When connecting with employers it is important to converse in a professional manner. This guide will provide some tips on the following professional modes of communication:

- Cover Letter
- Thank you Note
- Email
- Voicemail & Phone

Did You Know? Employers view written correspondence as evidence of your communication skills – one of the most important abilities that recruiters seek in entry-level professionals.

**COVER LETTER**

A cover letter may also be referred to as a letter of interest or application letter. It accompanies your resume. All letters should be prepared individually and tailored to that particular company.

**Goal:** Introduce you to an employer, highlight key experiences and qualifications you possess, and convey enthusiasm for that particular position and employer.

**Format**
- Limit length to one page
- Use standard business letter formatting with your return address (sender’s address), the date, and the employer’s name, title and address (recipient’s information)
- Use block style (e.g., no paragraph indents and insert a blank space between paragraphs)
- Use common font styles such as Times New Roman, Garamond, Cambria, Arial. Avoid intricate fonts or those with narrow or wide spacing (use same font as resume).
- Greeting: If possible, address the letter to a specific person in the organization using “Dr., Ms., or Mr.” If you do not have a name, “Dear Hiring Representative” might sound a bit more personalized than “To Whom it May Concern”, then follow by a colon “:”.
- Signature: When concluding the letter, close with a straightforward, “Sincerely.” For printed documents, include a handwritten signature. If including the letter in the body of an email or sending via email. Leave some spaces and then simply type in your name.
- Enclosure: You can also add a line referencing your other materials depending on what the job description requires for the application

**How to Send**
- Emailing Your Document:
  - Option 1 (preferred): Write a brief email indicating what you are applying for and then attach the cover letter and resume as separate documents. Consider saving as a .pdf to ensure formatting and translation from computers.
  - Option 2: Write the cover letter in the body of an email and attach a resume
- Printing Your Document:
  - Print on resume paper that is white or ivory.
**Did You Know?**
Contrary to popular opinion, cover letters ARE read and ARE important. If an employer does not require but gives you the option of submitting a cover letter, ALWAYS submit a cover letter.

**How to Handle Requests for Salary History**
When an employer requests a salary history (what you've earned in the past) or salary requirements (what you hope to earn in this job), many job seekers find themselves at a loss. You don't want to price yourself out of a job, but you don't want the employer to offer less than the going rate for the position. So what's the right answer?

- Don't include salary history on your resume. Handle the request at the end of your cover letter.
- Respond to the salary history question positively without giving a specific amount. (Example: "I'm earning in the mid-40s.")
- Research the market value for the position and for someone with your skills and background; give at least a $3,000-$5,000 range when providing salary requirements.
- You may also respond to the salary requirement question by writing "salary is negotiable" or "I would be delighted to discuss specific salary details commensurate with my experience as part of the interview process."
- Be prepared to respond to this question in an interview. Carry a list of your positions in reverse chronological order, including the name of the company, your title, a synopsis of your duties, and, lastly, a general compensation amount (e.g. mid-40s).
- Don't lie about your salary history. Employers may verify salary history through reference checks.
- Salary requests are difficult for all job searchers to handle, not just new college grads. The key is to shift the focus, politely but firmly, from what you made in the past to competitive compensation for the position you want.

Some of this information is courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.
THANK-YOU NOTE

After an interview for a position or any professional exchange, such as a meeting at a Career Fair, conversations at a campus event, or informational interview, it is crucial to follow-up with those individuals to demonstrate your genuine interest and motivation.

**Goal:** Express appreciation, reiterate interest, and strengthen your position as an applicant by drawing connections to your skill set. Here are some tips for developing this message:

**Format/How to Send**

- **General:**
  - Set a goal of thanking anyone who has helped you during your career exploration and/or job search process
  - Make sure to send it 24-48 hours after your interaction with the recipient
  - Provide similar Greeting and Signature like you would in your cover letter
  - Send to everyone who interviewed you or ask the host to relay your appreciation to the entire group

- **Handwriting Your Note (note: many employers prefer a handwritten note due to the personalized nature of the interaction):**
  - Use simple, professional stationary with your name and/or “thank you” printed on it
  - Write legibly and sign your name in black or blue ink
  - Add correct postage and properly address your envelope

- **Emailing Your Note:**
  - Include in the body of the email
  - Write in a commonly utilized black font; avoid any distracting colors
  - Send your communication using a professional email address
  - Include suggested subject line, “Name of Position” – Follow-Up

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Mr./Ms./Dr. _______________

Express your thanks for their time during the interview or meeting. Reemphasize one of your strongest qualities and details from your conversation. Draw connections between the position and your skills and experiences (job opening) or what you learned from speaking to them about their field/organization (informational interviewing). Explain why their organization is a good fit for you.

Reiterate your interest in the position. Provide additional contact information (phone and/or email). Tell the recipient that you are looking forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

Type your name

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**Did You Know?** This written communication is an important piece of the process that is all too often forgotten. Saying “thanks” will help you stand out from the crowd and continue a positive rapport.
EMAIL

With the rise of electronic communication, many conversations are conducted through this medium (e.g., text, tweets, etc.). Be conscious of your tone and format, which should still be formal and professional.

