

PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email correspondence when searching for a job or internship is critical. Any time you communicate with a potential employer or a network connection you **MUST** be professional. Make certain to read, reread and edit your email correspondence thoroughly.

General Email Guidelines

- **Subject** – Make certain to always use an appropriate, specific subject for your email. The subject needs to stand out, be personal enough to not go into someone’s spam folder and tell the recipient a bit of the purpose for the email.
- **Salutation** – Start an email with a salutation such as: Dear Mr/Ms/Dr Last name or Dear First and Last Name. Do not just jump right in to your message.

SAMPLE NETWORKING REQUEST EMAIL

Subject: Seeking Career Advice

Dear Pat Friar:

My aunt, Sue Smith, referred me to you. I am a junior at Siena College majoring in English. At this time, I am exploring career options, and I am considering publishing as a possibility. Being that you have worked in publishing for Random House, I was hopeful to learn more about the field. Could you please answer these questions?

1. How did you get into publishing?
2. What advice do you have for an aspiring publisher?
3. What do you like and dislike about your career?

I very much appreciate your time and insights.

Respectfully,

Joe E. Siena

SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW REQUEST EMAIL

Subject: Siena Student Seeking Career Advice

Hello, Ms. Smith:

My name is Jane Doe, and I'm a senior at Siena College majoring in Economics. I found you on LinkedIn, and as a Siena economics alumnae I would like to ask for your assistance.

I am beginning my job search, and I'm hoping to conduct informational interviews with professionals in the field of economics. My goal in meeting with you would be to gain your perspectives about the field, and perhaps gain referrals to others in your network to learn more.

If you would meet with me for 20-30 minutes, I would be most appreciative.

Please let me know of your availability. We can do this in person or via Zoom.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Jane Doe

For more on informational interviews see page 48.

- **Edit** – Always take the time to proofread, spell check and grammar check your messages before sending.
- **Text** – Do not use slang terms, emoticons, text-talk abbreviations, overly stylized fonts, graphics or multi-colored fonts or backgrounds.

REFERENCES PAGE

Providing potential employers with a list of professional references will be necessary in the hiring process. **Do not state “references available upon request” on your resume**, but rather have a separate document listing your references. You should bring printed copies of this list to an interview.

- **ASK PERMISSION** from possible references prior to listing or sharing their information.
- Never list family members or friends as references!
- Choose people who know you and can comment positively on your professional skills. Ask professors, supervisors/bosses, club advisors, etc. to serve as your references. Ideally your references should provide a mix of professors and supervisors.
- After gaining permission, ask your references what contact information they want noted.
- Your reference list should be on a single sheet of paper. Copy the header from your resume so it looks the same and gives a professional appearance.
- Include three or four references.
- Include on the list: reference’s name, title, company, address, email and at least one phone number. If it’s not obvious how you know the person you can include a short phrase.
- Always let references know when you have provided their information to a company. Don’t let them be caught off guard.

Career Tip
Never include “References Available Upon Request” on your resume!

See sample reference list on page 43.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Many employers use applications as a way of standardizing the information they obtain from all job candidates. Some employers will use the application as a screening tool without looking at a resume or cover letter.

- Complete the online application thoroughly and completely.
- Follow all directions carefully, especially regarding uploading cover letter, resume and other required documents.
- Never put, “see resume;” complete each answer.
- Proofread thoroughly before hitting submit.



THANK YOU NOTES

It is proper etiquette to send thank you letters **anytime** you meet with someone regarding career opportunities. Certainly after an interview it is **necessary**, but it also looks great if sent after talking with someone at a career fair, networking event, an informational interview, a job shadow or company visit. A thank you letter can set you apart, and it gives you another opportunity to remind the interviewer who you are and why you are the ideal candidate for the position.

