THE APPLICATION COMMUNICATION GUIDE: How to Write It Right

Application communication — whether for a job search, graduate and professional school applications, or scholarships — plays a key role in the selection process. Application letters and emails introduce you to a potential employer or entity, keep you connected to the process, and solidify your post-interview interest. Additionally, application communication (i.e., cover, inquiry, networking, thank you, acceptance, withdrawal, and turndown letters) serves as samples of your writing to your reader(s).

Whether it's a cover letter or another piece of application correspondence, here are a dozen points to adhere to:

1. Write your communication using a conventional business letter style. (Sample letters are included in the second part of this document.)

2. Each letter should not be longer than one page.

3. Cover letters contain three, and sometimes four targeted paragraphs.

4. Your writing style should be clear and concise.

5. Make sure that all information in the introductory address, i.e., the person's name and address, is correct.

6. Single-space your lines within your paragraphs and add a line between paragraphs.

7. Sign your hard copy letters with a black pen making sure that your signature is legible. Or scan your signature and upload it into your letter.

8. If possible, word process or type the address on the envelope when sending hard copies.

9. Close your letters with "Sincerely" or "Respectfully"

10. If sending a hard copy of your communication, use a high-quality bond paper that matches your resume.

11. Proofread your letters and emails very carefully.

12. Then, proofread your letter or email again; even have others look it over for you as well.

COVER LETTER

Let's first turn to the most referenced form of such communication, the cover letter. So, what exactly is a cover letter? The best way to think of it is as a companion document to your resume. Moreover, it introduces you to the recruiter and turns the reader's attention to the most relevant parts of your resume when you cannot do it in person. The name *cover letter* originated because, in hard copy application days, the letter was placed on top of our resume set for the mail.

You should <u>always</u> send a cover letter with your resume unless an online application tracking system does not allow you to do so. Many employers will discard resumes without cover letters. A well-written cover letter is your chance to stand apart from the crowd. Just like for your resume, you need to tailor your letter to each job, school, or program with considerable effort and care.

Be sure to know the organization's mission and vision; products, services, or programs; and current keymetrics such as sales, earnings, product launches, or initiatives.

Researching the person to whom you need to write is essential to compellingly illustrate your fit in writing with the organization. If you cannot find the name of the person to whom you need to address your letter, after researching the organization online or through diligent networking, <u>only then</u> use a salutation that is more targeted such as "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Search Committee." Do not use outdated language such as "Dear Sir/Madam" or worse yet, "To Whom It May Concern." You should also use "Ms." for females and "Mr." for males unless you know of another title such as "Dr." If you are uncertain of the addressee's gender or gender identity, write the salutation using the person's full name. For example, "Dear Sydney Doe."

While most readers will scan your resume first, an effective cover letter draws the reader in and gives them a sense of who you are.

COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Date

Name of Contact Person
Title
Organization
Street Address
City, State ZIP

Dear (Contact Person's Name):

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State why you are writing.

- State why you are writing. Name the position or type of position for which you are applying. Include the job or posting number if it's referenced.
- Then, mention how you learned of the position, e.g., where the job was posted or the name of any referring person.
- Briefly describe why you are interested in this position.

BODY OF THE LETTER: Sell yourself.

- Describe the skills, competencies, and/or experiences you have that fit the requirements of the position. Think of where your skills and experience best match those that the employer desires and highlight your skills and experiences. Don't focus on your tasks rather, focus on the skills and competencies you utilized or developed in the position. The National Association of Collegesand Employers (NACE) lists eight Career Readiness Competencies* that you should consider. Highlight two or three if you have developed these skills.
- If you have work-related experiences, share these qualifications and achievements with specific examples.
- This paragraph is your chance to give the reader more insight as to who you are as a person. Do not repeat your resume word for word.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Thank the reader and request an interview.

- Directly, but politely, show your desire to further discuss your qualifications/background/education/experience in an interview.
- Make it easy for the reader to contact you by supplying your phone number(s), email, and the best time to reach you.
- Thank the contact person for his or her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Hand-Written Signature (Sign if it's a printed letter; omit it if it's an electronic version.)

Your Typed Name (Four lines down if it's a printed letter; or 2 lines down if an electronic version.)

* https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/

INQUIRY LETTER OR EMAIL

So, you've researched companies that you would like to work for on Handshake, LinkedIn, or on other online job platforms, but you haven't found openings for positions that you would like to hold within a targeted company. What should you do? Write an inquiry letter or email!

