

The Thank You Note, Dissected.

A. Why write a thank you letter?

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

B. Who should get a thank you letter?

Anybody that you interviewed with, including employer/residency director/a person you met.

Dear Dr. Einstein,

Thank you so much for the invitation to interview at UCLA. I left our meeting very impressed by the range of clinical issues at your facility, the staff's obvious commitment to patient education, and your recent investments in new technology.

Personally, it was very exciting to hear about the teaching opportunities for residents, and very helpful to hear your thoughts about the challenges facing your organization over the next year.

I remain greatly interested in your program, and regardless of the outcome, I appreciated learning more about your program at UCLA. I am certain that the selected residents will have a rich experience, and thank you again for the chance to share my skills, experience and interest.

Be well,

Stephen Hawkings

C. What's the format of a thank you letter?

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

D. 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.

E. 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 Dr Einstein and Curie. Do you recommend email or paper correspondence?"

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

No. Those 4x6 folding 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 you letter, write legibly!

To have your letter critiqued, schedule an appointment with the UCSF OCPD at 415.476.4986. We book 2-3 weeks in advance.