TYPES OF LETTERS

Communication skills are among the most important skills you bring to your career, and your job-search letters usually will be the first samples employers will have of your competency in this area. Your letters should be functional, understandable, easy to read, and pleasant in tone. Remember, your letters say something important about you as a professional and as a prospective employee.

There are eight basic letters you probably will use during your job search:

1. **COVER/APPLICATION LETTER** - The purposes of this letter are to get your enclosed resume read and to generate interviews. Use this type of letter to respond to specific job advertisements and vacancy announcements. Your strategy is to demonstrate that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position.

2. **PROSPECTING LETTER** - These letters are used extensively for long-distance searches. Structure this letter similarly to the application letter, but instead of using position information, focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment.

3. **NETWORKING LETTER** - This letter is designed to generate informational interviews—not job interviews—which allow you to meet individuals who can give you specific information about your intended career.

4. **THANK-YOU LETTER** - This is one of the most important tools in a job search. It is used to establish goodwill, to express appreciation, and/or to strengthen your candidacy. When used to follow up employment interviews, thank-you letters should be sent within 24 hours to everyone who interviewed you.

5. **ACCEPTANCE LETTER** - Use this letter to accept a job offer, to confirm the terms of your employment (salary, starting date, medical examinations, etc.), and to positively reinforce the employer’s decision to hire you.

6. **WITHDRAWAL LETTER** - Once you accept a position, you have an ethical obligation to inform all other employers of your decision and to withdraw your employment application from consideration. Your withdrawal letter should express appreciation for the employer’s consideration and courtesy.

7. **OFFER DECLINE LETTER** - Employers are not the only ones to send rejection letters. Candidates may have to decline employment offers that do not fit their career objectives and interests. Rejecting an employment offer should be completed thoughtfully. Indicate that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it. Also, be sure to thank the employer for the offer and for considering you as a candidate.

8. **RESIGNATION LETTER** - When leaving a position, it is important to resign diplomatically and tactfully. A resignation letter can help you maintain a positive relationship with your current employer, while paving the way for you to move on.
COVER LETTERS

Professional communication is an important aspect in the job and internship search process. Most applications now require a cover letter or allow you to upload additional documents as an option. When possible, it is always a good idea to submit a targeted cover letter with the rest of your application materials. It gives you a chance to highlight your most relevant skills and experiences while showcasing your writing abilities. Here are some basic tips for drafting a cover letter.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN WRITING
1. Be prepared to spend one to two hours creating your first cover letter.
2. Research the company or organization on the Web.
   a. Read articles about the company
   b. Read the “about us” section of its Web site
   c. Familiarize yourself with the company’s mission, goals, and values
   d. Learn about its products and services (and the competition)
   e. Research the industry as a whole
3. Each cover letter should be tailored to the job or internship description (if you have a detailed one). In order to tailor the cover letter, make a chart. On one side, list the most important qualifications the employer is seeking in the job description. On the other side of your chart, write out how you meet each qualification. If you do not have a detailed job description you need to determine what the key qualifications are for entry-level opportunities in the industry/field. Whatever is in your chart should frame the content of your cover letter. Your chart may look something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Possible Experiences that Match</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical skills</td>
<td>Related coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Related internships, research or in-depth course projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of industry</td>
<td>Related coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement with student organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alumni networking/career exploration events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency in another language</td>
<td>Two years of language courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study abroad experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to build relationships</td>
<td>Leadership role in a student organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with others</td>
<td>Related internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership potential</td>
<td>Relevant student organization involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group projects for relevant courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership role in an internship/job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. It must be perfect and error-free; have your cover letter reviewed by a career peer advisor or a career counselor/advisor in the Career Center.

Source: JHU Career Center
WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER

Cover letters introduce your story and create a first impression for employers. They link your resume to the position, showcase your knowledge of the organization and highlight related skills. Start by researching the organization, considering what interests you and what you have to offer.