Emailing a Note:

- Send the email a few hours to one day after interview
- Subject of email should be: Thank you from <Name>

Mailing a Note:

- Use professional stationery, a simple thank you note card
- Write neatly and legibly, a handwritten note is more personal
- Mail ASAP

Key Points to Writing Thank You Letters

- Thank you notes should be approximately two paragraphs long
- Letters should be sent individually to everyone with whom you spoke at an interview and personalized to that person
- Be professional, not too casual
- Refer to specific points discussed during the interview to help the interviewer remember you
- Re-emphasize your qualifications
- Express your continued interest
- The body of the thank you letter is the same regardless of email or hard copy

Used with permission from The College of Saint Rose Career Center

Green and gold thank you note cards are available to students FREE. Stop in the office to pick yours up today!

Career Tip

Employers tell us when candidates are close a thank you note often is the additional positive behavior that gets that candidate hired.

COVER LETTERS



A cover letter is a full letter that accompanies a resume

General Cover Letter Guidelines

- The purpose of a cover letter is to demonstrate your fit for a particular position and expand upon your resume
- It is an opportunity to highlight your competencies and demonstrate how you meet the employer's needs based on the job description
- Be sure to demonstrate your interest in that particular field and company
- It should be concise, well-written, **tailored** to the individual position and company
- Do some research on the company. The letter **NEEDS** to be customized for each position and company
- For consistency's sake copy your name and contact information from your resume and paste at the top of your cover letter
- Save your cover letter as "Your Name Cover Letter"
- It is extremely important your cover letter is well written. Proofread it several times. Bring it to the Career and Internship Center for a critique

Career Tip

Make sure to address a cover letter to a person. Call to find out who if necessary!

For a sample cover letter see page 44.

Cover Letter Content

- Set it up as a business letter including your contact information, date and name, title and address of recipient
- Include a salutation. A salutation is a line that says Dear <NAME>: This line in the cover letter should end with a colon (:), NOT a comma (,)
- The first paragraph should clearly state why you are writing. Indicate the position title and organization name if applying to a specific position. If inquiring about opportunities, be as specific as possible. If you were referred by someone, include that person's full name
- Like any essay, a thesis sentence stating what skills you bring to the position will provide cohesion to the letter

- The second and third paragraphs are where you expand on your resume. Be certain to address the desired skills and personal attributes they seek. Also include your interest in the specific company and/or industry. **DO NOT BE GENERIC!**
- The final paragraph should thank the reader and detail what follow up you will do.

The process of looking for a position — and it is a process — is the same whether you are looking for an internship, a part time or full time job; the search strategies are the same.

COVER LETTER BRAINSTORMING WORKSHEET

What are the employers top needs?

Example: Bachelor Degree, Writing Skills, Experience

How do I meet those needs?

Example: Internship at Capital Roots, Psychology Club Secretary, Environmental Studies Major

Top Skills Employer is Seeking

Example: Strong written communication skill

Examples/Demonstration of Your Skill

Example: Wrote and edited monthly newsletters for Psychology Club

What's interesting about this company?

Example: Green company, Not-for-Profit

What's interesting about me?

Example: Habitat for Humanity Volunteer, Schoharie Trail Volunteer

Employer mission statement

Why am I a good fit?

Example: Care for environment, strong writing skills, teamwork developed on habitat trips

COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Use formal business letter format: your header/contact information, date, inside address and salutation (Dear ____:).

Paragraph 1 — Intro/Why are you writing?

State the position to which you are applying, any personal references, what you like about the position and/or company. End with a thesis statement about what skills you bring.

Paragraph 2 — Demonstration of skills

Outline one competency/skill you bring, an example of how this skill was used or developed in the past, and how that skill will help you in the said position.

Paragraph 3 — Demonstration of skills

Outline an additional competency/skill, an example of how this skill was used or developed in the past, and how that skill will help you in the said position.

Paragraph 4 — Conclusion/Ask

Statement about why you want to work for that company. A thank you and a statement about asking for an interview.

