

Factsheet

Handling Job Rejection



The IET Benevolent Fund

Rejection is a hard fact of life. Remaining positive after receiving another rejection letter is easier said than done.

The best way to deal with the rejection is not to take things personally and to take stock of the situation.

Successful candidates continue to job-hunt, stay positive, motivated and learn from the process.

If you didn't reach interview stage a rejection letter may be disappointing, but it is not usually devastating.

All the organisation has seen is in your covering letter and your CV or application form. So, be constructive and focus on those materials:

- Did you tailor your covering letter to meet the requirements as they were set out in the job ad, or did you send a generic covering letter?
- Did your letter talk more about your history and accomplishments rather than focusing on how your background matches the job?
- Does your CV sell your skills?
- Take another look at your CV. Make sure it highlights your skills and achievements.
- Would it be helpful to get a CV review from a company that specialises in writing CVs and helping people find jobs?
- Should you get more involved in professional organisations? This can be a valuable source of networking and opportunities to find ideas, support and encouragement.
- Do you understand the skills, qualifications and personal attributes that are required for the position you seek?

Rejection after an interview

If you get rejected after an interview, your initial reaction may be to go off and drown your sorrows. Once you've recovered, take a long hard look at what happened and see if there are positive changes to be made.

- Make a note of questions you had difficulty answering or questions that stood out in your mind.
- Write out a list of further questions you could have asked.
- Review how you handled yourself and how you prepared.
- Were you able to elaborate effectively on the information you provided in your initial application?
- Did you do research on the company before you interviewed? Were you able to express your understanding of the company to the interviewer?
- Did you memorise your background speech — the 2–5 minute recap of your background — and present it in a positive manner?
- If you think your interview skills need work, then you might want to set up a mock interview or make an appointment with a career specialist to talk about how you conduct yourself through the process.
- Did your dress sense and personal grooming on the day match the work culture you were seeking to join?

Was there anything else you could have done to sell yourself in your interview? Were you listening, actively, to the questions and answering them in the best possible way?

Crucially, get feedback. Find out why you weren't chosen and don't just listen to what they tell you - apply it.

Why not write back and thank the company for the interview. You may want to say how much you would like to be reconsidered if a job comes up in future that could use your qualifications and skills.

Once you've looked at how the interview went, assess the sort of jobs you are going for. Are they the right position for you, in the right area at the right level? Is it worth visiting, or perhaps revisiting, a careers service to find out where your talents lie and where you should be directing them?

There are internet sites that provide job search support such as Doctorjob iee.doctorjob.com and Guardian Jobs jobsadvice.guardian.co.uk/ and of course the IEE Jobs Online pages www.iee.org/EduCareers/JobsOn/

None of this advice changes the harsh reality of rejection. Disappointment and disillusionment can be really undermining. But whatever has gone wrong so far, it must not affect the way you continue your job search. Remember that a rejection is not personal – it just means that it wasn't the right fit this time.

Three final suggestions:

1. Consider temping until something does come up. The position could expand your skills set and lead to other opportunities. At the very least it will top up your bank account, and will give you the opportunity to see different types of job and organisation from the inside.
2. If you are looking for a job full-time, be professional about it. Structure your day.
3. Remember that you are talented and qualified and you are still just at the very start of finding what is right for you.

This article was written by IET Connect, the IET Benevolent Fund, which gives advice and support to IET members and former IEE members, and their families.