

**CANISIUS COLLEGE
CAREER CENTER**

2001 Main Street
Old Main 013
Buffalo, NY 14208
716-888-2475

CORRESPONDENCE FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

Correspondence is important! You put a lot of time and energy into your resume and interviewing skills (at least you should ...) and you need to put just as much effort toward creating your cover letters, thank you letters, acceptance letters, etc. Effective letters will accomplish their immediate purpose as well as impress potential employers with your professionalism.

1. Always keep your reader in mind. Design your letters to be work-centered and employer-centered, not self-centered. Your letters are marketing tools that should address the needs of employers and evoke a desire to learn more about you.
2. Never delegate responsibility for your job search to anyone else. Do all the writing yourself, and take responsibility for following up with employers.
3. Always address your letters to a specific individual with his or her correct title and business address. Be certain to spell his or her name correctly.
4. Make your letters easy to read and attractive. Use high-quality stationery and envelopes.
5. Keep the letter to one page. Eliminate extraneous words and avoid rehashing material from your resume.
6. Produce error-free, clean copy.
7. Tailor your letters for each situation. Generic, mass-produced letters are unprofessional.
8. Show appreciation to the employer for considering your application, for granting you an interview, etc.
9. Be timely. Demonstrate that you know how to do business for yourself and, by implication, for others.
10. Be honest. Always be able to back up your claims with evidence and specific examples from your experience.

This handout will give you specific suggestions regarding format and content for:

- ◆ Cover Letters
 - A. Letter of Application
 - B. Letter of Inquiry or Prospecting Letter
 - C. Networking Letter
- ◆ Thank You Letters
 - A. For a Job Interview
 - B. For an Information Interview
- ◆ Application Status Check Letters
- ◆ Letters of Acceptance
- ◆ Letter of Refusal

LETTER FORMATS

The sections of your letter will be arranged in one of these styles:

1. **The Blocked Style.** The date, the complimentary closing and writer's signature and name all begin at the center line of the page. All other lines begin at the left margin.
2. **The Modified-Blocked Style.** This is exactly like the blocked style, except that the first line of each paragraph is indented five spaces.
3. **The Full-Blocked Style.** All lines begin at the left margin. Nothing is indented (except for displayed quotations, tables and similar material).

COMPONENTS OF A COVER LETTER

Your Street Address
City, State Zip
Today's Date

Ms. Ann Jones
Vice President, Marketing
Widgets, Inc.
321 Grand Avenue
El Paso, TX 70899

Note: You always address a specific person except when responding to a blind post office box ad.

Dear Ms. Jones:

The opening paragraph should arouse the interest of the employer. State why you are writing and give information to show your interest in this specific organization. If it is a letter of application, name the position for which you are applying and how you heard of it.

The middle paragraphs should create a desire on the part of the employer to know more about you. Explain why you are interested in working for this employer. Point out your achievements or qualifications in this field, especially those that meet the job description or requirements.

Refer the reader to your general qualifications on your enclosed resume. Highlight important points from your resume. Also highlight points that will be of particular interest to this specific organization.

The closing paragraph should pave the way for the interview by asking for an appointment, or by offering to call the employer in the near future, or by some similar suggestions to facilitate an immediate and favorable reply.

Sincerely,

(Sign here)

Mary E. James

Enclosure (You are noting that you have enclosed your resume.)

TYPES OF COVER LETTERS

There are two kinds of cover letters. An **application letter** is used to apply for a specific job which you know is available--usually found through ads or word of mouth. **A letter of inquiry or prospecting letter** is used to apply for a position when you don't know if a vacancy actually exists. With the exception of a few sentences, both letters are essentially the same. The content of the letter should follow this format:

Sample 1 **Application Letter** (Full Block Format)

356 S. Hampton Road
Norfolk, VA 23517
May 26, 2001

Ms. Sandy S. Strand
Manager of Human Resources
Atlantic Coast Industries, Inc.
4520 Virginia Beach Boulevard
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Dear Ms. Strand:

I am applying for the position of systems analyst, which was advertised on May 11 with the career center of Old Dominion University. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

Your position requires experience in computer systems, financial applications software, and end-user consulting. With a major in management information systems, I have training on mainframes, minicomputers, and microcomputers as well as with a variety of software programs and applications. My practical experience in my university's computer center as a programmer and as a student consultant for system users gave me valuable exposure to complex computer operations. Additionally, I worked as a cooperative education student in computing operations for a large bank where I gained knowledge of financial systems. My enclosed resume provides more details on my qualifications.

