

The Thank You Letter, Dissected (in 6 Steps)

1. Why write a thank you letter?

If someone takes time or effort (in an internship, employment or residency interview), or shares advice or resources (in an informational interview), it is considered professionally polite to acknowledge it.

2. Who should get a thank you letter?

Every person who interviewed you. (See Step 4 for details)

Dear Dr. Einstein,

Thank you so much for the invitation to interview with Kaiser. I left amazed by all of your efforts around patient education and outreach, and impressed by the staff's commitment to providing culturally competent care.

Personally, I also appreciated hearing about your own experience transitioning into Kaiser as a resident. It's clear that Kaiser is a very supportive environment.

I remain very interested in the residency position, and regardless of the outcome, I appreciated learning more about your program and Kaiser. I am certain that the selected candidates will have an incredible experience. Thank you again for the chance to share my skills, experience and interest.

Regards,

Stephen Hawkings

3. What's the format?

Thank you notes are about 4-8 sentences long.

Imagine that you had an all day interview, and met 5 people. You would use this format to write their letter:

1. (Same for everyone) Say thank you
2. (Same for everyone) Tell them why you are thanking them or give them your overall impression of the meeting.
3. (Unique to each person) Give one line about something you specifically appreciated from your time with them.
4. (Same for everyone) Closing Line

4. So I should send a note to everyone I met?

Yes. If they took the time to meet you, it is professionally appropriate to thank them for it.

5. Should I send my note by email or via the post office?

If you know that the employer/residency director is making a decision in the next few days, send an email, so it arrives on time. But if it's going to be a few weeks, a handwritten note is also fine.

If you're not sure, you can ask. For example, at the end of the interview, you could ask the administrative assistant/whomever organized you day for the correct spelling and contact information for everyone you met because you would like to write a thank you note. You can also ask their opinion. "I'd like to send brief thank you notes to Drs. Einstein and Curie. Do you recommend email or paper correspondence?"

6. If I send paper correspondence, do I need to use cards that say 'thank you'?

No. Those 4x6 folded cards are excellent for brief 4-sentence thank you notes. You do not have to use the ones with 'thank you' stamped on them. Many UCSFers have used ones with the UCSF logo. You can also print out your thank you on 8x11 paper. Remember, if you are handwriting your letter, write legibly!