Address
City, State, Postal Code

This is your current address and should align with your name below

Date

Name of Contact Person
Title
Organization Name
Address
City, State, Postal Code

Address to a specific individual. Watch titles (i.e., use "Ms." for women, regardless of marital status). If you are unable to locate a specific individual, you may use Dear Selection Committee, Dear Human Resources Manager or Dear Internship Coordinator.

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Smith:

1st Paragraph-The main purpose of the first paragraph is to introduce yourself and to specify the position for which you would like to be considered. You want to grab the employer’s attention. Based on your research, indicate why you are interested in this position and/or this organization. If responding to a published ad, mention the date and name of the publication. Use your networking skills. If someone referred you to the organization (a current employee in good standing, a professor, a friend) include his or her name in the first sentence. Finally, indicate that you attend Towson University and provide information about your major and anticipated graduation date.

2nd Paragraph-Tell the employer your story. Describe your qualifications as they relate to the desired position using specific examples for academic, internship, volunteer, and/or co-curricular experience. Connect your accomplishments, skills and knowledge directly to the type of position, organization and/or field.

3rd Paragraph-Summarize or give a final statement of interest. Include your phone number and/or email address for the employer’s easy reference. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,
(Your Signature)
Type Your Name
Encl.

Source: University of Michigan, The Career Center
COVER LETTER WORKSHEET

Paragraph 1: State the name of the position and any pertinent information such as the vacancy number and where the job was posted. Why are you interested in this position/this organization? (demonstrate you did your research)

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph 2 (optional 3): Be specific about how your education and experience(s) would be an asset to the organization. (Describe how you can assist the organization and its clients) based on your interests, skills and abilities.

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Last Paragraph: What final point do you want to make?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Quick Tips:
- Use LinkedIn/Glassdoor.com and the organization’s Web site to gather information for your cover letter. Focus on skills and attributes the employer is seeking in applicants. Discuss these skills in the body of your cover letter.
- Letters addressed to a specific person demonstrate a higher level of investment and enthusiasm for the position; so try to find the name of the person you want to read your letter.
- Cover letters also showcase your writing abilities. Therefore, it is imperative that your cover letters be error-free and grammatically sound. Avoid beginning every sentence with an "I" statement.
- Underline the verbs in the job posting to identify key skills.

Quick Formatting Tips:
- **Font**: 10 to 12 point, in the same font as your resume
- **Paper**: The same as your resume; quality bond resume paper in white or ivory
- **Margins**: 1 or 1.25 inches
- **Layout**: Left justified, beginning no more than 2 inches from the top
- **Style**: Positive language, confident but not imposing, concise with supporting detail, written in active voice
- **Email**: Use body of email as cover letter starting with salutation

Want to learn more about presenting your story? Meet with a career counselor/advisor today!
This letter is for an analyst position. The job requirements include research, quantitative and communication skills.

515 East Jefferson
Baltimore, MD  21239

October 15, 20XX

Seymour Careers
Superior Finance
12234 Marconian Drive
Greatplace, MD  21220

Dear Mr. Careers:

I am applying for the Analyst position that is listed in Towson University’s Hire@TU system. As someone with a unique academic background, research experience and strong communication skills I am eager to apply for this position in the financial industry. I admire that your organization is able to offer a suite of savings options designed to help clients achieve financial success, while maintaining your position as leaders in the industry.

As a dual major in economics and physics graduating this May, I have developed an interdisciplinary approach to research. Economics has taught me to examine systems and the problems that arise within these systems while at the same time considering the people and their role as decision makers. Through the study of physics, I have gained an appreciation for researching topics by working with their smaller components.

My academic training was applied during internships with JPMorgan Chase and Chrysler. My hands-on projects included creating a long-term economic model, researching financial statements to develop exposure profiles and writing weekly interest rate updates. Each project provided an opportunity to use my research and quantitative skills and gain experience in the financial industry.

