

# Bennington College Professional Correspondence Guide

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We understand that applying for a field work term or job can be a stressful experience, especially when you are trying to simultaneously engage in your academic learning. Below are some easy-to-follow process points along with sample emails that will make you realize that applying for jobs/ following up with employers is easier than you might think!

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## Inquiry

Subject Line in Email:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Title (Last name),

I am currently a (insert class year) at Bennington College where I plan to study/am studying (insert potential concentration). I discovered your work through (describe how you discovered the company; mention referrals) and was drawn to the scope of your work. I hope that you might be open to discussing potential winter internship opportunities at (insert organization name).

As background, this internship is for a six-week, off-campus winter term called [Field Work Term](#) (FWT). (Insert organization name) is particularly interesting to me as an FWT site because of my background in (insert field) and my related work experience with (insert organization name). I want to explore (mention a skill or growth area that their company offers) and I would be thrilled to contribute my skills in (insert one or two specifics, i.e. “graphic design” or “customer service.”)

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about an internship at (insert organization name). Attached please find my resume for reference. You can reach me at this email, or by calling (insert number). I will also plan to follow up with you next week, as I am required to register my FWT site in early November. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Insert Name)

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## Follow up

Already applied and are waiting to hear back? The next thing you need to do is to send the organization a follow up email. Following up is crucial to landing interviews and job offers.

When you take the initiative to get in touch with an employer, it shows reliability and excitement for the position. It's best to wait a week before following up on an application or job inquiry.

Dear (Ms./Mr. Last Name),

I am writing to follow up on the email I sent last week inquiring about potential winter internship opportunities with (insert organization name). I am still very interested in speaking with you about the possibilities. Attached, please find my resume for your review. You can reach me by phone at (insert phone number) or email at (insert email address).

Thank you again for your time and consideration, and I hope to speak with you soon.

Sincerely,

(Insert Name)

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## Thank You Email

(after a job interview)

Already got a call for an interview? Look at you! Once you have impressed them in the interview, it is always nice to write a thank you email afterwards:

When following up after a job interview, your goal is to thank the employer for meeting with you and to express your enthusiasm and continued interest in the position. Employers will expect this, and not doing so could cost you a job offer. You should send this promptly (within 24 hours) after each of your interviews. Use the thank you email as a chance to succinctly reiterate your background and qualifications and convey to the employer your appreciation for their time and consideration.

### Example:

Dear Ms. Jones,

Thank you for an interesting and informative interview. I learned a great deal about ABC Publishing and am more convinced than ever that my qualifications are a perfect fit for the Student Intern position.

I would like to be part of the ABC team and am confident that my combination of academic achievement and strong interest in children's literature will allow me to make a significant contribution to your department this winter. I also see how essential attention to detail and an understanding of child development will be for this job and this industry. These are areas in which I have excelled, both in college and through my experience volunteering in my public library's summer reading program.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Insert Name)

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## Follow up phone call

(once you've waited a week to 10 days to hear back)

It's best to follow up about a position you interviewed for by phone. Although you may feel shy or nervous to call instead of email, phone contact is by far the most effective way to hold the employer's attention and show initiative. Always ask to speak with the person you interviewed with and then ask that person if it is a good time to check in. It's important to maintain a professional and gracious demeanor.

### Example:

Hi, this is (Your Name). I'm calling to follow up on our interview last week regarding the (insert position title) position. I imagine that you are still in your consideration process, but I wanted to reach out personally to reiterate my strong interest in the position.

**Possible questions to ask to assess timeline:** What is the timeline of the position? When do you expect to let candidates know if they advanced? What are the next steps?

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## Acceptance Email

The acceptance email is sent to formally accept a position and clarify important information to avoid misunderstanding. In this email, you should restate what you understand to be the terms of employment, including your job title, description, starting date, hours, and compensation (if offered). Additionally, you should seek to build a relationship through this email, expressing your appreciation and eagerness to join the organization.

### Example:

Dear Ms. Jones,

I was delighted to accept your offer of the Student Intern position over the phone yesterday. Just to clarify the details we discussed, I understand that I will be starting at 9:00 AM on January 2 and will work at 9:00 – 4:00 daily, with an hour lunch. My final day at ABC Publishing will be February 16, 2018 and I will be paid a stipend of \$1,000 for the term.