Just like the application cover letter, you begin the inquiry letter or email by saying why you are writing to the organization and what it is that you are seeking. Research the organization's website, use your professional network, or reach out to a contact email or phone number online and find out to whom you should address your inquiry. Then, write to that specific individual. Be sure to link your education, experiences, and activities to the position you are seeking.

The body of your inquiry letter can be much like a cover letter. The same holds for the closing.

NETWORKING LETTER OR EMAIL

The purpose of a networking letter is to generate an informal networking interview, aka a career conversation, designed to ask for a meeting with an individual in an organization who can give you specific company information, industry insights,and career advice.

Your reasons for wanting to meet with a specific person should be sincere. You should use this approach for information gathering and not as an inquiry about a specific job. A networking letter is a terrific way to conduct market research, refine career goals, and uncover position openings in an industry or a geographical region.

> Networking is not a guise to employment. Remember that genuine networking requires dedicated preparation and sincerity.

The networking letter is the first step in the informational interviewing process. Do not attach your resume to a networking letter. The best method is to present your resume during the granted interview itself to help the interviewer address your questions about career advice. Networking is also a two-way street. Be open and honest in answering their questions, taking their advice to heart and implementing it, and following up with them periodically to keep them informed of your progress.

THANK YOU LETTER OR EMAIL

After every interview is completed, you need to write a thank you letter or email to those who interviewed you. A thank you letter, or email is one of the most important yet least leveraged tools in a job search.

A thank you letter, or email is a time to strengthen your candidacy by summarizing your background as it relates to the position. If you need to clarify or better answer a question, you can strategically use the thank you letter to achieve that goal. Also, anyone who has helped you in the search process simply deserves a thank you letter.

A thank you letter or email tip: Send a thank you letter within 24 hours of each interview to each person who interviewed you. An email is acceptable; especially if you know the decision-making period for the position is short. Try to personalize each thank you by addressing something they mentioned during the interview that was especially important or interesting.

If it is not possible to send a thank you letter to everyone you met during the interview, then send a thank you letter to your host or to the highest-ranking manager you met with. Request that the person to whom you are writing the thank you extend your appreciation to the entire interview team.

ACCEPTANCE LETTER OR EMAIL

An acceptance letter or email is the most joyous letter of all letters. Write an acceptance letter to accept a job offer, scholarship, or entrance into a program. Be sure to confirm the terms of your employment, scholarship, or program. Terms include compensation, key benefits, start date, start location, to whom you will report, any forms that need to be completed, and/or a required medical examination orvaccination. Enthusiastically reinforce the decision to hire you, admit you to the program, or grant you a scholarship.

Most often, an acceptance letter follows a telephone conversation, during which the details of the offer and the terms of employment are discussed. Typically, an organization will have a specific format for their acceptance letter or contract to sign. Be sure the details are correct and match what you verbally agreed to before putting them in writing or signing anything.

WITHDRAWAL LETTER OR EMAIL

Once you have formally accepted a position, you need to inform all other employers, with whom you are actively engaged, about your decision and need to withdraw your employment application from further consideration. Your withdrawal letter should express gratitude for the interview consideration. Keep in mind that an interview should be a two-way street with you gathering information about how the position and organization fit your career goals.

> It's ok to decide that a position does not meet your goals. However, do not be unprofessional and say that you landed a better job.

TURN DOWN OFFER LETTER OR EMAIL

Employers, graduate schools, and programs are not the only ones to send rejection letters. As a job or school candidate, you may have to decline offers that do not fit your career goals, talents, and interests. It is better to decline an offer that does not meet your goals than to find yourself unhappy or leaving the position after a brief period. Or worse yet, having your employment terminated.

Rejecting an employment offer should be done thoughtfully. You should be given a brief period (a few days) to consider the job offer and be wary of any offer that requires you to make a quick decision. Be sure of your decision once you have made it. It is considered unprofessional to accept an offer only to then rescind that acceptance. Share that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it. Also, be sure to thank the employer for the offer and for considering you as a candidate.

This is not a time to burn a bridge as you never know when you may want to apply to that organization again. Or, that interviewer or hiring manager may be at the next organization you wish to interview with. Always be gracious and thankful.

SAMPLE LETTERS AND EMAILS

To aid and inspire you, we've included a variety of sample application communication letters and emails on the following pages of this guide.

SAMPLE ARTS APPLICATION CORRESPONDENCE

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

March 6, 2022

Jason B. Smith
Director, Customer Engagement
Toledo Museum of Art
2445 Monroe Street
Toledo, Ohio 43620

Dear Mr. Smith:

I was delighted to find the Social Media Specialist position at the Toledo Museum of Art advertised on Handshake. I will graduate from the University of Toledo with a degree in Art Education in May 2022. In addition to my degree, I have solid social media experience.