I welcome the opportunity to talk with you more about the analyst position. I can be reached at (123) 410-1234 or mhall5@towson.edu. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mason Hall

Mason Hall

Adapted from University of Michigan, The Career Center
SAMPLE COVER LETTER/JOB SPECIFIC
(In response to a posted advertisement)

Technical training in HTML, XML, Metadata; content management of an internal information and training Web site; liaison activities with internal Web masters.

Qualifications: Bachelor’s degree and one year of experience. Familiarity with MS Office, HTML< SML, and section 508 accessibility guidelines. Must be a team player and able to work in a dynamic environment.

2222 Cross Campus Drive
Towson, MD 21252

June 16, 20XX

Sue Recruiter
MegaTech Company
1111 Main Street
Baltimore, MD 21250

Dear Ms. Recruiter:

Having just completed my Bachelor of Science degree in Information Systems at Towson University, and having spent the past two years fine-tuning my abilities in a number of internships and projects, I have worked hard to develop relevant and up-to-date skills. With this in mind, I hope you will consider me for the technical trainer position advertised in the June 14th Baltimore Sun (Job Reference Code:37K89J).

The impressive client list posted on your Web site immediately indicates that your staff must be talented and conscientious; I think you’ll find that I share your commitment to a job well done. In addition to my work ethic, I can also offer:

- Bachelor’s degree-major in Information Systems (focus on Web development and technical writing)
- Experience training users in Microsoft Office in a classroom setting and several years of experience with one-on-one instruction
- Development of several Web sites (links available at http://www.hireme.com); familiarity with HTML and XML
- Proven ability to work effectively in teams; flexible and adaptable; effective communicator, both verbally and in writing

I look forward to the opportunity to meet you to discuss my background in further detail. I am available at 410-683-4388 or William@yahoo.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

William Skinner

William Skinner

Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
SAMPLE PROSPECTING LETTER

Your Street Address
City, ST  Postal Code

Date

Pat Cummings
Chairperson of the Board
Any Clinic
1140 Main Street
Chicago, IL  60601

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I am a certified chiropractor currently exploring affiliations with established clinics. I am in the process of relocating to the Chicago area. I have worked in the Baltimore area for more than 20 years and, as a result, my reputation for quality care is well known.

Currently, I work as a chiropractic therapist with the Baltimore Chiropractic Center, a position I have held for the past 15 years. In this capacity I provide spinal manipulation and handle the musculoskeletal needs of sports injury patients, alleviate pain in elderly patients and those with work-related injuries, and help victims of industrial accidents regain strength and stamina.

I am also an active member of the following associations:

- American Chiropractic Association
- Baltimore Chiropractic Society
- Sports Injury Council of the American Chiropractic Association

If my qualifications are of interest to you, I can be reached at (410) 555-1234 or wcarter@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

William Carter

William Carter, D.C.

SAMPLE NETWORKING LETTER

333 College Lane
Fullerton, CA 928234

April 20, 20XX

Ms. Helen Taylor, JD
The Law Offices of Helen Taylor
1224 Thunderbird Road
Anaheim, CA 92806

Dear Ms. Taylor:

I am currently an undergraduate student at California State University, Fullerton majoring in criminal justice. A colleague of mine, Desiree Cabinte, who previously worked for your law firm as an office clerk, suggested I contact you to conduct an informational interview.

My passion and desire is to become a business law attorney, such as yourself. Ms. Cabinte mentioned that you are an excellent business law attorney who could provide me with great insight about the field. Currently, I am exploring different law schools. Your background and experience in business law will be invaluable to me as I pursue my career in law. At your convenience, I would like to schedule a 20–25 minute informational meeting with you that will better assist me with my career decisions.