My background and career goals seem to match your job requirements well. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively. Furthermore, I am genuinely interested in the position and in working for Atlantic Coast Industries. Your firm has an excellent reputation and comes highly recommended to me.

Would you please consider my request for a personal interview to discuss further my qualifications and to learn more about this opportunity? I shall call you next week to see if a meeting can be arranged. Should you need to reach me, please feel free to call me at 685-2297. If I am not in, please leave a message on my answering machine and I will return your call within a day.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you. _____

Sincerely yours,

(Your signature)
Lisa Watson

Enclosure

Structure your application letters with three or four paragraphs.

Come to the point. Reveal your purpose and interest. Identify the position and your source of information. Introduce your themes.

Outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements based on the themes you selected. As much as possible, provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. Make reference to your enclosed resume.

Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well in the position. Sell yourself.

Suggest an action plan. Request an interview, and indicate that you will call during a specific time period to discuss interview possibilities.

Show appreciation to the reader for his or her time and consideration.

Sample 2
Application Letter
(Full Block Format)

1828 Lakeland Avenue
New Road, NY 18767
July 23, 2001

Ms. Mary Smith
Director of Campus Relations
ABC Corporation
87 Ridgeway Avenue
Albany, NY 10059

Note spacing and arrangement.

Dear Ms. Smith:

Use a name whenever possible.

I am interested in applying for the sales representative position recently advertised in *The New York Times*. The skills I have developed from my work experience and academic background support my strong interest in a sales career.

Identify a position.

As you can see from my resume, the internship I had with XYZ Corporation provided an opportunity for me to gain practical experience with account maintenance and cold-calling new accounts. In addition, I have worked as a waiter for the past four years, learning firsthand how to effectively deal with customers and their demands. I have been formally commended by the management several times, being named "Employee of the Month."

Refer to resume...point out qualifications and relevant background.

Since I decided to pursue a sales career, ABC Corporation has been at the top of my list of prospective employers. The strides your company has taken in the computer software market, namely the development of packages for use by pharmacies and hospitals, makes ABC a leader in the industry.

I would very much like an opportunity to speak with you regarding the sales representative position. I will call you late next week to discuss my qualifications for the position or you can reach me in the meantime at (718)555-0000. Thank you for considering me for this position.

Arrange for an interview.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

John J. Jones

Enclosure

Note that you have enclosed your resume.

These are good cover letters because:

- They were addressed to a person, not just a company or title.
- They stated where the ad was found as well as the position.
- Background was given and related to the job.
- An interview was requested and a plan of action was stated.

Sample 3
Letter to Someone You Discovered Through Research
(Modified-Blocked Format)

Your Address
City, State Zip
Today's Date

Name
Title
Company Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. _____:

Your name came to my attention while researching the field of _____ as a possible industry where I can help a company reach its goals by using my skills and experience.

At this time I am exploring a variety of professional positions to discover the ones that would be the most appropriate focus for my attention in a job search.

I will complete my bachelor's degree in electrical engineering next June at (University) and am using these months to plan ahead for that time. The course work for the degree has led me to believe that there are several possible directions my career could take. During the summers between academic years, I have worked at (Company) doing _____, which I found very interesting.

Based on your knowledge of the field, you could help me considerably by discussing the kinds of jobs you know about for a recent engineering graduate with my experience.

Within the next week, I will contact your office to request an opportunity to meet with you. I know you are busy and will keep our conversation to 20 minutes. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

(Your signature)

(Your name typed goes here)

Center the letter on the page, with a little more white space on the top than on the bottom.

Don't send a resume at this time, you will use it as a reason for future contact.

Don't use all your ammunition for contacts at the first meeting.

