

Business Career Services

Department of Business Administration and Economics

COVER LETTERS & THANK YOU NOTES

Each time you submit a resume through mail, fax, or email, a customized cover should be sent as well. A cover letter serves as an introduction to skills, experiences, and characteristics, as well as highlights your written communication skills, interest in an organization, and describes your qualifications as they relate to a job or internship.

Cover letters take two forms: **a response letter** or **letter of inquiry**. Although both may contain similar information, their purposes are very different.

- *Response letter* is written for an advertised position.
 - *Letter of inquiry* is used to declare interest in an organization that does not have a position listed.
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GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1. Address letters appropriately.
 - “Dear Ms. Last Name” or “Dear Mr. Last Name”
 - When you don’t know whether person is male or female, use “Dear First Name Last Name”
 - If person holds a doctorate (i.e. PhD, EdD, etc.), use “Dear Dr. Doe”
 - **NEVER USE** “Dear Sir or Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern” or “Mrs.”
 - When no name is provided, use a memo-style as indicated below
TO: Company name Human Resources Department
RE: Position title or Position of interest
 2. Avoid using “I” to begin every sentence
 - Although the letter is about you and you will use “I” in many sentences, try not to start with “I have...” for each sentence
 - Use phrases to “push” the “I” back in the sentence (i.e. As you will note from the enclosed resume, I.....” or “Courses that developed my research and.....” or “My internship experience...”
 3. Keep letters brief (three to four paragraphs maximum)
 - No longer than one page; anything more and it will be tossed or not entirely reviewed
 - It may not get read! In truth, many recruiters will review the resume first and may not even read your letter. However, it works against you if one is not completed because it shows a lack of follow through and professionalism
 4. First Paragraph: Explain your interest in their company, industry, and position
 - A generic letter (one that is used for all position) will likely pull you out of consideration
 - Try to explain why the position, company, or industry is a good match with your skills.
 5. Second / third paragraphs: States specific reasons and qualifications regarding your experience
 - Highlight specific examples from your resume, don’t repeat everything on it
 6. Always sign your letter (unless sent by email) in blue or black ink
 - You may use an electronic signature or different font but it is not necessary
 7. Proofread, proofread, and proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
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GETTING STARTED

After reading the above carefully, please review the following samples to use as a guide. Well written cover letters accomplish two things: describes why your skill set fits with the open position and lets the reader know why you wish to work in that position, as well as why at that particular organization or industry. Students are encouraged to write unique cover letters for each position of interest, although some content will likely be similar in multiple letters.

COVER LETTER GUIDE

Mail or Fax Sample

Alexandra D. Jones

275 Student Lane • Brockport, NY 14420 • 585-555-8888 (cell) • bdj0450@brockport.edu
2290 DeGroff Road • Syracuse, NY 13214 • 315-458-3333

Individual's Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

← Use if you have this information

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____:

FIRST PARAGRAPH – The first paragraph is used to state the position you are applying for, where you found it advertised/who referred you and why you are interested in this opportunity/company/industry. Also include your school name, graduation date, area of study, and concentration (if applicable).

SECOND PARAGRAPH – This is the “heart” of your letter. Usually college students have two – three options for lead-in content: courses of study and projects; work experiences; leadership/volunteer activities. Start with the most relevant information and work backwards. Make each word count by matching your skills and examples to information contained in the job opening. Highlight general skills areas and back them up with a concrete example. Don't repeat every word that appears on your resume.

THIRD PARAGRAPH – An optional paragraph that you may want to include if your second paragraph is quite long or tries to cover too many topics. This is a great section for students to describe their leadership attributes or other relevant skills. Try to think of this brief paragraph as “what else do I have to offer.” When used appropriately, it helps to make you appear very humanistic. ***Note: When sending via email, do not use this paragraph. It makes your letter too long and requires the reader to scroll.*

THIRD / FOURTH PARAGRAPH – In closing the letter, ask for an interview. Be sure to restate the position name to make the letter more specific. Reference your contact information above or list your phone number and email in this paragraph. If taking a more direct approach, you can also state when you will follow up on the letter. Only use this method if you intend to call them. Lastly, thank the reader for her/his consideration.

Sincerely,

(Sign the letter here)

Alexandra D. Jones

Enclosure: Resume

COVER LETTER GUIDE

Email Sample

Date of writing

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____:

Or

TO: XYZ Company, Human Resources
RE: Analyst Opportunities

No contact information since sending by e-mail. Use name if you have it or direct your letter by company name and position title

FIRST PARAGRAPH – The first paragraph is used to state the position you are applying for, where you found it advertised/who referred you and why you are interested in this opportunity/company/industry. Also include your school name, graduation date, area of study, and concentration (if applicable).

SECOND PARAGRAPH – This is the “heart” of your letter. Usually college students have two – three options for lead-in content: courses of study and projects; work experiences; leadership/volunteer activities. Start with the most relevant information and work backwards. Make each word count by matching your skills and examples to information contained in the job opening. Highlight general skills areas and back them up with a concrete example. Don’t repeat every word that appears on your resume. You may also want to include brief statements regarding additional skill sets that are desired by the employer.

THIRD PARAGRAPH– In closing the letter, ask for an interview. Be sure to restate the position name to make the letter more specific. List your phone and email in this paragraph and below your name at the end. If taking a more direct approach, you can also state when you will follow up on the letter. Only use this method if you intend to call them. Lastly, thank the reader for her/his consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
585-395-5555
Jd0519@brockport.edu

RESPONSE TO A POSTED POSITION

Sample I –
sent by mail

Alexandra D. Jones

275 Student Lane • Brockport, NY 14420 • 585-555-8888 (cell) • bdj0450@brockport.edu

Ms. Gabriella Smith
College Relations Manager
Bank of America
PO Box 81226
Charlotte, NC 27277

This sentence demonstrates that the applicant has actually reviewed their website. Write one unique reason why that company, position, or industry. Don't use the sentence below unless it matches your company of interest.

