



Academic and Career Enrichment Center

BENEDICTINE UNIVERSITY

COVER LETTERS

WORKFORCE READINESS:



EXPLORE | EXPERIENCE | ENGAGE | EMERGE

Academic and Career Enrichment Center (ACE)

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COVER LETTERS

The cover letter is one of the most important documents in the job search process. While the resume must be a concise, hard-hitting summary of all you have to offer, the cover letter offers you an opportunity to shine as an individual. It can highlight and expand on the accomplishments listed in your resume.

Additionally, the cover letter provides the first written correspondence with a prospective employer or contact. Therefore, it is imperative that your cover letter characterizes your skill as a well-organized individual with exceptional written communication skills.

Every cover letter should be personalized and targeted to fit the requirements set forth by any available position. However, while the cover letter must be conservative and formal, you also want your own style to come through. When addressing job requirements, you may want to explain how your personal characteristics and philosophy fit with the company standards and philosophy base.

Remember, a cover letter must accompany any resume you send out and ultimately, its goal is to obtain a meeting or an interview. Be sure you take your time writing each letter and be sure to have a professor, colleague or career center staff member proofread your letter for errors and readability. A good cover letter can be your greatest ally.

COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

1. Type letter, never send a hand written cover letter
2. Use good quality, bond paper –white, cream or gray if sending it through the mail. Match it with the color of your resume.
3. Display your contact information in the same way as is displayed on your resume so your documents appear consistent with your own letterhead.
4. Always address your letter to a specific person. If you are unsure of the appropriate name or title, call the company and ask the receptionist for the information. If you are unable to get a specific name, use “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Human Resources Manager.”
5. Your cover letter must be error free. Check grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
6. Keep your cover letter concise and to the point. One page only!
7. Use appropriate language. Repeat terms the employer uses and utilize language unique to the field. Avoid slang terms, jargon, and clichés.
8. Keep your letter in the present tense. Avoid the passive voice.
9. Sound confident and self-assured.

10. Always be positive by stressing your past accomplishments and your future value.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your contact information should be written in your own letterhead/brand style. Include:

Your Name
Your Permanent Address
City, State Zip
Telephone Number
Email
LinkedIn address (if have an account)

Date of Letter

Contact's Name
Title
Company/Department
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

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

- address to a specific person
- always use a formal opening, never use a first name only

Opening Paragraph:

- explain why you are writing
- explain how you found out about the position (i.e. personal contact, web posting)
- if someone referred you, indicate person's name in first paragraph

Body Paragraph(s):

- discuss academic background and/or training
- emphasize accomplishments and recognition
- address qualifications for the position
- address personal characteristics, relevant skills

Closing Paragraph:

- politely request an interview/meeting time
- thank the contact for their time, consideration
- address why you are interested in the organization and how you can add value

Sincerely,

(leave 4 spaces after Sincerely)

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Request for an Informational Interview:

While the request for informational interview is a type of cover letter, its purpose is different. This type of correspondence may accompany your resume, but serves to request information from an individual currently in your field of interest. Additionally, the request for information letter is an excellent way to begin building contacts in your chosen field. Remember, the purpose is not to obtain a job from that individual, but to gain information, advice, and insight into your future profession.

Follow Up Letter:

It is imperative that your job search is well organized. This means appropriate follow up on any correspondence or applications previously sent. The follow up letter allows you to reemphasize your qualifications and confirm your interest in the available position. Additionally, the follow up letter allows you to keep track of prospective job opportunities and the status of your candidacy.

Thank You Letter:

The thank you letter should be standard procedure in your job search process. Thank you letters show appreciation, respect, and professionalism. The thank you letter should be sent within 24 hours following your interview, telephone conversation, meeting, etc. This correspondence allows you to thank the employer for their time, reemphasize points of interest, and confirm your desire to be considered for the available position. You may send a thank you note via email or a handwritten note card.

Acceptance Letter:

Once you have accepted an offer, the acceptance letter may be sent to confirm your acceptance, your starting date, and any appointments you may have made with your future employer. The acceptance letter also paves the way for a smooth transition into your new position.

COVER LETTER EXAMPLES

Cover Letter Sample: Request for Informational Interview:

John Doe
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

December 10, 2012

Ms. Jane L. Doe, Director
Arc Design Office
321 West Park Avenue
Akron, Ohio 34522

Dear Ms. Cooper:

John Sayres suggested that I write to you in regards to my interest in architectural drafting. He thought you would be a good person to offer me some career advice.

I am interested in an architectural drafting position with a firm that specializes in commercial construction. As a trained draftsman, I have three years of progressive experience in all facets of construction, from pouring concrete to developing plans for 14 million dollars in commercial and residential construction. I am particularly interested in improving construction design and building operations of shopping complexes.

Mr. Sayres mentioned you as one of the leading experts in this growing field. I would appreciate being able to meet with you personally sometime in the next week. Over the next few months I will be conducting a job search. I am certain your counsel would assist me as I begin looking for new opportunities.

I will call your office next week to see if your schedule permits such a meeting. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John Doe

Cover Letter Sample: Exploring opportunities with no specific position open:

Norman L. Doe
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

March 2, 2015

Mr. Thomas K. Allerton
MLVTK Incorporated
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. Allerton:

I am writing to you regarding possible employment opportunities within your department. I am confident that my academic background and experience will provide those characteristics deemed necessary to successfully contribute to your company.