During the Fall of 2021 and Spring of 2022, I had the good fortune to intern at Imagination Station. While at Imagination Station, I created and administered all content for their social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. Additionally, I learned how to build audiences for each platform, ensure customer engagement, monitor site metrics, respond to reader comments, and report on site analytics. In my role, I had the opportunity to collaborate on numerous creative designs, marketing pieces, and educational tools with the creative team. I firmly believe my experience at Imagination Station would allow me to immediately step right into the Social Media Specialist Toledo Museum of Art and begin contributing from day one. Moreover, I am confident that I will be able to, as stated in the position's requirements, drive customer engagement and produce meaningful results through social media for the Toledo Museum of Art.

I would love an opportunity to discuss my education and experiences with you in person. Please feel free to contact me at either 419-555-1212 or janjones1212@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Jan Jones

SAMPLE INQUIRY LETTER

January 28, 2022

Jason B. Smith
Toledo Museum of Art
2445 Monroe Street
Toledo, Ohio 43620

Dear Mr. Smith:

My name is Jan Jones, and I am writing to inquire if you have any openings for a Social Media Specialist or similar positions at the Toledo Museum of Art. I will be a graduate of the University of Toledo's Art Education program in May 2022, and I have solid social media experience, too.

During the Summer of 2021, I interned at Imagination Station. While there I created and administered content on all social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. Additionally, I learned how to build an audience, ensure customer engagement, monitor site metrics, and respond effectively to reader comments. In my role, I had an opportunity to collaborate on creative design with the creative team. I believe my experience at Imagination Station would allow me to step into the Social Media Specialist Toledo Museum of Art

I am excited at the prospect of using my education and my experience to drive customer engagement and produce meaningful results through social media at the Toledo Museum of Art. I'd very much like an opportunity to discuss my education and experiences with you in detail. Please contact me at 419-555-1212 or at. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Jan Jones

SAMPLE NETWORKING EMAIL

Dear Mr. Smith,

My name is Julie Jones, and I am currently a senior at the University of Toledo. I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Art Education this May. Even though I did not have the opportunity to intern at the Toledo Museum of Art, one of my classmates, Tanisha Peten, did and has spoken so very highly of you and your professional insight and advice. It is the reason that I am writing to you.

I am finding that my passion is not only art education, but it is also social media. I would welcome a meeting with you to learn your thoughts and suggestions for how I can make this career goal a reality. I am very aware that you are busy and, therefore, only ask for 20 minutes of your time.

I can be reached at 419-555-1212 or janjones1212@gmail.com. If it would be helpful to you, I could contact your assistant to schedule a time for us to meet. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Jan Jones

SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today about the Social Media Specialist position at the Toledo Museum of Art. I especially appreciated the point you made about the key role the Social Media Specialist holds in ensuring positive relationships with the Museum's customers and community 24/7.

Combining my education in and love for art and social media is a dream come true. I know that I would be able to make a positive contribution to the Toledo Museum of Art.

Thank you so very much for the opportunity to interview. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jan Jones

SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE EMAIL

Dear Mr. Smith,

I enthusiastically accept your offer to be a Social Media Specialist at the Toledo Museum of Art. I understand the position is a salaried position at $42,000 per year starting on June 1, 2022. I also understand that there is a full benefits package and that I will earn two weeks of vacation on a pro-rated basis over a year.

I look forward to receiving the paperwork to begin my employment with the Museum. Thank you again for the offer. I look forward to working with you, the Museum team, and the Museum's customers.

Sincerely,

Jan Jones

SAMPLE WITHDRAWAL EMAIL

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the Social Media Specialist position at the Toledo Museum of Art. As we discussed during my interview, I am passionate about using my art education and social media background to create and grow customer engagement.

Earlier today, however, I was offered and have accepted the position as a Social Media Coordinator at the Detroit Institutes of Art Museum. While the position is like your position, I will also be doing more creative collaborations and staying closer to my family. This was a very tough decision, and only time will tell if I've made the right decision. Therefore, I must withdraw from consideration for the position.

Please know how thankful I am for your time and your consideration of me as a candidate. I hope that we will remain in touch.

Sincerely,

Jan Jones

SAMPLE TURNDOWN EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for the gracious offer of the Social Media Specialist at the Toledo Museum of Art. After careful consideration, I must regretfully decline your offer of employment at this time. Please know how thankful I am for your time and confidence in me as a candidate.

