

## ***Letters Concerning Employment***

For some students the job-seeking process involves interviews at the University Placement Service or Cooperative Education Program and visits to company headquarters; for other job-seekers, it means sending job applications with resumes and hopefully receiving invitations for interviews at company offices. In either case, you will find that additional correspondence will not only be necessary but will also enhance your chances of being the applicant chosen for the job.

The secrets to the success of these letters are in part your timing and also the exactness of detail. Do not allow your letter to sound like every one else's. Avoid using the clichés and generalizations found in so many employment letters. It is also good advice to stay away from form letters. The purpose of your letter is to make yourself stand out from other applicants. If you utilize the aid of a form letter, you may finish your letter quickly, but it will likely be ordinary and lack the finesse to get your qualifications noticed.

## ***Applicant's Request For a Reference***

During your job search, a prospective employer may request a list of references prior to or during an interview. This request may take the form of a response to a written job application, a question on a company application or as an addendum to your resume. Your reference sheet should list the names, addresses and relation to you for each reference.

As a courtesy, you should get in touch with the people you wish to include on your reference list and ask permission to use their names. This contact will allow them to prepare adequate answers to questions about you so they will not be caught by surprise when prospective employers call or write. Also, those contacted can decline you permission, if they wish. You may find it worthwhile to reintroduce yourself to the people on your list, particularly if you have not spoken to them for a while. The suggestions below will be helpful if you need to write a letter to contact your references.

### ***What do you include?***

- Reintroduce yourself. Be sure that your reference remembers the situations the two of you were involved in.
- If you have not spoken to your reference in awhile, it is extremely important to provide a summary of your most recent qualifications and experience.
- Be sure to let the reference know where you are in your studies. List your year in school, your field of study and possibly your career aspirations.
- Formally ask to use the person as a reference and state how the reference will be used.
- Be sure that the reference understands that if you do not hear from them you will assume they do not mind being used as a reference.
- Include a copy of your resume.

*View a model Request for a Reference Letter at PUPR Cooperative Education Program Office.*

### ***Follow-up to an Interview***

The interview follow-up, when you have visited a business location, is a courteous letter of acknowledgment. You may also write a follow-up to an interview when your interview took place on campus. It is a good idea to write a follow-up thank you letter anytime a company has invested time with you. The letter should show the reader that you are thorough, courteous, efficient, and sincerely interested in the job. On the personal level, writing this letter allows you to wrap up your application for the job; it is your last chance to tie up all the loose ends neatly.

#### ***What do you include?***

- Convey your gratitude at being selected for an interview.
- The tone of the letter is courteous and thankful.
- Consider including an analysis of your visit to the company or your interview.
- This may include impressions of the company itself, analysis of the interview proceedings or new facts you learned about the company.
- Include any new information about your qualifications or education since your interview.
- This letter will show the interviewer that you are thorough and sincerely interested in the job.

*View a model Follow-up to an Interview Letter at PUPR Cooperative Education Program Office.*

### ***Inquiry about Cover Letter and Resume***

When you have received no response to your application or cover letter, you might consider writing an inquiry letter. This letter is relatively simple to write considering that you might have no new information to convey, and investing a considerable amount of time at this point seems inefficient. If you still do not receive a response to your application, consider the company a dead end and move on to other opportunities.

#### ***What do you include?***

- Restate the position for which you are applying.
- Include a forecasting statement, which states why you are qualified for the position.
- Give situational examples of your qualifications.
- Update the company by including any new information about your qualifications or education by giving examples.
- State your contact information and when you are available to be contacted.

*View a model Inquiry about Cover Letter and Resume Letter at PUPR Cooperative Education Program Office.*

### ***Follow-Up After No Response to Your Interview***

The follow-up letter required when you receive no response to an interview is the subtlest of the follow-up letters. It is normally employed for two reasons: either the company is painfully slow in making decisions, or you have other offers pending and you want to hurry the decision along. If you have other offers, you must in all fairness contact the firms who have spent money and time on your interviews and visits to the firm before accepting another position. The main purpose of the letter is to request that a decision about your application be made.