COVER LETTER OF INQUIRY/PROSPECTING LETTER

Sample 4 Prospecting Letter (Blocked Format)

5989 East Madison
New York, NY 10033
March 6, 2001

Mr. Timothy C. Falcon
Director of College Recruiting
Midwest Mercantile Company
229 Rudolph Drive
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Falcon:

I read with interest your company's description in NACE's Job Choices in Business and would like to inquire about employment opportunities in your management training program. I want to work in retail management and would like to relocate to the Chicago area after graduation.

I shall receive my B.S. degree this May. My interest in business started in Junior Achievement while in high school and developed further through a variety of sales and retail positions during college. My internship with a large department store convinced me to pursue a career in retail. When I researched the top retailers in Chicago, Midwest Mercantile emerged as having a strong market position, an excellent training program, and a reputation for excellent customer service. In short, you provide the kind of professional retail environment I seek.

My resume is enclosed for your consideration. My education and experience match the qualifications you seek in your management trainees, but they don't tell the whole story. I know from customer and supervisor feedback that I have the interpersonal skills and motivation needed to build a successful career in retail management. And my relatively extensive experience gives me confidence in my career direction and in my abilities to perform competently.

I know how busy you must be during this time of year, but I would appreciate a few minutes of your time. I shall call you during the week of March 24 to discuss employment possibilities. In the meantime, if you need to contact me, my number is 804/683-8843. Please leave a message if I am not in, and I will return your call the next day.

Thank you very much for considering any request. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Craig S. Wilson

Enclosure

Prospecting letters are frequently used for the long-distance job search. Here is your chance to:

Indicate your interest, and reveal your source of information.

Outline your strongest qualifications - focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment.

Do some personal marketing: Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to contribute to the organization.

Suggest an action plan: Request an interview, and indicate that you will call during a specific time period to discuss interview possibilities.

Express appreciation to the reader for his or her time and consideration.

Sample 5
Letter of Inquiry
(Full Block Format)

18240 Magnolia Place
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
August 2, 2001

Mr. John Sampson
Vice President ABC, Inc.
2301 Walnut Grove Lane
Raleigh, NC 27695

Dear Mr. Sampson:

I am seeking a position in materials evaluation at a high technology company such as yours. I am aware from researching your firm that you have a training program for physicists and engineers.

Identify your objective.

As you will note from the enclosed resume, I have majored in physics and have participated in significant research. This background, as well as several business courses, has prepared me to combine an interest in motivating people with a desire to work in a technical environment.

Refer to resume...point out qualifications and special interests.

I would like to learn more about your trainee position, and I will contact your office the week of August 15th to request an appointment at your convenience.

Arrange for an interview.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Karen E. Jones

Enclosure

NETWORKING LETTERS

Networking letters are designed to generate *information interviews* - not *job interviews* - which allow you to meet individuals who can give you specific information about your intended career. Your purposes in seeking information interviews may vary, but your reasons for wanting to meet with a contact person must be genuine and sincere. The networking letter is the first step in the information interviewing process. Normally, a resume is not attached to a networking letter, but it may be presented during the interview itself to help the interviewer address your questions.

Sample 6 **Letter of Inquiry** **(Full Block Format)**

543 Powhatan Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23517
July 21, 2001

Ms. Cynthia S. Kennedy, Manager
Jones, Smith and Doe, P.C.
Certified Public Accounts
1400 World Trade Center
Norfolk, VA 23510

Dear Ms. Kennedy:

Dr. Carr, professor of accounting at Old Dominion University, suggested that I contact you. He thought that you would be in an excellent position as an alumna to assist me with a career decision.

As an accounting student, I am exploring which career path to pursue. Public accounting, management accounting, and IRS work all sound interesting to me at this point, but I want to go into my campus interviews next semester with a clear sense of direction. I would like to get your advice on the long-term career implications of each path as well as a better handle on the day-to-day activities of a CPA.

I shall call you next week to see if we can arrange a brief meeting at your convenience. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Janis K. English

Structure this letter along these lines.

Make a connection between you and the reader - e.g., alumnus/alumna of your school, mutual acquaintance, similar interest or background, etc.

State your purpose without pressuring the reader. Explain your situation briefly.

