

Professional Correspondence

- ✓ Create It
- ✓ Tailor It
- ✓ Wow With It

Career Services & Professional Development

Phone: 210-829-3931

www.uiw.edu/career



**UNIVERSITY OF THE
INCARNATE WORD.**

Professional Correspondence

There are many types of correspondence that can accompany your employment search. Correspondence is extremely important to your professional reputation with a potential employer, and should always come across as genuine and original. Common correspondence includes:

Cover Letter | References | Thank You Letter | Networking Email

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is a first introduction to an employer and describes why you are interested in the company and why you are applying for a particular position. **It expresses your interest in THAT position with THAT company.**

PURPOSE

- A cover letter gives the employer a clear understanding of your skills, abilities and why you are a good fit for their position
- Demonstrates your writing and communication skills
- Conveys your knowledge of the position, interest in the company, and provides context that your resume alone cannot

DEVELOPMENT

- Become familiar with the job description and how your experience relates
- Research the organization to get an idea of how your skills and experiences meet their requirements
- Keep it concise and direct; ask for what you want and keep the letter to one page
- Include the title of the position and how you learned about the job
- Specifically address how your skills and abilities will add value to the organization and role (*tailor the letter specifically to the job description by mirroring key words in your letter*)

EMAIL vs. HARD COPY

- For a hard copy letter, use the same heading as you have in your resume
- In an email, the subject line should include your name, the job title, and/or the posting/Job ID # number
- When emailing your materials, write your cover letter in the body of the email - omit the header, date, and address section; only keep whom the letter is addressed to and the body of the letter
- Make sure to include your email address in the body of email when emailing a letter, in case it is forwarded

AVOID

- Using a generic letter for every position you apply for; be original! Take the time to tailor each cover letter to the particular company and position that you are applying for; be sure to follow the instructions in the job posting, and include any information specifically requested
- Typos, misspelled words and false information – always have someone else proofread before sending
- Using “To Whom it May Concern”! Research the name of the hiring manager; in a pinch, you can use one of the following salutations: Dear Hiring Manager, Dear Hiring Committee, Dear Human Resource Manager, Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Hiring Authority, Dear Decision Maker
- Not following through – tell them when you will be following up, and do it in that timeframe

THREE PARAGRAPH BUSINESS STYLE LETTER

Here's what you should include in each of your paragraphs:

FIRST PARAGRAPH

Introduce yourself and explain how you became aware of the position. If someone has referred you, now is the time to drop his or her name. Give a brief statement about why you are interested in the position.

SECOND PARAGRAPH

Explain how your experience matches the qualifications and how you would be an asset to their team. Expand on experience by giving **specific** details that may not be included on your resume. Show that you are aligned with the company values, and that you will be able to contribute to their overall mission.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Take the initiative to follow-up with them by mentioning specifics about your availability, and that you will be in contact with them. Include your contact information as an invitation for them to reach out to you as well. Thank them for their time and consideration.

Make sure you follow up.

COVER LETTER SAMPLES

YOUR NAME

yourname@gmail.com | (512) 555-5555

Date

Name of Employer
Title/Department
Organization Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr. /Ms. /Dr.:

As a mathematics major at The University of the Incarnate Word with a strong background in teaching and facilitating trainings in an elementary school setting, I was very excited to hear about the recent opening with Teach for America. I was able to speak with Ms. Jane Doe at the recent job fair at UIW, and realized that my education and experience would be a great fit for the Team Leader position.

Teach for America sets a high standard of customer service and educational advancement while addressing the needs of an underserved community, which is something that I have been drawn to in my quest for employment. During my internship at XYZ last semester, I was able to gain valuable experience while acting as team facilitator to a rotating group of 15 freshman students, teaching skills such as team building, conflict resolution and mathematical pedagogies appropriate for elementary school children. During my time at XYZ, I created and implemented a customer satisfaction survey to understand the growing needs of our population, which is still in use today. Based on my experience working in the community with children and my academic background in mathematics, I am confident that I would be an asset to your team.

You will find my resume included so that you may continue to review my qualifications. Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to discussing this opportunity with you further and I will contact you within two weeks to explore job opportunities.

Sincerely,

(Hand written signature if you are mailing a hard copy)

Your Name Typed

COMBINATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT FOCUSED LETTER

Here's what you should include in each section of your letter:

FIRST PARAGRAPH

Introduce yourself and explain how you became aware of the position. If someone has referred you, now is the time to drop his or her name. Give a brief statement about why you are interested in the position. State something you have learned from researching the company.

