

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

The Heller School
FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

CAREER
Development Center

Career Guide

Thank You Notes

Make a lasting impression

<http://heller.brandeis.edu/careers/>

Thank You Notes

Why send a Thank You note?

Thank you notes are an integral part of your career strategy and should be sent for multiple reasons in addition to following a job/internship interview or informational interview. If someone spoke on your behalf to a potential employer, forwarded your resume to a contact, provided you with a contact for an informational interview, provided you with great advice—these are all great reasons! **People appreciate being thanked!**

A common question today is whether the thank you note should be handwritten, emailed or both? We recommend that for a job interview, you email a thank you note **within 24 hours** and to really stand out, follow up with a short second handwritten note. This may seem like a lost art but it is often seen as genuine and going the extra mile.

For the job interview thank you, this is an opportunity to:

1. Show appreciation for the employer's interest in you.
2. Reiterate your interest in the position and in the organization.
3. Explain, restate, or clarify any potential misunderstandings that occurred during the interview.
4. Review or remind the employer about your qualifications for the position. If you thought of something you forgot to mention in the interview, mention it in the thank you note.
5. Demonstrate that you have good manners and professional etiquette.
6. A chance to stand out from all the other candidates they have interviewed and re-emphasize your strengths, accomplishments and skills.

Tips to keep in mind for the Thank You Note:

It's always important to say thank you after a phone or informational interview, first round interview and after a second or third round interview. It's also important to thank everyone you interviewed with individually.

Act Fast - Plan to send out your thank you within 24 hours of the interview

Group Notes - Are group notes appropriate? If you were interviewed by two people at the same time, noting them both together with a personalized note may work but typically individual notes with personalized content is best. Choose your approach based on what you think will be most in keeping with the personality of the organization.

Make an Impression - Use your note as a way to stand out from the crowd and make a good impression. Always go under the assumption that each person you interviewed with either sits next to one another or shares your thank you note - Make each note personalized and slightly different.

Customize- Instead of writing a generic thank-you note, share what a pleasure you had meeting X Organization's staff and your excitement about the potential for X position. The more personal, the more genuine it will come across.

Highlight- You want to include a few sentences that highlight your biggest selling points for this role. What are your main reasons for applying for the position and why do you think you're the best fit?

What You Didn't Say - If there was something that you wish you had mentioned during the interview, here's your chance to say it by including it in your thank you note.

Thank You Note Basics - Each thank you note should include a thank you for the interview, your interest in the jobs, your qualifications and skills, and a final thank you.

Short and Simple - Keep your thank you notes short and simple, but do use the note to reiterate your interest in the job, your enthusiasm for the company and to sell yourself as the ideal candidate.

Proof Your Note - Spell check and proof your thank you note. Then ask someone else to proof it for you. That way you will be sure it's perfect.

The Bottom Line - It is always appropriate to say thank you! If you are not sure whether you should thank someone, think positively and spend a few minutes saying thank you.

Correct Spelling Of Names: If you weren't able to collect business cards and are unsure of the spelling or the names of the interviewers, try first to find them on LinkedIn or the company website. If that doesn't work, call the company and ask for the proper spelling/title.

Thank You Note Format:

Thank you notes should be personalized to each person that interviewed you. Although you want to make sure your note touches upon key points, you want to make sure the note is not so long that the person doesn't want to take the time to read it.

The first paragraph

Immediately thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you (remind him/her about the position you interviewed for and the date of your interview). You can also include information about your impressions about the company and items you discussed:

"Thank you for taking the time to meet on Tuesday, August 15th to discuss the Policy Analyst position. I really enjoyed hearing about your journey from the financial world in New York before landing at the State Department; it was extremely interesting hearing about the anticipated growth of the department as a result of the recent policy shift."

Important Tip: While you are being interviewed, take a few notes and write interesting items discussed next to the name of each person you interview with. Do this while everything is still fresh in your mind and reference it later in the personalized thank you note:

"I was especially excited to learn that you are looking for someone with field experience in Africa. As we discussed, in addition to my Peace Corps experience in Nigeria, I am a Board Member of an International NGO focused on microenterprise in Sub Saharan Africa."

The second paragraph

Reiterate your sincere interest in the position and company and include any additional information that was not brought up in the interview which would make you the perfect fit for the position. Tweak them towards the points that the interviewer considered the most important for the position (no more than 2-3 sentences)

"It was clear from our conversation that this position calls for someone with strong analytical skills who can handle multiple projects at once while still producing high quality work on time. All of these qualities align with what I am seeking in my next professional opportunity and are areas at which I have excelled. In addition to what we discussed, I also wanted to mention the article I contributed to while working as a Research Assistant to Professor Howard (www.internationaldevelopment.org/articles)."

The last paragraph

You should let the hiring manager know that you look forward to hearing from them soon, you are available to come in again and are willing to discuss the job further. Include your contact information again. To finish up the note, thank them again for their time.

If the employer requested that you submit samples of your work or some other documentation, these may be sent with the thank you note. Be sure to mention the enclosures in your note:

"As requested, I am forwarding copies of two promotional brochures I developed during my last internship."

Sample Thank You Note

Dear Mr. Adams,

Thank you very much for the kind opportunity to interview with all of you today as it was incredible to learn more about Curry Institute. MEI appeals to me as its focus on different aspects of young people's development is relevant to my professional goals.

My strong interest in this position was further strengthened after hearing how it would allow me to combine my extensive research, analytical and statistic skills within the context of economic and political policy implementation for the development of youth in the Middle East. The area of research for this position is very appealing and would be a natural fit for the direction I am planning on pursuing for my Masters Thesis.

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me today as it reinforced my desire to work for Curry Institute. Please feel free to contact me should any questions arise as you continue through the process.

Best regards,
Andrea Ross
(914) 111-1111
aross@yahoo.com

Sample Thank You Note

704 High Street
Atlanta, GA 02312
March 5, 2010

Social Changes, Inc.
257 River Road
Bath, MA 04011

Dear Ms. Skillman:

I have heard nothing but good things about Social Changes, Inc. so I was thrilled to meet you at the Brandeis "Social Impact Career Fair" last Thursday.

As we discussed on Thursday, I am really excited by the work that Social Changes is doing in the way of asset building in rural communities in the United States. After our conversation, I was once again energized by your commitment to social equality as I share the same commitment. You suggested that I speak with Kathy Goodwin, who is the Assistant Director of the Asset Building Project, about a possible informational interview and to explore possibilities for a professional practicum. I would really appreciate it if you would send me her contact information so I can formally follow-up with her.

Thank you for your consideration. Once again, it was truly a pleasure to meet you here at Brandeis, and I really appreciate you referring me to Ms. Goodwin. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Amy Forest