Request a meeting at a mutually convenient time, and indicate that you will call to make arrangements

THANK YOU LETTERS

Why send a thank you letter? A thank you sent to a potential employer will make you stand out above the crowd. Not everyone sends them and it will be noted "if" you take the extra time.

Thank you letters:

- Remind the employer who you are.
- Impress the employer with your conscientiousness and enthusiasm.
- Shows the employer that you really did appreciate the time that was given to you--a common courtesy which isn't all that common. You don't have to gush with gratefulness.
- Are professional, polite, and to the point.

The thank you letter is also an opportunity to inform the employer of relevant job-related information: events which have occurred, awards received, etc. since your interview. Eg. "Since speaking with you, I have received an award for excellence from the National Association of Accountants. This is the first time I have been recognized nationally and am quite excited about it."

Sample 7 **Thank You Letter** (Blocked Format)

3701 Old Mill Road
Decatur, GA 30214
May 1, 2001

Ms. Kim Parsons
Executive Vice President
Worldwide Automation & Control, Inc.
1127 Nelson Drive
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Parsons:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me at Georgia Tech on April 29. I enjoyed talking with you and learning more about the mechanical design position with Worldwide.

As you recall from our interview, I have had experience as an intern with Honeywell IAC. I have also taken advanced classes in material engineering at Georgia Tech. I greatly enjoy this career field and wish to apply my interest and knowledge to Worldwide Automation & Control.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to interview with you. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)
James Davis

Sample 8
Thank You Letter
(Modified Block Format)

2913 Baxter Road
Bridgeport, MA 34568
July 8, 2001

Dr. Julia Edmonds, Director
Technical Design Group
Pacific Engineering Systems, Inc.
1340 Myrick Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 60305

Make your thank you letters warm and personal, and use them as an opportunity to:

Dear Dr. Edmonds:

I want to thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the associate engineer position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your research and design work.

Express your sincere appreciation

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for PES were strengthened as a result of the interview. I think my education and cooperative education experiences fit nicely with the job requirements, and I'm sure that I could make a significant contribution to the firm over time.

Reemphasize your strongest qualifications. Draw attention to the good match between your qualifications and the job requirements

I want to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. You provide the kind of opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at 804-593-8855 if I can provide you with any addition information.

Reiterate your interest in the position. Use the opportunity to provide or offer supplemental information not previously given.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Byran Fredericks

Sample 9
Thank You Letter for an Information Interview
(Modified Block Format)

2913 Baxter Road
Bridgeport, MA 34568
July 8, 2001

Dr. Julia Edmonds, Director
Technical Design Group
Pacific Engineering Systems, Inc.
1340 Myrick Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 60305

Dear Dr. Edmonds:

Thank you for taking the time last Thursday to talk with me about the field of chemical research. I had read a tremendous amount of literature about careers in chemistry, and your knowledge and experience helped me to understand it much better. Being able to talk with someone in the field answered a lot of my questions and helped me realize there are new developments all the time.

I particularly appreciate the information you gave regarding the philosophy of American Chemicals and the independence and responsibility a researcher has at your company. This information will help very much when I determine the career I intend to follow.

Thanks again for your time and the information you shared.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Bryan Fredericks

APPLICATION STATUS CHECK

Sending a letter is OK, but it is a more passive, time-consuming process. For a more timely, assertive approach, CALL the person with whom you interviewed and ask for an update on your application status. You will find out the information more quickly and it will show the company you have initiative.

3701 Old Mill Road
Decatur, GA 30214
May 1, 2001

Ms. Kim Parsons
Executive Vice President
Worldwide Automation & Control, Inc.
1127 Nelson Drive
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Parsons:

I interviewed with you March 29, 2001 for the position of Programmer I. As of yet, I have not been contacted and would like to find out the status of my application.

Recently, I was offered a position with another company. However, because of the excellent training program at Worldwide Automation & Control, Inc., I am still interested in joining your company. I will be glad to provide further information if you need any clarification on my credentials. I can be contacted before May 15, 2001 for a second interview.