I will contact you by telephone on April 26th to see if we can schedule a brief meeting at your convenience. Thank you for considering my request, and I hope we can spend some productive time together in the near future.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

David Romano

Source: California State University, Fullerton Career Center
SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER
(FOLLOWING AN INTERVIEW)

Your Street Address
City, ST Postal Code

Date

Kristen F. Harris
Director, Personnel Department
Coastal Products Incorporated
7229 Lakewood Drive
Baltimore, MD 21240

Dear Ms. Harris:

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the marketing position on Tuesday, March 25th. I appreciated your hospitality and enjoyed meeting you and the members of your staff.

The interview convinced me of how compatible my background, interest, and skills are with the goals of Coastal Products Incorporated. My prior marketing experience with the Department of Commerce has prepared me to take a major role in developing both domestic and international marketing strategies. I am confident my work for you would result in increased profits within the first two years.

For more information on the new product promotion program I mentioned, call David Garrett at the Department of Commerce; his number is (410) 726-0132. I talked to David this morning and mentioned your interest in this program. Please feel free to call me at (804) 685-5555 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frederick Bryan

Frederick Bryan

Adapted from National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 2010
SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Your Street Address
City, ST  Postal Code

Date

Jack Krebs
Division Manager
Data International Corporation
1212 Corporation Lane
Richmond, VA  23212

Dear Mr. Krebs:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer on April 20 and to tell you how delighted I am to be joining Data International in Richmond. The work is exactly what I have prepared for and hoped to do. I feel confident that I can make a significant contribution to the corporation, and I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

As we discussed, the annual salary will be $49,998 and I will report to work at 8:00 a.m. on May 22 following the completion of the medical examination and drug testing. Additionally, I shall complete all employment and insurance forms for the new employee orientation on May 23.

I look forward to working with you and your excellent team. I appreciate your confidence in me and am very happy to be joining your staff.

Sincerely,

Pamela Jones

Pamela Jones

Adapted from National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 2010
Your Street Address  
City, ST  Postal Code

Date

Ralph Ullman, President  
Ayer Corporation  
6921 Hilltop Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD  21250

Dear Mr. Ullman:

I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application for the program coordinator position. As I indicated during our interview, I have been exploring several employment possibilities. This week I was offered an administrative position with a local county government agency and, after careful consideration, I have decided to accept that offer. This position provides a suitable match for my interests at this point in my career.

I want to thank you for interviewing and considering me for your position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning about the innovative community programs that you have planned. You have an excellent organization, and I wish you and your staff well.

Sincerely,

Heather Ferguson

Heather Ferguson

Adapted from National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 2010
SAMPLE OFFER DECLINE LETTER

Your Street Address
City, ST  Postal Code

Date

Patricia Ralley
Hiring Manager
Brooks Law Associates
Baltimore, MD  21250

Dear Ms. Ralley:

Thank you very much for offering me the chance to work as a full-time paralegal at Brooks Law Associates next fall. I realize what a challenging experience this opportunity represents.

As I explained in our interview on February 28, I also had submitted law school applications for the upcoming year. Early this week, I received notification of my acceptance at Fordham University.

After weighing my choices, I realize that the best decision would be to begin law school without delay. However, I sincerely wish to thank you for your trust in my skills.

Should you need a summer intern or part-time law clerk within the next three years, I would welcome the opportunity to work for your firm in either capacity.

Sincerely,

Christopher Daniels

Christopher Daniels

SAMPLE RESIGNATION LETTER

Your Street Address
City, ST  Postal Code

Date

Pat Cummings
Head Architect
ABC Corporation
1450 Main Street
Hartford, CT  06106

Dear Ms. Cummings:

I am writing to inform you that I will be leaving ABC Corporation permanently on April 21, 20XX. I have recently accepted a position as head architect with a local organization in the public sector. I think that this new opportunity is well suited to my long-term career goals.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work with and learn from such an outstanding staff. The knowledge I have gained in my year at ABC Corporation will surely aid me in my future endeavors. I am especially grateful for your close and patient supervision. Your kind encouragement assured me of my ability to handle all aspects of this industry.

If there is anything I can do to make my departure easier, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Eric Williams

Eric Williams