#### ***What do you include?***

- Restate the position you interviewed for.
- Make specific reference to your visit to the company or your interview.
- If given a deadline by your interviewer as to when you should expect to hear from the company, state it. Also include any deadlines you have received from other companies.
- Request that action be taken to either inform you of the status of your application or make an employment decision.

Remember to use an appropriate tone when writing this letter -- you don't want to cause the scales to tip the other way!

### ***Acceptance Letter***

The acceptance of a job offer is one of the most pleasant letters to write. Your contact at the company should have sent you a written job offer that briefly reaffirms the offer. This is their way of completing the legal contract between you and the company. It is your responsibility to confirm that you understand the details of the offer. This letter could also be used if the elements of the offer were not clearly stated. Use it to request clarification in your acceptance letter and state explicitly what you are agreeing to. This part is particularly important if critical items are not mentioned in the offer letter or remain vague, as often happens if the offer is made verbally.

#### ***What do you include?***

- Thank the company for the offer.
- Accept the position.
- Restate the terms of your contract. These may include salary, benefits, location and others
- Restate any instructions given to you by the company. These might include your start date or the hours you will be working.
- State your happiness at joining the company.

*View a model Acceptance Letter, at PUPR Cooperative Education Program Office.*

### ***Rejection of Job Offer***

A polite refusal is an applicant's responsibility as well as a professional courtesy. You notify the employer that you are not interested in working for the company and thereby allow him/her to continue to search as quickly as possible. Also closing the door gently, ending negotiation pleasantly on a note of goodwill, makes good sense in terms of the future. In writing the refusal letter, use the indirect plan, giving reasons before saying no as described below.

Do not put off writing refusal letters. They are not crucial to you personally, but they are important to the employer and to others who may be under consideration for the position you are refusing. The sooner you step out of the way, the easier it will be for others.

#### ***What do you include?***

- Thank the company for the offer.
- Be polite, but firmly reject the offer.
- Give reasons why you turned the offer down. Doing this will improve the experience for future applicants.
- Leave the door open in case you wish to apply for another position at the company in the future.

*View a model Rejection of a Job Offer Letter at PUPR Cooperative Education Program Office.*

### ***Request for Further Negotiations***

This letter is similar to both the acceptance and the refusal, except for an added "if" clause. In other words, you would most likely accept the offer if certain conditions are met or addressed.

Either party can instigate negotiations concerning responsibilities, salary, or benefits. Do not be reluctant to ask for adjustments in the offer if you are sure your request is fair. But assess the situation first to determine whether your request will cost you the job. Remember the employment situation may involve both a buyers' and a sellers' market. Ask yourself how difficult it would be for an employer to find someone else for the position that would accept the original terms of the offer.

#### ***What do you include?***

- Thank the employer for the offer.
- Make a direct request for further negotiations or write a conditional statement.
- List the points of your contract that require negotiation and state the reasons for the negotiation.
- Suggest that the employer contact you with their opinions about your points of negotiation.

### ***Letter When You Receive a Rejection***

Consider writing a letter even when you receive a rejection. Sometime later when you have had additional experience or training, you may want to apply to the firm once more. The letter shows that you were extremely interested in working for the particular company and states your interest in applying for another position at a later date.

What do you include?

- Thank the company for considering you for the position.
- Discuss your positive impressions of the company during the entire application process.
- Mention the possibility that you may reapply to the company again at a later date.

*View a model of a Letter When you Receive a Rejection at PUPR Cooperative Education Program Office.*

### **Thank You Letters**

When you know a firm contacted one of your references, you should thank the individual in person or by letter. In your letter, you should show appreciation for the assistance and describe the job you received.

University Placement Service personnel who have been especially helpful or individuals who may have notified you of job openings would be pleased to receive an appreciative note from you once you obtain a job.