As I mentioned during our conversation, I am required to complete a minimum of 200 hours during this time to fulfill my Field Work Term requirement at Bennington College. You will be receiving an email from the Field Work Term & Career Development Office that will provide information about Field Work Term and confirm that they have registered me to work with you. Once the term begins they will send you an online evaluation form to complete and submit by February 22, 2020 in order for me to fulfill my requirement.

I would like to reiterate how excited I am to have this opportunity and am certain I will learn a great deal. Please contact me if you require further information. Please let me know if you have additional questions about my Field Work Term requirements. I look forward to working with you this winter.

Sincerely,  
(Insert Name)

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## Decline/Withdrawal Email

While you should never withdraw an acceptance of an offer just because something else came in, you can decline if you receive multiple offers before making a final choice. It is critical to let an employer know if you decide to decline their offer. Maintain a positive professional reputation by sending an email politely withdrawing your application. This allows the employer to continue their search and demonstrates a respect for their time. Additionally, it indicates your appreciation for their consideration.

### Example:

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing to inform you that I will need to withdraw myself from consideration for the position of Editorial Intern, Children's Department. I received an offer for a different Field Work Term position that will allow me to pursue my priority goals. After much deliberation, I have decided to accept that offer. I appreciate the consideration you have already given my application, and hope to have the opportunity to work with XYZ Press in the future.

Sincerely,  
(Insert Name)

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## Late for Work/Left Early

When you have been late to a scheduled shift, or had to leave early unexpectedly, it's always appropriate to send a message to your supervisor acknowledging your absence, rather than leaving them without word of what happened.

### Example:

Dear Anna,

I'm writing to apologize for <insert: "arriving late" or "leaving early"> yesterday. I know that you rely on staff working their full shifts, and I'm sorry. I will do my best for it not to happen again.

Thank you,  
(Insert Name)

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## Planned Absence

If you know you will need to miss a shift that you have been scheduled to work, it's expected that you will inform your supervisor as far in advance as you can. You do not need to provide extensive detail about the reason for your absence, but it's polite to give at least a category for your absence. Some workplaces will ask that you help them find coverage for your shift from among your coworkers, and you should try to help with this when applicable.

### Example One:

Dear Anna,

I'm writing to let you know that I will need to be absent from work next Monday, January 2nd, for <insert: "a doctor's appointment," "my sister's wedding," "a lecture required for one of my classes," "travel related to the holiday weekend," etc.>.

Thank you,  
(Insert Name)

### Example Two:

Dear Anna,

I'm writing to let you know that I'm feeling unwell this evening, and if I am not doing better by tomorrow morning, I may need to miss work. I apologize for the short notice, and I will write again in the morning to update you.

Thank you,  
(Insert Name)

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## Missed Shift

It is always best to inform your supervisor that you will not be at work before it happens. However, if circumstances intervene and you are not able to arrange an absence ahead of time, it's recommended that you send a note afterward acknowledging the mistake and briefly explaining what happened.

### Example:

Dear Anna,

I'm writing to apologize for missing my shift today. I know that my absence makes it harder for you and the team, and I'm sorry. I will do my best for it not to happen again.

Thank you,  
(Insert Name)

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## Struggling at Work/Need for Accommodation

Sometimes, life will intervene and affect your ability to be fully present and do your best work. If you have a personal matter affecting your work, it's appropriate to let your supervisor know, and, if you need it, to ask about making changes that will help you cope while you work on solutions to the main issue. In the example below, the writer is a student worker with a campus job, but the personal matters and possible solutions can vary widely.

### Example:

Dear Anna,

I'm writing to let you know that I have a <insert: "health issue," "learning difference," or "personal circumstance"> that is impacting my ability to do my job to my best ability. I'm meeting with College staff to see what steps I need to take, which may include <insert options like: "arranging accommodations," "changing my work assignment" and "reducing my hours," as appropriate to the case.> I will provide an update soon, but for now I wanted you to be aware, as I know this impacts our team.

Thank you,  
(Insert Name)