10 TIPS FOR COVER LETTER WRITING

1. **Watch the length.** A well written, concise letter demonstrates your strong communication skills. It should be about ¾ of a page in length.
2. **State the position.** Clearly state the job title/position for which you are applying in the first paragraph of the letter.
3. **Address the letter to someone.** "To Whom It May Concern" is not a person. Find the name of someone at the company. Anyone's name is better than no name!
4. **Explain why you want the job.** State why you are excited about this position and how it fits your career goals. Showing your enthusiasm will make you stand out.
5. **Expand upon your resume.** Don't reiterate your resume. Rather, provide specific examples and give details regarding the skills you gained.
6. **Keep the tone and content professional.** You can tell a story, but keep it professional. Don't whine, beg, brag or be sarcastic.
7. **Be convincing and confident.** State your skills and what you bring in a confident tone. Don't preface statements with "I think", "I feel" or "I believe".
8. **Describe ways you will contribute.** Clearly identify two competencies you possess and how they will tie to the position and will enable you to do the job well.
9. **Do your research about the company.** Every cover letter should be different. State what you know and like about the company.
10. **PROOFREAD and EDIT.** Mistakes on your cover letter will quickly get your application put aside.

The Career and Internship Center can help you with your cover letter. Come to PCA Drop-in hours or schedule an appointment.

THANK YOU NOTE SAMPLE

Jane E. Siena

2514 Homebound Lane
Johnstown, NY 12095
sample@siena.edu ~ 518-678-4325

Use the same Header for a unified look to all of your documents

April 6, 2021

Ms. Amanda Paulson
Human Resources Director
Hilton Garden Inn
100 State St.
Albany, NY 12222

Use a business letter format if sending a typed thank you note

Dear Ms. Paulson:

Include something to help the reader remember you

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday for the Event Management Intern position. It was a pleasure talking with you about our mutual interest in watching documentary movies. After learning about Hilton Garden Inn's events and sales department, I am confident my marketing research skills will enable me to effectively design a marketing campaign for you.

After our discussion, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to help Hilton Garden Inn achieve its goal of hosting 30 events in July-August. My ability to anticipate problems will enable me to thoroughly check the venue prior to an event's opening to ensure all matters such as technology, lighting, catering, etc. are perfect.

Again, Ms. Paulson, I appreciate your time. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information to support my candidacy. You indicated a decision would be made by the middle of next week, and I look forward to hearing from you then.

Sincerely,

Jane E. Siena

Good to remind them of a time-line if one was discussed in the interview

Being that this is a professional letter, in the greeting use the persons' title and last name and a colon (:)

Cite a specific skill discussed during the interview.

This same text can be sent as an email. If mailing a business letter it should be formatted as above and printed on resume paper. If hand-writing, use a professional thank you note card and write neatly.

REFERENCES SAMPLE

Daniel J. Sarazen

(518) 123-4567

123 Example Road, Glenville, NY 12302

email123@yahoo.com

Use the same header as your resume

Professional References

Dr. Laurie Naranch
Associate Professor of Political Science
Siena College, Loudonville, NY
lnaranch@siena.edu
Office: 518-783-1234

Include a full name, title, business/organization and appropriate contact information for each reference

Dr. Gary Thompson
Library Director
Siena College, Loudonville, NY
Thompson@siena.edu
Phone: 518-783-4321

Dr. Don P. Levy
Director
Siena Research Institute, Loudonville, NY
dlevy@siena.edu
Work: 518-782-6789

Ms. Anna Maria Wilkinson
Manager
La Bottega Restaurant, Howard Beach, NY
(Formerly Manager at Chili's)
amwilkinson@gmail.com
Cell: 440-555-7782 or Work: 516-555-1900

A brief explanation of how you know the person if not evident is acceptable, but it doesn't need to be included on each entry

Be sure to ask individuals first, before using them as a reference. Bring a few hard copies of your reference list to job interviews.

COVER LETTER SAMPLES

Career Tip

No contact name provided? Call the business and ask for a contact person's name only. Explain you want to address a cover letter to the correct person.