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please consider this letter in application for the **Risk Analyst** position, reference number **089175**, at Bank of America that was advertised on your corporate web site. In May 200x, I will receive a degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Finance, from the State University of New York College at Brockport. Upon graduation, I will be relocating to Charlotte, NC. My internship experience, proven record of academic achievement, and leadership abilities match many of the qualities outlined in the corporate culture section of the Bank of America web site.

As my resume indicates, my internship at M&T Bank's credit department required strong analytical skills, independent thinking, and teamwork. Specifically, I reviewed defaulted loan cases and compiled findings in reports that were sent directly to a Vice President. In addition, I have completed a number of research projects that allowed me to develop excellent presentation, written communication, and teamwork skills. In Strategic Management, I conducted thorough financial analysis of a Fortune 500 company using ratio analysis and studying past performance of key financial variables.

In addition to my work and academic experiences, I have been an active member in the Finance Club. This experience, along with professional site visits, has sharpened my decision making, event planning, and networking skills. As a result, I am adept at solving problems and creating new relationships with current professionals.

I would like to discuss my qualifications with you in person for the Risk Analyst position at Bank of America. I will call you within a week to hopefully arrange an interview. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Alexandra D. Jones

Alexandra D. Jones

Enclosure: Resume

LETTER OF INQUIRY

**Cover Letter
Sample II –
sent by email**

Date of writing

To: Starbucks College Recruiting Manager
RE: Summer 2006 Treasury/ Finance Internship

As a current student at the State University of New York College at Brockport majoring in finance (graduating May 20xx), my summer 2006 goal is to obtain an internship in finance in Seattle, WA. In researching potential organizations, Starbucks appeared to be a strong match. I have always admired your marketing campaigns, product offerings, rapid growth, and social responsibility. I am confident that my analytical, financial, organization and teamwork skills will complement your team.

Through my AACSB accredited finance courses, I have become knowledgeable in corporate treasury, analyzing trends, investment options, and accounting procedures. A project in my _____ class required me to work in a team of four to review and analyze the financial statements for two Fortune 500 organizations. Our group presented all findings using Excel and PowerPoint to 30 students. This project, as well as others, required excellent time management and planning skills. In addition to academic projects, I have worked as a teller for a local credit union. My responsibilities include selling products, opening new accounts, building customer relations, and performing basic accounting duties. As you will note from the enclosed resume, I perform well in and out of the classroom.

Please consider me an enthusiastic candidate for any finance-related internship opportunities at Starbucks. I am eager to relocate for the summer and may be reached at phone number or email address listed below. I look forward to sharing my qualifications with you in person. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Jones
585-395-5555
ajon0845@brockport.edu

List phone number and e-mail address below name and don't sign when sending via e-mail. Do not use a different font to sign your name. Simply remove the spaces.

Internship Sample

Sam R. Garcia

123 Main Street • Brockport, NY 14420 • 585-555-1234 • tjs0987@brockport.edu

Individual's Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____:

OR

To: Starbucks College Recruiting Manager
RE: Summer 2006 Treasury/ Finance Internship

I am sending you my resume in response to the upcoming opportunity for an internship at company name. I learned about this opportunity from the office of Business Career Services at the State University of New York College at Brockport. I will be graduating from The College at Brockport in date with a Bachelor of Science in degree name. Based on my research of the qualifications you seek as well as your core values of trust, problem solving, and leadership I feel that an internship at company name would give me an excellent opportunity to share and develop my skills in the area of career area.

In addition to the opportunity to develop my career area skills I also feel that I have much to offer company name. As my resume indicates I have excelled in my career area classes. In a team of four I have successfully completed a research project and presentation in project name. The experience allowed me to develop my leadership skills. Effective communication skills were essential to me and my team as we successfully met research and presentation deadlines.

My skills and experience in leadership and problem solving have been further advanced as a shift manager at job name. Here I was responsible for overseeing other employees and performing many functions that have given me practical experience in the area of career area.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss the internship at company name in more detail. If you have any questions or require anymore information please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Timothy R. Smith

This sentence demonstrates that the applicant has actually reviewed their website. Write one unique reason why that company, position, or industry. Don't use the sentence below unless it matches your company of interest.

THANK YOU LETTERS

After every interview, candidates should (though quite often they do not) send a thank you letter. It is best to send your letter out within 24 hours of the actual interview, time permitting. You may send a hand-written note, email, or letter. Each form of correspondence should be treated formally, written concisely, and without error.

You may send one letter to the main contact (the person who organized your interview) and/or to each person that you met. Both are considered appropriate, particularly if you had a group interview and do not have business cards for each interviewer.

Below you will find a brief sample. The letter format will change depending on how you send it out (i.e. hand-written or email). The content does not change.

Alexandra D. Jones

275 Student Lane • Brockport, NY 14420 • 585-555-8888 (cell) • bdj0450@brockport.edu

Ms. Gabriella Smith
College Relations Manager
Bank of America
PO Box 81226
Charlotte, NC 27277

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the Risk Analyst position at Bank of America. I enjoyed meeting you in person and learning more about this opportunity. As I shared during our conversation, I am confident that I have the analytical, teamwork, and organizational skills needed to be effective in this role.

If you require additional information from me during the candidate review process, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email address listed above. Good luck with your upcoming golf tournament (reference something from your conversation) and enjoy the rest of your week.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Once again, I enjoyed meeting you.

Sincerely,

Alexandra D. Jones

Alexandra D. Jones