



PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

It is important to remember that each piece of correspondence that you write and submit, from the cover letter to a position acceptance, makes an impression on the organization to which you are applying. Each document should be tailored to the position you are applying for, and must be error free.

In this guide, you will find helpful tips and samples for the types of professional correspondence you may need to write as part of your job and/or internship search.

- Cover Letters
 - Thank You Notes
 - Letters of Acceptance/Refusals/Withdrawal from Consideration
 - Email Correspondence
 - Sample Reference Page
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WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

To be considered for almost any position, you will need to write a cover letter. This type of professional correspondence introduces you and your resume to the organization that you wish to join. This is not a duplication of your resume; rather it expands on what you have to offer to an organization and why they should interview, and ultimately hire, you. Take advantage of this important first impression! Be sure to state why you are applying, why you are a good match for the position and organization, and when you will follow up with the recruiting contact.

A cover letter allows you to show the organization that you understand how your experiences parallel their requirements, and how you may fit into the organization's culture. You can do this by calling out important personal experiences and skill sets related to the position's requirements and the organization's mission. A cover letter should be written for each position you apply for, and be tailored for the specific opportunity and organization.

TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL COVER LETTER

1. **Proofread for spelling and grammar errors.** Many employers use cover letters as a writing sample, so it needs to be 100% error free, well-written, and an honest representation of you.
 2. **Length should never exceed one page.** The body is typically comprised of 3-5 paragraphs.
 3. **Try your best to address the letter to an individual.** If you do not have the name, you can use *Dear Organization Name Representative*: as an inclusive statement.
 4. **Pay attention to details.** Use the same header and font from your resume.
 5. **Align all letter text to the left.** It will look simple, polished, and professional.
 6. **Let it reflect your voice.** It shouldn't sound or read like one of our samples.
 7. **Be specific.** Show an employer you have the skills or knowledge they seek by framing those traits in your experiences.
 8. **Send as a PDF.** This will ensure everything looks the way you intend it to. Never trust that the recruiter has the same font or version of Word.
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COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

<<Your Header Goes Here>>

Month Date, Year

Mr. /Ms. First Last Name

Title

Organization Name

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name: (Note: If name is not available, use *Dear Organization Name Representative*.)

The **opening paragraph** should spark the interest of the individual reading your letter! State the position you are applying for, how you learned of the opportunity, and what you respect about the organization. If you are applying through or because of a contact, be sure to mention the contact's name in the first few sentences. Express your interest in both the organization and the position, and mention something unique about the organization that prompted you to apply.

The **middle paragraphs** should create a desire on the part of the employer to know more about you. Establish the connection between the organization's needs and your experiences and skills. Emphasize what you have to offer, not what you want and why it should matter them. Make a stronger impression by highlighting one or two of your experiences, providing specific results, and demonstrating how those experiences relate to the position for which you are applying.

The **closing paragraph** should state a clear path of communication to you so the employer will be able to reply to you at his/her discretion. Restate your interest in the position and ask for the job – tell them that you can't wait to be a part of their team. Be sure to thank them for their time and consideration in the review of your application materials.

Sincerely,

(Sign here) _____→

Your Name Here

Sign your name on a blank white sheet of paper. Scan it, then crop the image. Insert it into the document here and save your cover letter as a .pdf prior to sending via email.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Peter Canisius

2001 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14208
griffcareers@canisius.edu
716-888-2170

August 4, 2016

Ms. Jessica Smith
Human Resources Director
Univera Healthcare
205 Park Club Lane
Buffalo, NY 14221

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am applying for the position of Systems Analyst, which was advertised through Handshake at Canisius College. I applaud your mission to improve the health of members in our community, and am eager to contribute my technical skill set to assist you in achieving that goal.

The position requires experience in computer systems, financial applications software, and end-user consulting. With a major in Computer Science, I have studied and acquired advanced skills working with mainframes, minicomputers, and microcomputers as well as with a variety of software programs and applications.

Working at the Help Desk for Information Technology Services on campus gave me valuable exposure to complex computer operations and working with a vast array of end users. I learned how to work with students, faculty, staff, and community members in a patient, professional manner to resolve their computer issues. Additionally, I worked as an intern in Computing Operations for a large bank this past summer, where I gained knowledge of financial computer-based systems.

These experiences have prepared me to take on the role of Systems Analyst at Univera Healthcare, and I am confident that you will find that my technical and interpersonal skills will be an asset to this organization. I look forward to having the opportunity to interview with you for this role. Should you wish to reach me, please call me at (716) 888-2170. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Canisius

Peter Canisius

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

JOHN J. JONES

2001 Main Street | Buffalo, NY 14208 | John.jones@gmail.com | 716-888-2170

November 1, 2016

Ms. Mary Smith
Director of Campus Relations
CS Technologies
87 Ridgeway Avenue
Albany, NY 10059

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am applying for your Sales Internship opportunity, which I learned about through Professor Smith at Canisius College. I am a native of the Albany area, and am excited by the prospect of working for an organization that is truly dedicated to the community in which it resides. Your summer internship aligns with my goal for a career in sales, and I am excited to apply my prior customer service experience, along with my management coursework to this role.

I have worked at Verizon Wireless as a Customer Service Representative for two years. In this role, I provide customers with solutions to their technology needs, and offer products to enhance their experience, which generates more revenue for the company. My work has been formally commended by management several times, being named "Employee of the Month."