MIDDLE SECTION

Share some of your key achievements while in school. Expand on experience by including details and bullets that are **not** identical to those in your resume. *(remember this should not be repetitive but an outlet to highlight your accomplishments)* Show that you are aligned with the company values, and that you will be able to contribute to the overall mission.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Take the initiative to follow-up with them by mentioning specifics about your availability and that you will be in contact with them. Thank them for their time and consideration.

YOUR NAME

yourname@gmail.com | (512) 555-5555

Date

Name of Employer
Title/Department
Organization Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Decision Maker: (addressing to a specific person is best)

Your need of a (insert position/job title here) caught my interest. As ABC Software works hard to build clientele and services, my skills and education closely match your growing needs. The enclosed resume will provide you with a brief outline of my experience and accomplishments. In summary, they include the following achievements:

- Designed and implemented new software *(include specifics)*
- Programmed support tools for a 3-D visualization tool
- Tracked, researched, and documented daily customer interactions with 100% accuracy (e.g. repair orders, sales, and requests)

Given the combination of these assets, I am confident I would quickly be valued as a key contributor to your team. Your consideration of my qualifications is appreciated. I look forward to providing any additional information about my qualifications.

To ensure the receipt of my material, I will follow up with you during the upcoming week. I look forward to speaking with you.

Yours Respectfully,

(Hand written signature if you are mailing a hard copy)

Your Name Typed

REFERENCE PAGE GUIDELINES

When asked to provide references for a job or professional school, you may need to submit a references page or enter this information into an online application. If you need to create a references page, here are some easy steps to get started:

FINDING REFERENCES

- Make a list of professional contacts you feel could provide a strong recommendation:
 - Professors
 - Supervisors
 - Advisors
 - Professional Contacts

FIND A GOOD FIT

- If you didn't have a lot of personal interaction with someone, they probably wouldn't be the best reference because they won't know how to talk about you and your skills or knowledge
- Choose references who know you well and whom you have known for a longer period of time

MAKING CONTACT

- Contact potential references and ask permission to use them as one of your references
- Send them your resume and/or a description of the job or program you are applying for so they can be prepared

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- For each reference, include the person's name, your relationship to this person, their current job title, company they work for and contact information. Be sure to include both a phone number and an email address

FOLLOW UP

- Give references an update on the outcome of their reference for the job or academic program you applied to

DON'T:

- Use someone as a reference until they have given you permission
- Use a friend or family member as this is not considered a "professional" reference
- Only have 1 reference; have 3-5 references prepared
- Put someone down that does not know you well since they won't be able to speak to your abilities or work ethic
- Use outdated phone numbers or email address—confirm with your reference to ensure you have up-to-date information before sending

CARLIE CARDINAL

ccardinal@student.uiwtx.edu
(210) 829-3931

REFERENCES

Darlene Moczygmba, Former Math Professor at UIW

Faculty Member, University of the Incarnate Word, Mathematics Department
210-829-3931
ddd@uiwtx.edu

Michelle McWilliams, Supervisor

General Manager, Bill Miller's
210-829-3931
mmm@uiwtx.edu

Abretta Goode, Former Supervisor

Registered Math & History Tutor, Sylvan Learning Center
210-829-3931
aaa@yahoo.com

Anastacia Porter, Mentor

Life Skills Coach, Life Coach Institute
210-829-3931
Anastacia@yahoo.com

THANK YOU LETTERS

This is an opportunity to stand out from another candidate that may neglect this generous act of courtesy. A thank you letter is appropriate for everyone that has taken the time to meet with you, not just the interviewers.

- 1 Address this to the person that you met with
- 2 Express appreciation for the opportunity and mention something unique about the meeting to personalize it
- 3 Add any information that was left out in the interview, or that was requested
- 4 Thank you letters sent via email are acceptable if they maintain the same professionalism as a hard copy would
- 5 Send **24-48 hours** after you have met for the interview or meeting
- 6 Keep it brief and, if you indicate you will follow up with them again, do so in the timeframe you've specified

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday to discuss the Research Design Assistant position in the Fashion Department at the University of the Incarnate Word. I enjoyed learning about the challenging work opportunities and professional development that the Research Design Assistant role entails. I especially appreciated your story about your first time working in a fast-paced design studio.