Freshman Snyder

315 Mechanic Rd. Latham NY 12211
fsnyder@siena.edu (518) 555-5050

Be sure to use your contact information from your resume

21 April 2022

Always include the date

Ms. Debra DelBelso
Director, Career and Internship Center
Siena College
515 Loudon Road
Loudonville, NY 12211

Formal writing uses a colon (;) not a comma

State what position you are applying for and why you want the job

Dear Ms. DelBelso:

I am eagerly applying to be a Peer Career Advisor (PCA) at Siena college for the 2022-2023 year. As of right now, I am a freshman pursuing a political science major and business minor, with a pre-law certificate. I wish to become a PCA because I enjoy working with others and assisting those who may need advisement. I personally have sought help from PCAs in creating my own resume and cover letter, and interacting with them made me further want to help students the way I was helped. Besides wanting to help my peers, my communication and collaboration skills will enable me to work well as a PCA.

My current job at Grafton Lakes State Park has allowed me to communicate with a wide variety of people as well as gain experience in helping people with any issue or problem they may have. For example, I have had multiple different people come into the office asking questions in regards to the hiking trails that are offered at our park. After listening to their questions, I proceeded to not only answer their questions, but also provide additional information and materials such as hiking guides to further assist them. I want their visit to our office to be as beneficial as possible and, by providing them with additional information and resources, to potentially give them the tools they may need if future questions were to arise.

Furthermore, in your job listing you indicated that one of the responsibilities would be to present workshops in small groups or classrooms. During my time spent as Speaker of the Council at my highschool, I had worked on a project that I presented to our school board. This equipped me with the communication and collaboration skills needed to be a PCA. Additionally, following this presentation I worked with the athletics director to address the issues I presented, which furthered my collaboration and communication skills in regards to individual meetings. This will be highly beneficial when working directly with my peers during individual meetings, as identified in your job listing.

I am very enthusiastic about the opportunity to pursue becoming a PCA. I look forward to further discussing this position with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

List the skills or competencies as the job description lists them

Freshman Snyder

List a skill you offer and how you developed it

The final paragraph should mention what you hope to gain, a polite ask for an interview and should always include a thank you.

A thesis statement outlining the skills you have and how they relate to the role makes the whole letter/essay come together.

Be sure to re-read, proofread and edit your cover letter. Schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor to critique your cover letter.

Jane E. Siena

2514 Homebound Lane
Johnstown, NY 12095
sample@siena.edu ~ 518-678-4325

Use the same font, size, spacing and graphics as your resume

March 28, 2021

Ms. Amanda Paulson
Human Resources Director
Hilton Garden Inn
100 State St.
Albany, NY 12222

Always try to find an individual's name and title to address it to

Dear Ms. Paulson:

Make certain to list correctly the specific position and company.

My unique mix of previous work experience and my status as a Siena College marketing major in my junior year make me an ideal candidate for a summer internship with the Hilton Garden Inn. I recently spoke with you at the Siena College Career Fair, and I am following up on your request to receive my application for the Event Management Internship for the summer of 2021.

My past experience as a sales associate in the clothing retail industry has taught me many customer relations skills that will be applicable to working with Hilton Garden event customers. For instance, I have learned to patiently and actively listen to a customers' complaints and then calmly negotiate with her to resolve the issue. My manager has commended me several times and has asked me to help train some fellow associates. Additionally, my work experience with Sodexo Catering has supplied me with much knowledge of and appreciation for the many details involved in catering events of various sizes. I am confident that these skills along with my detail-oriented nature will enable me to greatly assist the Hilton Garden Inn events staff.

More importantly, an internship with the Hilton Garden Inn would be mutually beneficial. Your organization has an excellent reputation for customer satisfaction. In addition, you identified a need for experience in market research. You will note on my attached resume, I have taken several classes in marketing and completed a target market research project for my Introduction to Marketing course. I also served for two years as the marketing chair for our student chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). In this role, I volunteered to work on a marketing task force with the board of the local SHRM chapter. Researching target markets for their annual salary survey was a significant part of my contribution to this committee.

This internship will also assist me in reaching my goal of working in the hospitality industry upon graduating with my bachelor's degree. I look forward to the opportunity to talk with you further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Jane E. Siena

Illustrate how past experiences/skills are relevant to the position.

Use a closing such as Sincerely, Respectfully, Cordially.

Include SPECIFIC examples of your skill development.

A cover letter should be less than one page. You want to make certain it is read and a letter too long will not get read!