

Purpose

A thank you letter should be sent as soon as possible after an interview, whether it is a first-round interview, a call-back or an informational interview. Too often students do not realize the importance of a follow-up letter and miss out on this opportunity. An interviewee should never consider a thank you letter as optional. Even if you should fail to receive an offer, the employer will retain a more favorable image of you if you take the time to send a letter of thanks.

Content

Thank the interviewer, restate your interest in the firm/agency/employer, and indicate your willingness to furnish any other information the firm may require to reach a decision.

The same standards apply for a thank you note as for the initial cover letter. If it contains grammatical or typographical errors, is poorly composed, or reflects poor judgment, it could result in knocking you out of the race. Do not use text messaging shorthand abbreviations.

Format

A thank you note is a professional business letter, but may be handwritten rather than typed. Email is appropriate as long as you follow a traditional format and keep the email in a business tone. The most conservative approach is to type and mail a thank you note on plain bond paper. If a certain tone of warmth and friendliness was established during the meeting, or if it is a person you know well, a handwritten note on a plain bond note card works well, provided your penmanship is attractive. You may want to consider investing in personalized thank you notes with your name and contact information to use while you are in law school.

If you are not using personalized stationery, make sure to print your full name on the return address and to sign your full name (legibly). The goal for the interviewee is to get his/her name in front of the interviewer again and this opportunity is lost if the note isn't addressed and signed with care.

A letter may be sent to each interviewer or, if the firm/organization has one, to the recruitment coordinator with a note to pass along your thanks to those with whom you spoke during the interview process. When writing to more than one interviewer, try to personalize each letter by altering at least one sentence in the letter. It can be time consuming, but it may pay off. If you are sending a single letter which thanks everyone you met, take the time to get the names of those with whom you interviewed and make sure you spell their names correctly.

Generally, a thank you letter has three basic parts:

1. Start by thanking the interviewer for taking the time to talk with you. It is generally a good idea to include the actual date on which the interview

occurred.

2. Reaffirm your interest in the firm/organization by pointing out particular issues brought up during the interview that appeal to you. It's a good idea to include a specific reference to something unique that was discussed during the interview so that the interviewer can connect the name with the person interviewed.
3. Close the letter with another word of appreciation, an offer to provide more information and a statement that you look forward to hearing from them.

Resist the temptation to reiterate what was in your resume. Keep it short and to the point.

Note re sending an email thank you: Personally, I think a thank you is a thank you. And e-mail allows you to get a thank you out right away which is handy in situations where a decision may have a quick turnaround time. Just make sure you follow all the general rules of a normal letter (salutation, typo-free, grammatically correct, and your full name and contact info under your name).

Sending thank you notes is a great skill to learn and use not only during the interview process, but once you land your first job and throughout your career.