Please send my sincerest thank you to the entire interview team. Wishing you all the best.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE PSYCHOLOGY APPLICATION CORRESPONDENCE

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

February 6, 2022

Dr. Linda B. Smith
Assistant Dean for Student Services
University of Toledo Department of Psychology
2801 West Bancroft Street
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Dear Dr. Smith:

I am enthusiastically writing to apply for the **Academic Advisor** position in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toledo that was advertised in Handshake. I am a graduate student in the University of Toledo's Psychology program, and I have experience advising undergraduate students and providing them with knowledge and tools to be academically successful.

In my current role, as a graduate assistant in University College, I meet with students in one-on-one 15-minute, drop-in appointments to aid them in building their class schedules for the upcoming semester and to answer their questions about academic requirements and procedures. In addition, I help them update and complete their four-year academic plan and track their progress and plan for their future. I am proud of my work with students, my partnerships with other offices on campus, and the familiarity and competence I have with all the electronic resources to aid students across their years at the University.

I believe that I bring a solid combination of skills and experience to the position that will drive student success. I would warmly welcome an opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in person. Please contact me at 419-555-1212 or jonathonjones75@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Jonathon Jones

SAMPLE INQUIRY LETTER

February 6, 2022,

Dr. Linda B. Smith
Assistant Dean for Student Services
University of Toledo Department of Psychology
2801 West Bancroft Street
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Dear Dr. Smith:

My name is Jonathan Jones, and I am writing to inquire if you know of any academic advising or student support positions in your department, or elsewhere at the University of Toledo. Academic advising and academic student support are passions for me as a graduate student in the University of Toledo's Psychology program. Additionally, I have experience advising students and providing them with tools and resources to be successful.

In my current role, as a graduate assistant in University College, I meet with students in one-on-one 15-minute, drop-in appointments to aid them in building their class schedules for the upcoming semester and to answer their questions about academic requirements and procedures. In addition, I help them update and complete their four-year academic plan and track their progress and plan for their future. I am proud of my work with students, my partnerships with other offices on campus, and the familiarity I have with all the electronic resources to aid students across their years at the University.

I believe that I bring a solid combination of skills and experience to the position that will drive student success. I would warmly welcome an opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in detail. Please contact me at 419-555-1212 or jonathonjones75@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you! Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Jones

SAMPLE NETWORKING EMAIL

Dear Dr. Smith,

My name is Jonathon Jones, and I am currently a graduate assistant at the University of Toledo. I graduated with a Bachelor of Psychology degree last year and am currently a graduate student. Even though I never had the opportunity to have you as a professor, my classmates who did have you always speak highly of you and your commitment to serving students. It is in the spirit that I write to you.

I have found that my passion is in helping students in the higher education environment and would very much like to meet with you to learn your thoughts and suggestions for how I can make this career goal a reality. I am mindful that you are busy and would only ask for 20 minutes of your time.

I can be reached at 419-555-1212 or jonathonjones75@gmail.com. If it would be helpful to you, I could contact your administrative assistant to schedule a time. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Jones

SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL

Dear Dr. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today about the Academic Advisor position open in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toledo. I especially appreciated the point you made about academic advisors being key in not only connecting students to the proper classes but also connecting them with the resources they will need to either find employment or apply to graduate schools upon completion of their bachelor's degrees.

Helping students be successful in college and after graduation is my passion. Learning that you have a life focus on academic advising makes me even more excited about the position.

Thank you again for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Jones

SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE EMAIL

Dear Dr. Smith,

I enthusiastically accept your offer of the position of Academic Advisor with the Department of Psychology at the University of Toledo. I understand the following terms for the position:

- 12-month, exempt position
- Salary of $40,000 per year
- February 14, 2022, start date
- Full benefits package: medical, dental, vision
- 2 weeks' vacation

I look forward to receiving the pre-employment paperwork that I will need to sign to begin my employment with UToledo. Thank you again for the offer. I look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and the students.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Jones

SAMPLE WITHDRAWAL EMAIL

Dear Dr. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday about the Academic Advisor position open in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toledo. As we discussed during my interview, I am passionate about helping students be successful in their college journey.

Earlier today, however, I was offered and have accepted a position as a Success Coach here at UToledo. This position will give me an exciting opportunity to work with students from various backgrounds and further develop my breadth of advising experiences. Therefore, I must officially withdraw from the selection process.