Recently, I worked on developing a marketing plan with four classmates for a fictional medical product. I assisted with the delegation of tasks, resolved group conflict, and wrote the situation analysis. I am excited to apply what I have learned about the industry and how to smartly increase sales through this process to your organization.

CS Technologies has been at the top of my list of prospective employers since learning that a career in sales would effectively utilize my talents and strengths. The strides your company has taken in the computer software market, namely the development of packages for use by pharmacies and hospitals is cutting-edge.

I would enjoy the opportunity to speak with you regarding the internship opportunity in your Sales department. I will follow up with you next week, but am available to be contacted via phone at (555) 555-0000. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



John J. Jones

THANK YOU NOTES

Many job seekers think that writing a thank you note is a waste of time – and hopefully the job seekers you are competing with have that attitude. Why? Because it is wrong! 86% of employers recently surveyed by CareerBuilder¹ stated that not sending a thank you note after an interview showed a lack of follow through.

Regardless of how the interview happened - in person, over the telephone, via video conference - a prompt thank you to each interviewer can actually increase your chances of securing the position! Review your job interview notes and write tailored thank you cards or emails immediately.

When writing your thank you notes, be sure to:

- Retain professional courtesy and communication, addressing the thank you note appropriately.
- Personalize the note so that it reflects that you listened, what you appreciated, and what excites you about the opportunity.
- Demonstrate your skill at written/emailed communication.
- Remind the interviewer of your skills.
- Pick notecards that have a simple, clean design if writing out the thank you.
- Leave the "To:" field blank until you have gone through and checked your email for spelling and grammatical errors to prevent a premature sending.

Thank you notes also allow you to introduce information that you neglected to mention in the interview and clarify anything that you don't think you communicated well during the interview.

Should I write a note or send an email? This depends on how much time you have. At the end of the interview, you should ask when you can expect to hear about the next steps in the process. If they say within a few days, an email should be sent within 24 hours. If you are not expecting to hear back for a few weeks, sending a personalized, hand written note could help you stand out more.

THANK YOU NOTE TEMPLATE

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

Thank you for your time today/yesterday to speak with me about the name of opportunity position. I very much appreciated the opportunity to meet you and other team members' names, if applicable, and to learn more about this role and how my skills and values will continue to strengthen your team.

[In these next few lines, reiterate important and related skills sets and experiences, and incorporate suggestions on what you would do when hired, if appropriate.] With my background and experience, I am confident that I could become a contributor to your team very quickly.

I am excited about this opportunity to join organization name. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions or need any additional information. Thank you again for your consideration.

Best,

Your Name

¹ CareerBuilder :

<http://employer.careerbuilder.com/JobPoster/Resources/page.aspx?pagever=ThankYouNoteEtiquette>

For more information on career development resources and services, contact
The Griff Center for Academic Engagement located in Old Main 013 at 716-888-2170.

LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE AND REFUSALS FOR JOB OFFERS

You've just received a call from an employer with an offer. Congratulations! While it is exciting to receive an offer, it is advised that you do not accept (or refuse) an offer on the spot. Gather what additional information you need from the employer, and ask by when they will need to have your decision. You should then return the employer's call.

While the initial acceptance or refusal is initiated by you over the phone, an employer may also request that you submit a written acceptance or refusal of the position you have been offered.

Following the proper business letter writing format, remember to communicate the intent of your letter clearly and professionally. These can be mailed or emailed, but if the latter, included as a PDF attachment, not in the body of an email.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CONSIDERATION LETTERS

If you are no longer interested in an opportunity that you have applied to or interviewed for, you will want to let the employer know that you wish to be removed from consideration. While the employer might be sad to lose you as a candidate, you are able to save the recruiters some time in finding the (next) right candidate for the position.

This is another conversation that should be had over the phone, and to close the loop of communication, you'll want to follow up in writing. This may be sent in the body of an email, as a PDF attachment in an email, or mailed. Remember to proofread this letter, as it may be a company you'll want to consider again in the future.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email has become the preferred method of communication between job-seeker and employer. There are general guidelines that should be followed when emailing cover letters, thank-you notes and replies to various requests for information. Apply the following advice to every email you write:

- Use a meaningful subject header for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic and clearly conveys why you are writing.
- Wait until you proofread and add any promised attachments to your email before entering in the email address. This will prevent an email from being sent before you intended it to.
- Always be professional and businesslike in your correspondence. Address the recipient as Mr., Ms. or Mrs., and always verify the correct spelling of the recipient's name.
- Be brief in your communication. Keep the body of the email concise, and don't ask too many questions, that would be more easily answered with a phone call.
- Ditch the emoticons and slang language. While a LOL (laughing out loud) may go over well with friends and family, do not use such symbols in your email communications with business people. Also limit your use of exclamation points at the end of your sentences!
- Do not use strange fonts, colors that are hard to read, or multicolored backgrounds.
- Sign your email with your full name, and include your contact information in the signature.

Remember, your emails may say far more than you might realize. Always present a polished, professional image – emails that are too informal in tone, or that have spelling and grammatical errors will only hurt your chances of securing your dream job!

SAMPLE REFERENCE PAGE

YOUR NAME

Address, City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email Address

Remember to use the same header from your resume to maintain consistency!

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Dr. /Mr. /Ms. Reference One

Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email Address

Dr. /Mr. /Ms. Reference Two

Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email Address

Dr. /Mr. /Ms. Reference Three

Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email Address