

*GUIDE FOR COVER LETTERS,
REFERENCE SHEETS & OTHER
TYPES OF
CORRESPONDENCE*

Cover Letter

Otherwise known as a “letter of application,” this type of correspondence is written when you are applying for a specific job or internship opening. This type of letter provides the opportunity for you to call attention to your education or experiences that are appropriate to the position. Always send a résumé with your cover letter. **Specific examples can be found on pages 4-7.**

In the job, internship, or research posting it will state whether you need to send a cover letter. When in doubt, send one!

A successful cover letter should be specific and personal.

Each letter should be a neat, laser copy, but not mass generated. Your cover letters should be both well written and concise. Each should refer to a specific person at a specific company. Your letters should be employer focused - emphasize what you can bring to the employer, rather than what you hope to gain from the opportunity. If you state a definitive next step that you will be taking, make sure you follow through!

Your cover letter should speak of what you have done and what you can do for the company.

If you are not sure what differentiates you from the rest of the market, find out! Think about your past experiences and make note of the areas where you excelled, then make these areas your number one focus in writing your cover letter. Use active, not passive voice, and direct, powerful language.

Do your research.

- ◆ Research and understand the type of career fields you are targeting
- ◆ Utilize resources in Career Services to research employers, locate job descriptions and read periodicals.
- ◆ Use the World Wide Web and the search engines to locate employer information, contact information, email addresses, etc.

Network with friends, family, alumni and alumnae that might have an inside track with an organization and/or career field.

- ◆ Know the “buzz” words and understand what they mean.
- ◆ Keep copies of all correspondence. You may need to refer to them in the future for follow up.

Cover Letter Tips

1. Always direct your cover letter to a specific person, preferably an individual with hiring authority. If you do not know to whom you should write, call the organization’s operator/mainline for the name of the contact person. Be sure to spell his/her name correctly and use the proper title (Mr., Ms., Dr., Lt., etc.). A colon, not a comma, should always follow your salutation.
2. A cover letter should be employer focused – emphasize what you can bring to an employer, rather than what you hope to personally gain from the opportunity.
3. Letters should be concise and to the point (three to four paragraphs, but no longer than one page).
4. Tailor your letter for the specific job/internship and organization to which you are applying. Avoid using a non-personalized form letter (i.e. To Whom it May Concern). Demonstrate a clear purpose, a logical flow of thought and proper transitions.
5. Use the appropriate language for the career field or position for which you are applying. Use keywords, phrases and buzzwords that are currently being used in the profession.
6. Do not exaggerate your accomplishments; be positive about your qualifications and talents. Whenever possible, provide specific examples to support and illustrate your qualifications.

7. A cover letter gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your writing abilities. Use active, not passive voice, and direct powerful language. The cover letter should state your purpose, but it also shows the reader how well you communicate.
8. Always be positive by stressing your accomplishments and skills, as well as your future value.
9. Check thoroughly for grammar, spelling and punctuation errors!
10. A cover letter should always accompany your résumé when mailing to an employer.
11. Use the same bond paper for letters as used for your résumé. **DO NOT PHOTOCOPY!**
12. Keep copies of all correspondence. You may need to refer to them in the future for follow up.
13. Final step: **FOLLOW UP!!!**

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Date

Contact Name
Title
Organization
Street
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. {Contact's Last Name} :

Paragraph 1: Your reason for writing

Indicate if you are applying for or inquiring about a position. Name the specific position or particular career field that interests you. Mention how you learned of the job opportunity (if you were referred by a person within the organization or career field, mention his/her name and title) and why you are interested in the position and organization. Do your research!

Paragraph 2: Your qualifications

Refer to your enclosed resume and give some background information. Cite examples of your work and volunteer experience, educational preparation and skills which qualify you for the position for which you are applying. Indicate why you should be considered as a candidate, focusing upon how your skills can fulfill the needs of the organization. Relate your experience to their needs and mention specific results / achievements.

Example: During my time at Pepsi Co, I was responsible for coordinating meetings and workshops which taught me how to effectively facilitate communications between management and the project team.

