

Career Services

COVER LETTERS AND OTHER JOB SEARCH CORRESPONDENCE

A cover letter (sometimes called a letter of inquiry or letter of application) is a business style letter that accompanies each resume you send to prospective employers. It serves as an introduction, telling the employer who you are and why you are sending a resume. If written well, your letter allows you to provide a more detailed account of skills and experiences in your background that relate directly to the organization or position you are seeking.

Be Sure To:

- Address your letter to a specific individual within the organization.
- Research the organization so you can make a case for your interest.
- Target your letter to match each position being sought.
- Emphasize ways you can meet the organization's needs.
- Support your claims with evidence.
- Communicate interest, motivation, and confidence.
- Ask for an interview.
- Keep it to one page.
- Pay attention to grammar and spelling.
- Use an easy to read font.

Sending Cover Letters

- Send your cover letter (and resume) through the means indicated in the job posting.
- If mailing your cover letter, use the same type of paper on which your resume was printed.
- If you fax your documents, follow-up by mailing hardcopies to the employer.
- If emailing your resume to an employer, you may copy and paste your cover letter directly into the text of the email.

Follow-Up Letters

If you do not receive a response to your cover letter/resume within a reasonable amount of time (two weeks to one month, depending upon the position), it may help to follow up by letter or telephone. A follow-up letter should inquire about the status of your application, offer to provide additional information on your qualifications, and reaffirm your interest in the position and the organization.

Thank-You Letters

Immediately following an interview, you are encouraged to write a letter to those individuals with whom you interviewed. The thank-you letter should be typed or very neatly handwritten in business letter format and either emailed or mailed to the employer within 24 hours of the interview. In this letter, you should:

- Thank the individual for the opportunity to discuss your interests and qualifications.
- Introduce new information (items you may have neglected to mention).
- Reaffirm your interest in the position and the organization.

Websites for Additional Information:

- 200 Cover Letters for Job Hunters - www.careerlab.com/letters
- College Grad - www.collegegrad.com/coverletters/index.shtml
- JobStar Central Cover Letters - www.jobsmart.org/tools/resume/clletters.htm

Get your cover letter reviewed:

- By appointment: 610-499-4176
- Walk-in hours/no appointment necessary: Mon through Thurs, 1 to 4 during academic year

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Today's Date

Mr./Ms. First Name Last Name, Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Be direct. Tell why you are writing the letter (be clear about the position or type of position you are seeking). Is this an inquiry or are you formally applying for a specific job? How did you find out about the organization/position? You may wish to add a brief statement demonstrating the reason for your interest in the company or organization.

Your middle paragraph(s) should **communicate precisely what you have to offer** the employer. Select details and skills from past experiences that you feel directly relate to the organization and position at hand. Avoid vague statements; back up your claims with specific examples.

Use as much space as is necessary to convince the employer to consider your candidacy further, but state your case concisely, and get to the point quickly. Cover letters should be no longer than one page in length. Try to connect your background as closely as possible to the particular job for which you are applying.

Indicate your desire for a personal interview and offer information about how you may be contacted. Another approach is to mention that you will telephone to schedule an interview. Thanking your reader for the time and consideration given to your application is also a good idea. If you don't receive a reply within a reasonable period of time (2-3 weeks), write a follow-up letter or call the employer directly to see if your materials have been received.

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Your Full Name typed

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

226 South 49th Street
Drums, Pennsylvania 18222

March 6, 2010

Fred Jones, Manager
Executive Recruitment
XYZ Systems Development Corporation
200 Race Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the Systems Analyst position that I saw posted online through the Career Services office of Widener University. This position interests me because it affords the opportunity to combine my programming skills with the knowledge of information technology gained through coursework.

As the enclosed resume indicates, I will receive a degree in Business Administration from Widener University in May. My major concentration is in Management Information Systems. My coursework has provided me with a foundation in Enterprise Resource Planning Systems and an understanding of the role of workflow management. Through summer work experience at Siemens Medical, I have gained a solid background in various applications, languages, and operating systems including Microsoft 2003 server, Windows scripting, SAP, Java, and XML. I am confident that my coursework, combined with my previous work experience, would allow me to make a strong contribution to XYZ Systems Development Corporation.