Goal: Send an email for networking purposes, informational interviewing opportunities, or to reach out to an organization for potential full-time, part-time, or internship openings. Here are some suggestions for email:

Format

- Send your communication using a professional email address
- Provide similar Greeting and Signature like you would in your cover letter
- Write in a commonly utilized black font; avoid any distracting colors
- Should be brief and to the point, but do not use any slang or shorthand language that you would use in text messages; be conscious of sending emails from your cell phone – the various default signatures (e.g., sent from my iPhone).
- Attach your resume to provide a detailed account of your credentials (optional)

From: chester.w.student@gmail.com
To: (Professional’s email)
Subject: Internship Opportunity at ABC Company

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. ______________:

Introduce yourself by including your name and current role – your major and year at West Chester University. Mention the purpose of your communication and the position about which you are corresponding. Provide specific information to display your interest in their organization. Articulate reasons as to why you may be a good fit by referencing some prior or current experiences.

If appropriate, reference any attachments. Express any additional contact information. Tell the reader you are looking forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

Type your name

Did Know You? You should keep any copies of any paper and electronic correspondence. Create a folder in your email to save the correspondence or create a “job search notebook” in Microsoft Word/Excel. Utilize a hard copy folder or binder to track your materials.
VOICEMAIL & PHONE
With high volumes of applications and as another contact point, the phone is a frequently used tool to convey messages.

**Goal:** Leave contact information to elicit further communication or converse with professionals for openings and/or networking purposes. Here are some considerations for phone communication:

**Format**
- Edit your cell phone voicemail
  - Use your given name or the name that you commonly refer to yourself as (if you do not go by your full first name)
- Conduct any conversations in a quiet space preferably at a desk, with a copy of your resume and a ‘cheat sheet’ of what you definitely want to highlight in the conversation
- Have a pen and paper handy for any short notes or follow up instructions
- Turn off call-waiting and make sure your phone is charged
- Turn off any potential noise-makers—TV, radio, alarm clocks; you should be the only one in the room
- Speak slowly and clearly; smile—smiling will change the tone of your voice
- Convey more enthusiasm and energy through your voice—even though the other individual cannot see your body language
- It is okay to be quiet after your comment to send a non-verbal signal that you’ve completed your thought
- Pay attention to your posture in the chair and how you dress; it can add to the overall effect of your phone presentation
- Avoid chewing gum, getting a drink or use slang
- For more tips, review the Interviewing Guide on the career center website.

Cell phone custom message: “Hello, you’ve reached the cell phone of Chester Student. Please leave a message and I’ll return your call as soon as I can. Thank you.”

Cell phone automated message: “You’ve reached the voicemail of (Chester Student*) Please leave a message after the tone.”
  *This recording is of your own voice saying your name. Do not default to the automatic message which reads the digits of your cell phone number.

**Did You Know?** The most likely first step of a hiring process is a phone screen from the employers to the applicant. If a number you don’t recognize comes through on your cell phone, don’t answer it right away! Wait to listen to the message, because you already created a professional voicemail to field these calls. Avoid answering the phone in a loud space or in an unprepared manner.
How to Get Help with Your Cover Letter & Other Correspondence

Here are the ways you can get feedback on your cover letter and other job search correspondence (1-2 business day turnaround) in order to strengthen the presentation of your skills and accomplishments:

1. One-on-One Appointments and Drop-in Hours
If you want in-person assistance, you may utilize our regular drop-in hours during the academic year (Monday through Friday, 1:00 to 3:00 pm) or call the office at 610-436-2501 to schedule a 30-minute appointment during our business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm during the academic year, 8:00am to 4:00pm in the summer).

We strongly prefer that you bring a printed draft of a cover letter with you to in-person meetings so we can provide you with the most useful feedback. It doesn’t have to be good – that is why we are here to help you – but you will benefit more from the appointment if you have a rough draft already started.

2. Email Service
You may email your cover letter or other job search correspondence to mailto:cdc@wcupa.edu for feedback (again, you will receive an e-mail within two business days).

3. Drop-Off Service
You may bring a printed copy of your cover letter, thank-you note, or resume to the career center in 225 Lawrence and leave it with a staff member at the main welcome desk. You may pick up your documents with written feedback after two business days.

Did You Know?
A great next step is to find a job that interests you and draft your correspondence for the position, then make an appointment in the Career Development Center for feedback and assistance. If you are not really sure where to begin, then make an appointment anyway and come see us to help get you started!
345 Main Street  
West Chester, PA 19380

September 22, 2017

Ms. Jane Smith  
Ajax Widgets Company  
1223 Foster Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am applying for the web developer position that was advertised via the West Chester University Career Development Center this week. I will graduate in May 2015 with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. The position is a strong fit with my education, experience, and career interests and I am very enthusiastic about applying for consideration.

