jeff.Jefferson@jefferson.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
[4 spaces if mailed or faxed, 2 spaces if e-mailed]
[Handwrite signature if mailing or faxing]

Your Typed Name [include for all formats- mailing, faxing or e-mailing]