Thank you for your attention into this matter. I look forward to hearing from you within the next 2 weeks.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

James Davis

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Usually, an acceptance or rejection is initiated by you over the phone. The employer will also typically make an offer over the phone. If you need more information from the employer before making your decision to accept or reject the job, give the employer a call. There may be times when you'll want to put the acceptance or rejection in writing or if the employer requests it.

Sample 11 **Letter of Acceptance** **(Full Block Format)**

504 Coast Drive
Newport News, VA 23609
February 19, 2001

Mr. Joseph Stevens, Division Manager
Micro International, Inc.
323 Colonial Lane
Richmond, VA 23312

Dear Mr. Stevens:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer of February 15 and to tell you how delighted I am to be joining Micro 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, I will report to work at 8:00 a.m. on March 20 and will have completed the medical examination and drug testing before the start date. Additionally, I shall complete all employment and insurance forms for the new employee orientation on March 24.

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

Sincerely

(Your signature)

Paulette Downey

The acceptance letter provides you with the opportunity to:

Confirm, accept, and reaffirm your employment decision.

Confirm logistics.

Express your appreciation for the opportunity.

Sample 12
Letter of Acceptance
(Full Block Format)

1587 Magnolia Place
Atlanta, GA 79865
May 16, 2001

Mr. James Williams
Vice President
MIR, Inc.
3287 Grove Lane
Raleigh, NC 27695

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am writing to confirm receipt of your letter offering me a position in MIR's technical training program at an annual salary of \$30,000. I am every pleased to accept this offer, and I am proud to have been selected for the program.

Note offer and how you learned of it.

I will contact your office for more details, such as when the training sessions begin. Thank you for the offer and for your consideration throughout the past few weeks.

Arrange next communication.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Karen E. Jones

LETTER OF REFUSAL

Just as you would inform an employer that you accept a job offer, you need to let an employer know that you refuse a job offer. If you are offered a position and decide you don't want to accept it, you need to communicate this to the employer. Keep in mind that you will not keep your present job forever. It is very unwise to "burn your bridges" by annoying employers; keeping them unaware of your decisions will annoy them.

Sample 13
Letter of Refusal
(Modified Block Format)

351 Newstead Avenue
Chesapeake, MD 23456
March 22, 2001

Mr. Michael Duvall, Manager
Sales and Marketing Division
New Wave Properties, Ltd.
1977 Yorktown Parkway
Williamsburg, VA 24231

In rejecting an offer, you can demonstrate your professionalism:

Dear Mr. Duvall:

Thank you very much for offering me the position of commercial leasing agent with New Wave Properties. I appreciate your discussing the details of the position with me and giving me time to consider your offer.

Acknowledge the offer.

You have a fine reputation and there are many aspects of the position which are very appealing to me. However, I believe it is in our mutual best interest that I decline your kind offer. This has been a difficult decision for me, but I believe it is the appropriate one for my career at this time.

Show thoughtful consideration.

I want to thank you for the consideration and courtesy given to me. It was a pleasure meeting you and your fine staff.

Express appreciation.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Kristen Longfellow

FINAL TIPS ON JOB SEARCH CORRESPONDENCES

It is a good idea to keep an organized file of your correspondence and phone calls with each potential employer. Keep a copy of each letter you send. By keeping a copy of each correspondence and a notation of phone calls together, you will be able to determine when you last communicated, with whom you communicated, and what information you received for each employer. Using a systematic approach will make the hectic and sometimes long process of finding a job easier for you.

If you have any questions or concerns or just want to "run an idea by us," all you need to do is call the Career Center office. We may be available to answer your question then, or you can make an appointment to talk a little more in depth.

REFERENCES OF

SALLY SMITH

123 Apple Lane
Anytown, NY 12345
(716) 621-1234
email: ssmith@AOL.com

Dr. Samuel Goodfellow
Canisius College
Associate Professor of Biology
2001 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14208
(716) 888-0000

Mr. John Fredericks
Medallion Day Care Center
1423 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 123-4567

Ms. Jane Gregory, Manager
1-2-3 Fashions
1938 Lisa Drive
Clarence, NY 14031
(716) 842-1963

References

"Job Choices 2000 - Planning", published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers

"Career Development Guide" 1998-99, published by Cass Communications, Inc