Your position requires skills in various types of programming and software used in web development. My academic program emphasizes C, C++, .NET, PHP, Visual Basic, Assembler, Java, and MSSQL. In addition I have extensive experience using the Adobe Creative Suite and several photo editing packages. My internship experience as a department computer consultant gave me exposure to PC and Mac OS platforms. I gained knowledge of enterprise systems, content management systems, and e-commerce operations.

My background and career goals seem to match your job requirements well. I am confident that I will perform the job effectively. Furthermore, I am genuinely interested in the position because it utilizes my skills and areas of expertise directly; additionally, through the rotational training and management track you provide, I will develop new skills and be on a good path for advancement within Ajax Widgets.

I welcome the opportunity to interview for this position to further discuss my qualifications and interest in joining your organization. Should you need additional information, please contact me at (610) 345-6789 or RC811223@wcupa.edu. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rammy W. Chester

Rammy W. Chester

A cover letter accompanies your resume when you apply for a job or internship. You want to demonstrate that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position. Review the position description carefully and identify one or more themes (e.g., your education, experience, and/or leadership) that show persuasively how well you fit the position. Provide specific examples of past accomplishments and performance to support your argument that you deserve consideration for an interview.

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October 24, 2017

Ms. Jane Smith
Ajax Widgets Company
1223 Foster Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Ms. Smith:

I want to thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the Sales Associate position with Ajax Widgets. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your company’s products, services, and position in the Delaware Valley market. I also greatly valued meeting members of the current sales team.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for Ajax Widgets were strengthened as a result of the interview. I think my education and internship experiences fit well with the job requirements, and I am confident that I could make a significant contribution to the organization over time.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in the position and working with you and your team. You provide the kind of growth and advancement opportunity I seek; I was impressed with the amount and quality of professional mentoring and training available.

Please feel free to contact me at (610) 345-6789 or at RC811223@wcupa.edu if I can provide you with any additional information. Thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rammy W. Chester

Rammy W. Chester

This is one of the most important, yet least used, tools in a job search. A thank-you note is used to express appreciation, reinforce motivation, and/or strengthen your candidacy. When following up on employment interviews, thank-you letters (or emails) should be sent within 24 hours to everyone who interviewed you. If it is not possible or appropriate to send a thank-you to everyone, then send one to your host or the highest ranking manager you met with a request to extend your appreciation to the entire group.

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April 21, 2017

Ms. Jane Smith
Ajax Widgets Company
1223 Foster Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer on April 18, for the Social Media Coordinator position with a starting salary of $39,000. I am delighted to be joining the Communications and Public Relations team at Ajax Widgets in Philadelphia. The position is exactly what I hoped to do to begin my career after graduating from West Chester University. I am confident that I can make a significant contribution to the company and I am grateful for the opportunity.

As we discussed, I will report to work at 8:00 a.m. on June 15, and I will have completed the medical examination and drug testing by the start date. In addition, I shall complete all of the employment, benefits, and insurance forms you send me for the new employee orientation.

I look forward to working with you and your team. I appreciate your confidence in me and I am happy to be joining your staff.

Sincerely,

Rammy W. Chester

Rammy W. Chester

Use this type of letter to accept a job offer, to confirm the terms of your employment (salary, starting date, medical examinations, and so forth). Typically an acceptance letter is written after you telephone the employer to discuss the details of the offer and terms of employment and to verbally accept the offer.

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May 22, 2017

Mr. Robert Smith  
Ajax Therapy Associates  
1223 Foster Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application for the physical therapist position with Ajax Therapy Associates. As I indicated in my interview with you, I have been exploring several employment possibilities. This week I was offered a position with a local hospital and, after careful consideration, I decided to accept it. The position provides a very good match for my interests at this point in my career.

I want to thank you for interviewing and considering me for your position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your organization. I wish you and your staff well.

Sincerely,

Rammy W. Chester

Rammy W. Chester

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Once you accept a position, you have an ethical obligation to inform all other employers of your decision and to withdraw your employment application from consideration. Your withdrawal letter should express appreciation for the employer's consideration and courtesy. It may be appropriate to state that your decision to go with another organization was based on having a better person/job fit for this stage of your career. DO NOT say that you obtained a better job.

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April 24, 2017

Mr. John Smith  
Ajax Widgets Company  
1223 Foster Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you very much for offering me the position of chemical technician with Ajax Widgets Company. I appreciate your discussing the details of the position with me and giving me the time to consider your offer.

Ajax Widgets is a strong organization and there are many aspects of the position that are very appealing to me. I believe, however, it is in our mutual best interests that I decline your offer. As we discussed, my training and interests in chemistry are not as represented within this role. This has been a challenging decision for me, but I believe it is the appropriate one for my career at this time.

I want to thank you for the consideration and courtesy extended to me. It was a pleasure meeting you and your team.

Sincerely,

Rammy W. Chester

Rammy W. Chester

As a job candidate, you may decide to decline employment offers that do not fit your career objectives and interests. Rejecting an employment offer should be done thoughtfully. Indicate that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it. Also, be sure to thank the employer for the offer and consideration of you as a candidate. As a professional courtesy, you should telephone the contact person to decline the offer verbally, offering a consistent brief explanation as to why; you should then immediately follow up with the letter.

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