

Contacting Alumni

An excellent way to learn more about a company or industry is to talk with alumni of your university or affiliated universities. Think about the clubs and activities you participated in and all the friends you made during your time at APU. Most likely, some of your senior classmates are working at a company of your target business or industry. They can give you advice and first-hand insights that cannot be found in any pamphlet or information session. They can also give you general job hunting advice and share their experience with you. Use the APU and Ritsumeikan alumni networks to your advantage during job hunting. It usually requires some effort to find alumni working in your field of interest. Here are some tips on searching for alumni. Please be advised that some companies do not answer enquiries related to alumni contacts. Make sure you check their website before reaching out to them.

Getting connected with alumni:

- Ask friends and family if they know of anyone.
- Ask senior classmates in your seminar class, club or circle.
- Ask APU professors and staff.
- Contact companies you are interested in and ask.
- Search job-hunting reports (see p.14)
- On the "Alumni Database" website of the APU Student & Alumni Association (<http://www.alumni.apu.ac.jp/>), find alumni using the "Member Search function."
- Utilize social networking sites such as LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>) and Facebook. *Some functions are only available on a fee-paying basis.

Whatever method you use, searching takes time, so plan ahead accordingly.

1. Making an Appointment

Once you find an alumni in your field or industry of interest, make an appointment with them.

You should make an appointment by telephone, e-mail, or a formal letter. It is important when contacting an alumni to be as polite and thoughtful as possible, even with senior classmates you knew well. As busy working men and women, their time is precious and you should be aware of the importance of the time they put aside for helping you. You should offer the alumni a range of your free days and meeting times so as to not inconvenience them or disrupt their schedule.

2. Prepare your Questions, Statement of Purpose, and Other Information in Advance

It is important to make the most of your time together with the alumni, so be sure any questions you want to ask are written down and ready. If you are speaking on the phone do not make them wait on the line while you gather your materials. Reply to e-mails promptly and in detail.

You should research the company and think about why you want to work at the company and what you may be able to offer the company before you go. Prepare thoughtful questions; don't ask simple questions that can be found on a company website or in a pamphlet. Make the most of your time with the alumni to gain special information you could not get anywhere else.

3. Important Details

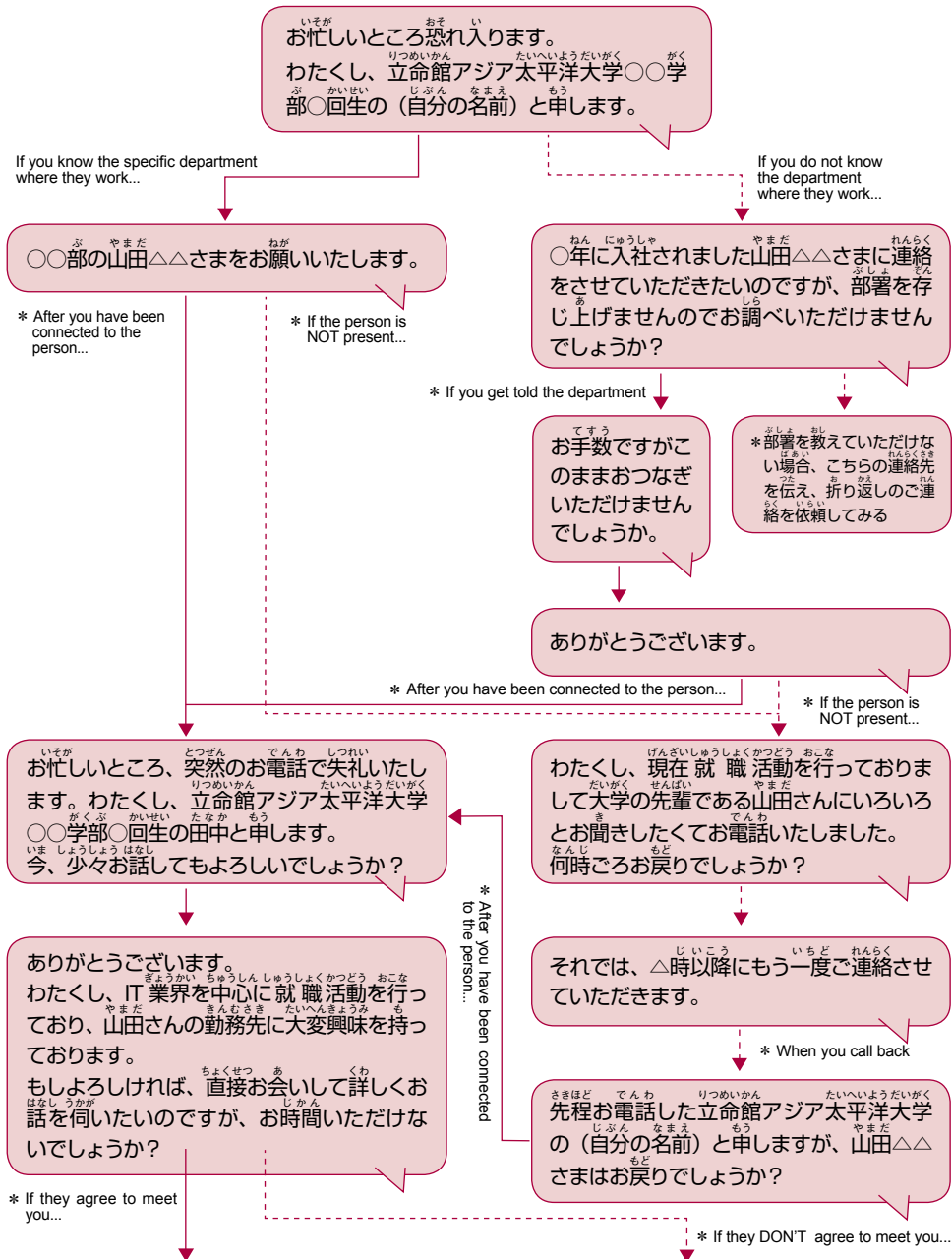
- Never be late. Always be sure to be ready 15 minutes earlier than the appointed time.
- Don't ramble or get sidetracked. Keep your questions short and take notes on the answers and feedback you receive.
- Keep the meeting formal and don't act too casual or friendly. Approach these visits as a professional opportunity, not a relaxed get-together.

4. Express Your Gratitude to Alumni for Their Information and Time

- Time is an invaluable resource. So make sure you send a thank-you note and express your gratitude to all the alumni you gather information from, so that they will continue to support other job hunters in the future.

Telephoning Alumni

Before calling alumni, make sure you are aware of your own upcoming schedule and have a pen and paper by your side. Below are model conversations for telephoning alumni in Japanese.



* If they agree to meet you...

ありがとうございます。
早速ですが、山田さんのご都合はいかがで
しょうか？

場所はどちらがよろしいでしょうか？

はい、わかりました。
わたくしは大学のロゴが入ったものを目印に
持って行きます。
念のため、電話番号を申し上げます。
〇〇〇 - 〇〇〇〇 - 〇〇〇〇です。
山田さんの番号をお伺いしてもよろしいで
しょうか？

では、〇日〇曜日〇時に・・・でお待ちして
おります。よろしく願いたします。

* If they DON'T agree to meet you...

お手数をおかけして申し訳ございませんで
した。ありがとうございました。

* If they can't meet you, thank them anyway and say goodbye...

It is best to avoid calling during the following times:

- At the very start or end of office hours
 - Around lunchtime (11:30 ~ 13:30)
 - In the afternoon of the last day of the month
- * However, this may not be applied to specific situations, such as emergencies or delays.

- Even though the alumni may offer to call you back, proper etiquette requires YOU to call them.
- Be sure to write down any times or dates immediately after hearing them.
- If the alumni chooses a date that is inconvenient for you, explain the reason and ask about another possible day.
- If you will only have limited time in the city where the alumni member is, be sure to contact them well in advance and check that they will be able to meet you.
- Always wait for the other person to hang up before you hang up!
- To protect personal privacy, there may be times that the company will not tell you the department where the alumni is placed. In this case, state your name and contact details and ask for the alumni to contact you. If they contact you, be sure to thank them straight away.

Contacting Alumni (e-mail)

While it is perfectly acceptable to send an unsolicited mail to a publicly listed address, as this is your first contact with the alumni, it is important to make a good impression from the start. Be sure to word your e-mail in a very polite and professional manner.

1. Use an easy to understand subject line

As your e-mail will most likely not be attended to immediately, it is important to use a simple and easy-to-understand subject line that will get the recipient's attention every time they look at their message inbox. A specific subject line increases the chance your mail will be read and responded to quickly.

2. Keep the message brief

When writing an e-mail, you do not need to add the special greetings or other set phrases that commonly open and close formal letters. After a brief greeting and introduction of yourself, you should get right to your main points. Try to avoid roundabout, unfocused sentences and be as brief as possible.

•Basic etiquette practiced in Japan when contacting via emails

宛先 : ○○○○@○○○.ne.jp

CC :

BCC :

件名 : OB 訪問のお願い

easy-to-understand subject line

株式会社○○○○
田中 太一 様

はじめまして。

私は立命館アジア太平洋大学○○学部○回生の垂細垂 リツオと申します。
突然のメールをお許しください。

32 to 35 characters per line

就職活動を間近に控えている現在、金融業界を第一志望に考え
企業分析を行っております。

先輩方のご意見も参考にさせていただきたく、校友会サイトより
OB・OG 情報検索を行っていたところ、一番興味を持っている
株式会社○○○○で田中さんが活躍されている情報を拝見し

是非お会いしてお話を伺いたいと思いメールをさせていただきました。

勝手なお願いで大変恐縮ではございますが、一度お時間をいただけ
ませんでしょうか？

後日、こちらから会社の方にお電話を差し上げますので、その際に
ご都合をお聞かせいただければ幸いです。

よろしくお願ひ致します。

立命館アジア太平洋大学○○学部
垂細垂 リツオ

E-mail : ○○○○@△△△.ac.jp

住所 : 〒○○○-○○○
○○県○○市○○町△丁目□番地○号

Thanking Alumni for a Meeting

Always send a thank-you letter to the alumni who has taken the time to meet you. A thank-you letter is preferred to just a phone call or an e-mail.

In your letter you should describe how the meeting was productive for you: e.g. things that you learned, advice that you were particularly grateful for, and so forth. This will help to create a positive image. Use the sample letter below to guide you but do not forget to use your own words to convey your own personality and sincerity.

Sample of a thank-you letter to an alumni member

Seasonal Greeting

拝啓

〇〇の候、田中先輩におかれましては、益々ご活躍のこととお喜び申し上げます。

さて、先日はお忙しい中、貴重なお時間を割いていただきまして本当にありがとうございました。

田中先輩の仕事内容などをお聞かせいただき、今まで漠然としていた仕事に対する考え方が明確なものになりました。また、田中先輩がおっしゃっていた「個人個人が一生懸命自分の役割を果たしてこそグループや会社の目標が達成できる」との言葉が強く印象に残りました。先輩の生き生きしている姿を拝見して、〇〇会社を第一志望とする決意が固まりました。これも先輩のご指導のおかげです。

まもなく、選考が始まります。先輩からご指導頂いたことを糧にして頑張り所存でございます。どうかこれからもご指導くださいますよう、お願い申し上げます。

本筆ながら、田中先輩の益々のご健勝をお祈りいたしております。

敬具

平成〇〇年〇月〇日

立命館アジア太平洋大学

〇〇学部

亜細亜 リツオ

株式会社〇〇〇〇
田中 太一様

Date and Signature

Closing

Main Body

Introductory Paragraph

Guidelines for writing envelopes correctly can be found on p.66 of this book.