Example: In addition, while working at Bank of America, I was expected to maintain my work load with little or no supervision, as well as manage team-oriented tasks with our group.

Paragraph 3: Indicate your plan for follow-up

In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview. You may wish to say that you will follow up with a phone call to discuss the opportunity, but make certain that you follow through. Restate your phone number in the letter. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

{sign your name in blue or black ink here}

Your name type

Hobart and William Smith Colleges
2175 Scandling Center
Geneva, NY 14456

December 7, 2017

Jane Doe
Director
Human Resources
Random House
1540 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10036

Dear Ms. Doe:

I am writing because I would like to become a part of the 2005-2006 Associates Program at Random House. I first learned of the Associates Program this summer while I was interning at Pearson Education in New York City. I have been very interested in this program for several months and I feel that my abilities are an exact match for Random House.

This summer, I interned in the Corporate Communications department at Pearson Education, the largest educational textbook publisher in the world. I had the opportunity to research, write and edit stories for the company newsletter and international magazine. I was also an active participant in several intern meetings that focused on each aspect of the publishing field.

Currently, I am a senior at William Smith College. I expect to graduate in May 2019 with a double major in English and Media and Society. While at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, I have assisted in publishing the school's weekly newspaper. I also created, edited and filmed a ten-minute documentary. Internships at a large city newspaper, a local television station and a small museum have allowed me to improve my writing, editing and communication abilities. I believe that the skills I have garnered from each of these experiences would be valuable tools in becoming an exceptional participant in the Associates Program at Random House. I am particularly excited to explore the various components of publishing by rotating through the different departments of your company.

I am extremely interested in obtaining an interview to discuss the Associates Program further. I am available by phone at (315) 787-5555 or via email at ivanajob@hws.edu. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ivana Job

Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Box 0001 Scandling Center
Geneva, NY 14456

January 12, 2018

Janie Smith
Human Resources
M & A Trust
100 Main Street
Pleasantville, NY 01234

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing in application of an internship for this summer 2019, and while researching opportunities in the field of finance, I found that you have an internship program working with mergers and acquisitions. I am writing to inquire about possible summer opportunities.

I am a junior at Hobart College working toward my Bachelor of Arts in Economics. My work background and coursework have supplied me with many skills and an understanding of mergers and acquisitions. As an intern at Merrill Bank, I worked with a small team on life mandates, business development and quantitative company valuation analyses. During this experience, I was also able to assist with the development of a pitchbook; containing background information about the industries the company was operating in and interested in operating in, to financial analysis of companies that could make good takeover targets, and ways of financing the deal. I feel that the combination of my education and experience will make me a valuable candidate for your internship program, and I am excited at the opportunity this presents me.

I look forward to speaking with you in person regarding this internship and my qualifications. I can be reached at (315) 781-1234 or via email at whired@hws.edu. I will also be in the Pleasantville area during my Spring break, March 13 - March 17. I will contact you next week to see if it would be possible to meet with you during that time to discuss your program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Will B. Hired

2370 Scandling Center
Geneva, New York 13210

October 31, 2020

John Doe
Director
Department of Human Resources
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street
New York, NY 10019-5497

Dear Mr. Doe:

I am writing to inquire about an archival position within your institution. With my objectives to pursue a career in archival and curatorial work I believe the Museum of Modern Art would provide an excellent opportunity to gain more experience. I am confident I would be a valuable asset to your team.

I will be graduating from William Smith College in May 2021 with a degree in studio art. I have a wealth of experience in the arts as well as a solid coursework foundation. As a student assistant at Hobart and William Smith Colleges' Visual Resource Center, I am trained in the specific cataloging method of our collection and the photographing technique for slide creation. With care and accuracy, I file, bind, label and scan slides to our exacting standards.

As an intern at Villa I Tatti, Harvard University's Institute for Renaissance Studies in Florence, Italy, I organized and labeled photographic film for their collection and used their institution to enhance my academic and personal art research. Following my experience at Villa I Tatti, I was thanked in their 2018 newsletter for my "meticulous attention to detail". In addition to my archival training, my undergraduate and personal studies have allowed me to experience the artistic realms of painting, drawing, jewelry, batik, pottery and photography.