Please know how thankful I am for your time and your consideration of me as a candidate.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Jones

SAMPLE TURNDOWN EMAIL

Dear Dr. Smith,

Thank you for the offer of employment as an Academic Advisor position in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toledo. After careful consideration, I must regretfully decline your offer of employment at this time.

Please know that I am thankful for your time and confidence in me as an Academic Advisor.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Jones

SAMPLE CHEMISTRY APPLICATION CORRESPONDENCE

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

February 6,
2022,Linda B.
Smith
Chief Quality Control Officer
ACME Polymers
1000 Water Street
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Dear Ms. Smith:

I was delighted to see the **Quality Control Chemist** position at ACME Polymers that was advertised on Handshake. I am a graduate of the University of Toledo's Chemistry program and have industrial laboratory experience using a variety of techniques to ensure the highest standards of production quality.

During the Fall of 2021, I interned at Progressive Plastics as a Color Quality Control intern. In this role, I monitored both the color and physical properties of plastic products to ensure they met accepted quality parameters. One of the aspects of the internship that I found most exciting was using spectrophotometers to maintain the highest consistency of color for Progressive's automotive customers. I believe this experience would allow me to step into ACME Polymers with a solid understanding of both your needs and the needs of your customers.

I am confident that I will bring a solid foundation of skills and experience to the position that will create customer satisfaction. I would welcome an opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in detail. Please contact me at 419-555-1212 or juliejones75@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE INQUIRY LETTER

February 6,
2022,Linda B.
Smith
Chief Quality Control Officer
ACME Polymers
1000 Water Street
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Dear Ms. Smith:

My name is Julie Jones, and I am writing to inquire if you have any openings for Quality Control Chemists or similar positions at ACME Polymers. I am a graduate of the University of Toledo's Chemistry program and have industrial laboratory experience using a variety of techniques to ensure the highest standards of production quality.

During the Fall of 2021, I interned at Progressive Plastics as a Color Quality Control intern. In this role, I monitored both the color and physical properties of plastic products to ensure they met accepted quality parameters. One of the aspects of the internship that I found most exciting was using spectrophotometers to maintain the highest consistency of color for Progressive's automotive customers. I believe this experience would allow me to step into a quality control role with a solid understanding of both your needs and the needs of your customers.

I am confident that I will bring a solid foundation of skills and experience that will create customer satisfaction. I would warmly welcome an opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in detail. Please contact me at 419-555-1212 or juliejones75@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE NETWORKING EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith,

My name is Julie Jones, and I am currently a senior at the University of Toledo. I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry this Spring. Even though I did not have the opportunity to intern at ACME Polymers, one of my classmates did and has always spoken highly of you and your professional insight and advice. It is in the spirit that I write to you.

I am finding that my passion is in the manufacturing quality control field and would welcome meeting with you to learn your thoughts and suggestions for how I can make this career goal a reality. I am very aware that you are busy and would, therefore, only ask for 20 minutes of your time.

I can be reached at 419-555-1212 or juliejones75@gmail.com. If it would be helpful to you, I could contact your administrative assistant to schedule a time forus to meet. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today about the Quality Control Chemist position open in your department at ACME Polymers. I especially appreciated the point you made about the key role the Quality Control Chemist holds in ensuring positive relationships with your various customers including the automotive industry.

Applying my chemistry background to ensure customer satisfaction has always been a passion of mine and to know that I would be able to do that in this role makes me even more excited about the position.

Thank you, again, for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith,

I enthusiastically accept your offer of the position of Quality Control Chemist with ACME Polymers. I understand the position is an exempt position with a salary of $65,000 per year starting on February 14, 2022; medical, life, and dental benefits, paid sick leave, and vacation of two weeks after a year of employment.

I look forward to receiving the pre-employment paperwork that I will need to sign to begin my employment with ACME Polymers. Thank you again for the offer. I look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and the customers.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE WITHDRAWAL EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday about the Quality Control Chemist position open in the Quality Control Department at ACME Polymers. As we discussed during my interview, I am passionate about using my chemistry background to foster customer satisfaction.

Last evening, however, I was offered and have accepted a position as a Quality Control supervisor at ACE Plastics. This position will allow me to apply my chemistry background and develop my supervisory skills as well.

Please know how thankful I am for your time and your consideration of me as a candidate. I hope that we can remain connected on LinkedIn.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones

SAMPLE TURNDOWN EMAIL

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for the offer of employment as a Quality Control Chemist in the Quality Control Department at ACME Polymers. After careful consideration, I must regretfully decline your offer of employment at this time due to family considerations.

Please know that I am thankful for your time and confidence in me as a Quality Control Chemist.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones