

Template Letter for Inviting Guest Speakers

Writing to invite a speaker for the first time can be daunting, but don't worry. By using our template email you can't go too far wrong. Then have a look at the example letter below to see how it's done.

A strong letter is not too long and clearly lays out all the important details of the event. It is much quicker to get all the details in the first email rather than have to email back and forth with the speaker later to clear up points.

Template

EMAIL HEADER: Invitation to appear at [event / society and location]

Dear [name],

Paragraph one: introductions

- Introduce yourself and your society
- Have you met before? How did you hear about them?
- Outline event you would like them to speak at, approximate dates, theme, location

Paragraph two: the event specifics

- What is the style of the event?
- Who is hosting it?
- Where is it?
- Will there be other speakers?

Paragraph three: what the speaker would do

- When is it? - date, day, time
- What would you like your guest to talk about?

Paragraph four: what can you offer the speaker

- Ask if the speaker will need anything for their talk
- Will you pay their travel fees?
- Can you offer them accommodation or food?

Paragraph five: sign off

- Be enthusiastic!

Example letters

Generic

Dear [speaker's name],

I am writing to you on behalf of the [society name] at the [University]. We are currently looking for interesting people to come speak at one of our society's events and we would like to invite you to come give a talk on [insert potential subject], or if you would prefer to present a different topic which you think may be of interest to us, please feel free to suggest it.

We meet on Wednesday evenings during term time. We would be honoured if you would accept this invitation to join us on a Wednesday evening. Our diary for the coming year is still quite flexible, but the most ideal dates for us would be [insert dates]. Unfortunately, as a small society, we can only cover travel expenses and not offer any payment for speaking fees. Please let me know at your convenience if you would be interested in giving a talk at our society, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

[name]

Invitation to participate in Oxford Think Week

Dear Professor Atkins,

Allow me (re)introduce myself. My name is Richy Thompson, a fourth-year Oxford student, founder and ex-President of the Oxford Atheist Society and current south-east regional development officer for the National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies (AHS). I was in charge of the OAS when you came to speak, so we've been in contact before. I'm also now the coordinator of a committee recently formed for organising Think Week, a series of events that will be occurring in Oxford from 22nd to the 28th February. The aim of the week will be to expose the type of discussion and debate that the various non-theistic societies in Oxford offer to a wider audience and hence raise the profile of the issues involved. This sets it apart from the annual Oxford Intercollegiate CU week, which is explicitly a conversion event, and we won't be covering base questions like "Does God exist?" but instead be providing events in a similar vein to those we provide during the rest of the year. The events will be intended to make people think about things they probably haven't thought about before.

The week is a joint venture between the Oxford Atheist Society, Oxford Secular Society, Oxford Humanists, Oxford Sea of Faith and Oxford Skeptics in the Pub, the first two of these being University societies, and the last three being town societies. Other speakers we have during the week include Stephen Law, Julian Baggini, Andrew Copson, Maryam Namazie and Evan Harris - you can see more details on the website: <http://www.thinkweek.co.uk/>

We would like to invite you to speak on the evening of Tuesday 23rd. Most evening events are taking place between 8 pm and 10 pm, but this can be moved earlier if you like. Please feel free to make suggestions as to what you want to talk about, though if you would like to give a similarly-themed speech to the one you did for Oxford Atheists ("On the Importance of Science") then this would fit in very well. As with Oxford Atheists, we will happily cover any transport costs, and the cost of a meal with the committee before the event.

Would you require a projector for this event? *We are considering recording the event - would this be okay with you? And do you mind there being a photographer there?*

I hope you find what we're trying to do here exciting, we're all pretty excited at the moment :)
Look forward to hearing back from you,

Richy Thompson