

Office of Professionalism

Apology letter guidelines

There are times when one's actions and/or statements may have hurt or negatively affected another person or group. In these types of situations, an apology can help heal the hurt, or aid in mending relationships. Consider referencing these guidelines when crafting a letter of apology. Tenets of an effective apology are to be sincere, admit responsibility where applicable, avoid deflections or excuses, be brief, and to not expect acceptance or forgiveness from the other party in return.

What Happened

- A description acknowledging and detailing the perspective of the other person.
- Avoid excuses or rationalizations for the interaction and/or event (eg: avoid "but").

My Role

- Own up to whatever part of the event and/or interaction that you feel you can agree with, however big or little. You can agree to disagree with parts of the interaction and/or event.

How I Feel

- An expression of remorse or regret.

What I Will Do

- A statement recognizing the person's point of view, and thoughts of change going forward, if appropriate. You may consider change in approach to various situations, changes in recognition and response to triggers etc.