I would appreciate having an opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss my qualifications and your professional needs in detail. I can be reached at 215-555-1212 or by email at areed@mail.widener.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Reed

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2
Referral from Networking

P.O. Box 275
Widener University
Chester, Pennsylvania 19013

October 1, 2010

Sylvia Goldstein, Director
Camden Family Services
214 West Green Street
Camden, New Jersey 08080

Dear Ms. Goldstein:

Dr. Kathleen L'Armand, Professor of Psychology at Widener University, suggested I contact you regarding your upcoming need for an Intake Counselor. I am very interested in employment in the area of family services, and believe that my qualifications would allow me to make a solid contribution to Camden Family Services upon my graduation in December.

This past summer, I served as an intern with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Geriatric Services. While there, I helped the Director develop a pilot project designed to curb abuse of elderly family members. I know you recently received a federal grant to develop a similar program for the Camden area, and I feel confident that I could contribute significantly to the implementation of this program. Through a previous internship at the Crisis Center at Crozer-Chester Medical Center, I augmented my counseling coursework by acquiring counseling skills in group and individual settings. I have a knack for creating innovative programs under budget constraints, and I work well with diverse groups of people.

I am available for an interview at your convenience and look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you personally. I can be reached at 610-555-2222 or by email at rjkraemer@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Kraemer

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #3
Email Response

Dear Ms. Bartow:

I would like to apply for an entry-level electrical engineering position within your System Operations Department. My interest in Major Public Utility stems from your online advertisement with *HotJobs.com*.

As the attached resume indicates, I will receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering in December. In addition to coursework in my major, I successfully completed several courses within the School of Business Administration. As a co-op student, I have had extensive work experience in the utility industry and have gained exposure to power system network analysis. This has served to confirm my interest in systems operations, as well as to provide me with hands-on experience in the field.

My experience in system operations, combined with my coursework, would enable me to make a strong contribution to Major Public Utility. I will be in New York during the week preceding Thanksgiving and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss my qualifications. If I have not heard from you before I leave, I will call you upon my arrival.

Sincerely,

Lauren Wolfe
(215) 555-1212
ljwolfe@mail.widener.edu

Attachment: Resume

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #4 (INTERNSHIP)

423 Chestnut Street
Chester, PA 19013

February 20, 2010

Beth Tuckman
Supervisor, Information Technology Services
George Washington University
1920 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052

Dear Ms.Tuckman:

I recently learned from my cousin, who is a sophomore at George Washington University, that your office was advertising for summer help desk assistance. I am planning on living in Washington this summer, and would appreciate being considered for this opening.

I have been working in the same kind of position here at Widener University, where I am a junior Management major with a concentration in Management Information Systems. I have strong computer skills, which I am continually updating through my coursework, my position in the IT department, and self-instruction at home on my computer. In addition, my supervisor has praised me for my customer service manner and for my trouble-shooting capabilities.

After reading the resume I am enclosing with this letter, I hope you will seriously consider my candidacy for this exciting summer opportunity. I will be in Washington for my spring break the week of March 4th, and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications. I can be reached at 610-555-1212 at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Sharpe

Encl.

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Subject Line of Email Message: Programmer Position – Jane Doe Application

Dear Mr. Jones:

I submitted a resume earlier this month for the programmer position that XYZ Company posted on its website.

I am very interested in working at XYZ Company and I believe my skills, especially my C++ experience at ABD Company, would be an ideal match for this position.

If necessary, I would be glad to resend my resume or to provide any further information you might need regarding my candidacy. I can be reached at (555)555-5555 or jdoe@abcd.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Box 778, Widener University
One University Place
Chester, PA 19013

September 8, 2010

Keith Watson
Director, Workforce Planning
Advanced Workforce Solutions
579 Henderson Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Dear Mr. Watson:

It was truly a pleasure speaking with you on Friday, September 7th about your Human Resources Generalist position. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you, as well as our discussion focusing on the mission of your firm. I feel that my current skills and experience would serve me well in the position of Human Resources Generalist.

I was excited to learn about your firm's plans to hire more native Spanish speaking executives, as you continue to build your business in Central America. My strong conversational ability in Spanish has been a great advantage to me in dealing with people from Spanish-speaking cultures, and I have experience communicating with diverse cultural and socio-economic groups.

It is my sincere hope that I would be given the opportunity to make a significant contribution to Advanced Workforce Solutions in this manner. Thank you once again for your time, for the opportunity to interview with your staff, and for your serious consideration.

Sincerely,

William Scheidley

July 2011