

Quick Reference: Best Practices for Informing Candidates of Hiring Decisions



When ending communication with job candidates who were not selected to fill a position, it is important that you communicate clearly, concisely and tactfully. The following best practices will help assist you in the post-interview process of informing candidates that they were not selected.

Do

- Be prompt in informing candidates once you have decided to move forward with another candidate.
- Make sure you have received at least verbal acceptance from the desired candidate before calling the candidate(s) who did not receive an offer.
- Part on good terms! Ending on a positive note will make the candidate feel comfortable approaching the university again in the future.
- If you truly enjoyed meeting the candidate and feel as though they would excel at Clemson University in a more suitable position, keep the lines of communication open. Connecting them to future opportunities demonstrates that Clemson appreciates their interest in working here and cares about their success.
- Humanize the rejection process. Thank the candidate—not only for their time and effort, but also for choosing Clemson.

Don't

- Don't leave room for ambiguity, which may allow the candidate to assume or misconstrue information. Be clear, concise and direct.
- Don't tell the candidate you will keep their resume on file for future consideration.
- Don't reveal too much information to the candidate, such as their ranking among the field or your personal thoughts and opinions about them or other candidates.
- Don't tell the candidate you chose someone who is more qualified than them. Instead, try, "We have selected the individual who we believe best fits the qualifications for the position."
- Don't forget to identify a strength of the candidate. Try highlighting a strength as it relates to the specific skills or experience of the candidate. For example, "We were impressed by your ability to complete large tasks, such as when you built out the entire ecommerce and payment solution at ..."

The following examples demonstrate how a hiring official might inform candidates 1) over the phone or 2) via email that they were not selected:

Phone

“Good morning/afternoon [Applicant Name]. This is [Your Name] calling from the [Department Name] at Clemson University.

Thank you for your interest in the [position name] position. While we certainly enjoyed meeting you and we were impressed with your [specific aspect of candidate’s qualifications], we have offered the position to another candidate. We hope you will continue to consider Clemson University for future opportunities.

On behalf of the university, thank you for taking the time to interview with us. We wish you much success moving forward.

Thank you and have a great day.”

Email

Dear [Applicant Name],

Thank you for your interest in the [position title] position within the [Department/Division Name] at Clemson University. We were extremely pleased with the quality of applicants we received for this role. While we were impressed by your [specific candidate’s qualification], we have offered the position to another candidate. We sincerely hope you will continue to consider Clemson University for future opportunities.

Thank you for your time. We wish you much success in your future endeavors.

Best regards,

[Hiring Official Name]