UCSF Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs

Career and Professional Development

The Format and Etiquette of Writing a Post-Interview Thank You

A six-step guide for residency, job, and informational interviews

1. Why send a thank you email?

When someone gives you their time in an interview, or shares advice in an informational interview, acknowledging it is professional courtesy. A strong note also reinforces your interest and helps the interviewer remember your conversation.

Keep perspective: many residency programs now state that thank you notes are optional and do not affect ranking. A note is a courtesy, not a strategy. Always follow a program's stated preference (see Step 5).

2. Who should get one?

Every person who interviewed you, with a separate email for each. If a coordinator or chief resident organized your day, a brief thank you to them is a thoughtful touch.

Not sure of names or email addresses? Ask the program coordinator at the end of the day: "I'd like to send brief thank you notes to the people I met. Could you share the correct spelling of their names and their email addresses?"

3. What's the format?

Keep it to 4 to 8 sentences. If you met five people in one day, write five separate emails using this four-part structure:

1. **Say thank you.** (Same for everyone)
2. **Share your overall impression** of the day or why you are thanking them. (Same for everyone)
3. **Name one specific thing** you appreciated from your time with this person. (Unique to each person)
4. **Close** with continued interest and thanks. (Same for everyone)

Sample email

Subject: Thank you: Internal Medicine interview, October 14

Dear Dr. Nguyen,

[Part 1] Thank you for interviewing me for the Internal Medicine residency program on Tuesday. **[Part 2]** I left energized by the program's commitment to community-based care and the culture of teaching I saw on every team.

[Part 3] I especially appreciated hearing about your own path into primary care. Your advice to seek out continuity clinic early is something I plan to act on.

[Part 4] I remain very interested in your program and am grateful for the chance to share my experience. Thank you again for your time.

Best regards,
Jordan Alvarez
MS4, UCSF School of Medicine
AAMC ID: 12345678
jordan.alvarez@ucsf.edu

Tip: Jot a note about each conversation right after it ends. Part 3 is the hardest to write from memory a day later.

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4. Email essentials

- **Timing:** Send within 24 to 48 hours of your interview.
- **Subject line:** Keep it clear and searchable, such as “Thank you: [Specialty or role] interview, [date].”
- **One email per person:** Never send a group email or copy multiple interviewers.
- **Signature block:** Include your full name, degree program and year, school, and any applicant ID the program uses (see Step 6).
- **Using AI:** An AI tool can help you get started, but the final email should sound like you. Your note is one more sample of how you communicate. Rewrite the draft in your own words, add the specific detail from Part 3 yourself, and read it aloud before sending. Interviewers read many notes, and generic phrasing stands out.
- **Proofread:** Double-check names, titles, and the program name. Send from your UCSF email account.

5. Respect program policies and Match rules

- **Follow stated policies.** If a program says not to send thank you notes, don’t. Honoring that request is itself a sign of professionalism.
- **Keep it genuine.** Never make statements about how you plan to rank a program unless they are true. Match agreements prohibit programs from requesting ranking commitments.
- **Don’t expect a reply.** Many programs do not respond to thank you notes, and silence carries no meaning about your application.

6. Tailor it to your program

Program	Tailor your note
Medicine	Include your AAMC ID in your signature. Follow NRMP communication rules.
Dentistry	Include your match applicant ID if you have one. Name the specific program type in your subject line.
Pharmacy	Include your match number. Many programs host several interviewers in one day, so keep Part 3 truly specific to each person.
Nursing	Hiring decisions often move quickly, so send within 24 hours. Thank the hiring manager and anyone on the unit panel.
Physical Therapy	Mention the clinical setting or patient population you discussed to show fit.
All programs	Name one piece of advice you plan to act on. Follow up later to share how it went.

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