Fascinated by ideas and world perspectives, I have utilized the unique opportunities available to me outside of my traditional coursework by studying internationally and developing French, Wolof and Italian language skills. Through my formal education, involvement in setting up student art shows, and personal art experience I have strengthened my natural eye for color, composition and design. With my plans focused around archival and curatorial work, having experience at a gallery such as yours would further enhance my practiced skills and knowledge.

I would like to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet or speak on the phone. I can be reached at 315-781-1234 or via email at ijob@hws.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ivana Job

Thank You Letter

This is a follow-up letter to an interview or meeting (job, internship or informational). Express your gratitude for the opportunity to speak with them, and reaffirm your interest in the position, career field, referral to additional leads, etc.

Thank You Letter Example:

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the sales position. I appreciated your hospitality and enjoyed meeting you and members of your staff.

The interview convinced me of how compatible my background, interest, and skills are with the goals of Pepsi Co. As I mentioned during our conversation, my experience as an Admissions Intern has prepared me well for direct sales opportunities. I am confident my work for you will result in increased profits within the first two years.

If I can be of further assistance in answering additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to the opportunity of seeing you again.

Sincerely,

Ivana Job

Networking Email

The focus of this letter is career exploration, gaining advice, acquiring informational interviews and ultimately acquiring referrals to job/internship leads and the people who actually make hiring decisions. Always send a résumé with your letter.

Networking Email Example:

Dear Mr. Doe,

I am currently a senior at Hobart/William Smith College, working towards my Bachelor of Arts in Art History which I will complete this coming May. I am very interested in learning more about the museum and gallery world and possible positions I could pursue within this field.

As a fellow graduate of the Colleges, I'm hoping you can share information with me about how you broke into this field and any advice you may have as I begin my job search. I'm very interested in your organization because I know the Museum of Modern Art is a world leader in modern art, and maintains a mission of being professional yet accessible to all types of art lovers.

I would like to set up a time to speak over the phone when it is convenient for you to do so, or continue to communicate via email if that is preferable. Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Will B. Hired

REFERENCES

A reference sheet is a document created to supplement your résumé. It is a separate document, and should not be listed on your résumé. It should contain people that you have worked with/for or have known throughout your lifetime. People to consider are internship supervisors, summer job supervisors, work study supervisors, professors, coaches, and deans.

Some important guidelines to follow when creating a Reference Sheet:

- ◆ You must ask each person for permission to use him/her as a reference.
- ◆ Prep your references! Let them know who will be calling, what job(s) you are applying for and some strengths you would like them to highlight and discuss.
- ◆ You should have 3 professional references, maximum of 5.
- ◆ Your Reference Sheet should be consistent with other job search documents; use the same paper, font style, etc.
- ◆ References should not be family members or friends your own age.
- ◆ Get a mix of references. Try not to use all professors. Some examples are faculty advisors, organization advisors, and supervisors past and present.
- ◆ Center the document on the paper from top to bottom. The actual text can be centered or left justified.
- ◆ List your best and most applicable reference first.

Each reference should have the following information:

1. Full Name with title (ex. Mr., Ms., Dr.).
2. Title
3. Organization Name
4. Street
5. City, State, Zip
6. Phone Number
7. Email (optional)

JOSEPH R. OAK

Joseph.oak@hws.edu • 488-789-5555

PRESENT ADDRESS:
1234 Scandling Center
Geneva, NY 14456

PERMANENT ADDRESS:
543 Brook Drive
Martin, RI 12345

References:

Name
Title
Organization
Street City, State Zip
Phone Number
E-mail: (optional)

Ms. Nancy Rodriguez
Advisor Philosophy Department
Brown University 100 Thayer Street
Providence, RI 02906
(401) 453-3100

Mr. John Bardo
Financial Advisor Merrill Lynch
101 Easy Street
Moneytown, MA 10045
(617) 678-9000
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