As we discussed yesterday, my past experience working in design studios and academic research as an undergraduate distinguishes me as a candidate for this position. After learning more about this position, I am confident that my leadership experience, paired with my commitment to becoming a valuable asset to your team, would make me an excellent fit.

I am interested in continuing through the interview process and will follow up with you next week via email to talk about the next step in the process. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carly Fashionista
Fashion Merchandising, 2016
University of the Incarnate Word
210-829-3931

In a study of over 1000 teenagers, Dr. Jeffrey J. Froh, assistant professor of psychology and lead researcher of the new study, found that "grateful students reported higher grades, more life satisfaction, better social integration and less envy and depression than their peers who were less thankful and more materialistic. Additionally, feelings of gratitude had a more powerful impact on the students' lives overall than materialism." <http://www.thank-you-note-samples.com/thank-you-notes.html> excerpted from Wall Street Journal Article: http://people.hofstra.edu/jeffrey_j_froh/spring%202010%20web/Wall_Street_Journal_2010.pdf

NETWORKING EMAILS

These emails can be used to reach out to professionals in your desired field to make a connection from a mutual contact, request an informational interview or inquire about a learning opportunity. We recommend not attaching a resume, as the purpose is not to inquire about job prospects.

- 1 Introduce yourself and indicate if you have a mutual connection to that person
- 2 Propose the topic of the requested meeting
- 3 Give the person some background information about your education and experience
- 4 Acknowledge that you are aware that the person may have limited time to spend with you, and always give a range of dates and times when you are consistently available to meet

Dear Mr. Smith:

Michelle McWilliams suggested that I reach out to you. I am a third year student at the University of the Incarnate Word, majoring in Music Industry. I am interested in pursuing a career in XYZ. Michelle has spoken very highly of you and suggested that you may be able to offer me some additional insight into the XYZ industry.

I am currently trying to learn more about the professional careers in the field of music industries and performance and your specific career path is of interest to me. Some of my past experience includes XYZ, but I would like to learn more about a field that may be a career path for me after graduation.

I would like to meet with you to discuss your career path so that I can identify experiential learning opportunities for my last year here at UIW. As I know you are busy and have limited availability, I am hoping for no more than 30 minutes of your time. I am available Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11AM- 3PM for a phone conversation, coffee, or lunch. Please let me know which option would be most convenient for you, and I look forward to meeting you.

Thank you,

Martha Music
Music Industry, 2017
University of the Incarnate Word
210-829-3931

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

We are now communicating with the written word more and more each day. Without immediate feedback from the reader, the message can be misunderstood. Without double and triple checking your email before hitting send, you are at risk for potentially representing yourself in a negative light.

When you send an email to a prospective employer, network contact or any faculty or staff, there are several things you need to double and triple check. Follow these easy tips to come across well versed and articulate!

Elements of Email Etiquette:

- **Include a salutation** – Address the recipient in a formal manner such as Mr. Science, Ms. Summers, or Dr. Jones. If you are unsure of how to address the person, do some research to find out their correct name and title.
- **Provide a clear context and clear purpose** – Think twice about the message you are trying to communicate. Keep the email brief and within a one page viewable pane.
- **Tone** – Write in a positive tone. Avoid using negative words, such as those that begin with “un, non, or ex” or end with “less.” Do **not** use symbols or emoticons. Use contractions to add a friendly tone.
- **Font** – Use a general font, not a decorative or an overly stylized one that is hard to read. **DO NOT USE ALL CAPITALS**, as it communicates you are shouting. Use coloring and bolding judiciously.
- **Spelling / Punctuation / Grammar / Typos** – With the advent of Facebook and texting, abbreviations have taken over. It is easy to forget that an email can influence the reader, and can misrepresent what we are trying to communicate. The email should be written using complete sentences, correct spelling and a clear and organized structure. Double and triple check it before hitting send.
- **Email response time** – Respond to an email within 24 hours as it shows respect and responsiveness.
- **Use the subject line to communicate your point** – Don’t leave this blank. Make sure it is clear and meaningful to the recipient. A blank subject line is unacceptable.
- **Close with your full name and contact information** – Make sure the recipient has a secondary way of contacting you, and be sure to include your phone number. Creating an email signature that includes your name, email address and phone number is an easy way to ensure that contact information is included on every email.

Remember To.....

Ask yourself if your content is appropriate for email correspondence? Answer this question and edit, edit, edit your email before you hit send. Once you hit send, your email can potentially be viewable by anyone, so make sure you are proud of the content and how it represents you.