As my resume outlines, I will be completing my Bachelor's Degree in English at the University of Illinois this May. Within this area of academia, I have maintained a strong academic record while acquiring many core skills necessary for a successful employment opportunity. For example, I have well developed written and oral communication skills, the ability to organize and synthesize information, and the confidence to express and contribute new ideas.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss any future employment needs you may recognize within your department. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,

Norman L. Doe

Cover Letter Sample: Targeting specific position posted on website:

Jane Cummings
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

August 24, 2008

Ms. Danielle Smith
Continental Airlines Employment Department
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Ms. Smith:

As a longtime resident of Cincinnati, I am well aware of the outstanding reputation of Continental Airlines, which leads me to express my interest in this dynamic company. I am submitting my resume for your review for the position of Ticket Agent that I found on the Careers page of your website.

While my experience in the airline business is limited, I have a strong customer service orientation developed through my experience in retail banking. I am an outgoing, friendly individual who enjoys developing personal relationships with customers. In my current position at the bank, I interface with clients on a daily basis and have won several awards for providing outstanding customer service. Additionally, my strong organizational and multi-tasking skills would serve me well in working in a fast-paced, energetic environment.

Additionally, I am an extremely dedicated worker who is noted for accuracy and timeliness. I believe my determination and leadership would serve me well in such a position, and my quickness and willingness to learn would be an advantage to Continental Airlines and the Ticket Agent staff.

I would welcome the chance to meet with you to elaborate on my qualifications. Please feel free to contact me should you need any additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Jane Cummings

Cover Letter Sample: Follow up letter of interest from phone conversation:

BRIAN FELZER
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

July 1, 2015

Mr. Lawrence Simon
Director of Marketing
Robert Anderson and Brothers
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. Simon:

I have had an interest in Marketing in the computer industry since I worked in retail electronic sales in high school. Our telephone conversation last week confirmed my interest in the Market Research Analyst position currently available at Robert Anderson and Associates. Your company is particularly attractive to me in view of your plan to diversify into mini-computer technology and applications.

In December of this year, I will be graduating from Benedictine University, where I am majoring in Business and Economics. While at Benedictine, I have taken several courses in computer programming, and I am familiar with Visual Basic and C++ languages. Additionally, my experience as a Research Assistant has sharpened my communication and presentation skills, both oral and written. This experience has also advanced my knowledge of SPSS to compile statistics, which would be an asset for this position.

I trust these are the kinds of skills and abilities you are looking for in a Market Research Analyst, and I would appreciate having an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this position further. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

Brian Felzer

Cover Letter Sample: Targeting specific position posted on website:

Sylvia Drell
123 Main Street
Lisle, IL 60532
555-708-9253

March 04, 2008

Ms. Katherine Ortiz
Director of Development
KLMR-Channel 57
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Ms. Ortiz:

I read of the position of Assistant Director of Development with great interest on indeed.com. I have always been extremely involved in the production of public television, and the opportunity of raising money for such a worthwhile organization such as Chicago Public Radio is very exciting to me.

I will be graduating from the University of New Mexico in June, where I am currently majoring in Public Speaking and minoring in English Literature. I feel confident that my speaking ability will allow me to make the kind of presentations the job undoubtedly requires, and that my writing will enable me to continue the effective letter-writing campaign that you have successfully initiated. In addition, I believe my volunteer experience at my local church coordinating fundraising efforts for our mission trips will

assist me in this position. For our last trip to South America, I raised nearly \$10,000 from local businesses.

I would be excited at the opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss in more detail how I can contribute my passion, energy and experience to help fulfill the goals of Chicago Public Radio. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange for a meeting time. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Sylvia Drell

Cover Letter Sample: Targeting specific position—referred by someone:

Tom T. Hallgreen
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

May 10, 2014

Ms. Roberta Nelson, Human Resources Manager
American Machine Tool Company
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Ms. Nelson:

I will be graduating from Benedictine University and Illinois Institute of Technology with a dual degree Engineering Science and Mechanical Engineering this May. Dr. Julie Cosimo, Director of Career Development, advised me to contact you directly concerning a position you have open in Research and Developmental Engineering.

As my enclosed resume indicates, I have had internship experience in the machine tool business. My internship has included the use of physical test equipment, calibration, and application of such equipment to solve manufacturing problems and field service

complaints. Overall, my education and internship experience covers a broad range of engineering functions that I can further develop with your company to our mutual benefit.

I would appreciate the chance to interview with you to elaborate on my qualifications and discuss how I might contribute to innovation of American Machine Tool Company.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I will look forward to talking with you soon regarding a meeting time.

Sincerely,

Tom T. Hallgreen

Cover Letter Sample: Targeting specific position—referred by someone:

Janet C. Davis
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

November 18, 2008

Mr. J. B. Price
Labor Relations Manager
Golden Enterprises, Inc.
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. Price:

Dr. C. Randall Powell, Professor of Business Administration at Indiana University, recently suggested that I write you concerning your opening and my interest in a labor relations assistant position. With a B.S. degree in Personnel Management and courses in labor economics, collective bargaining, and labor law, I am confident that I could make a positive contribution in the position.

The last two summers, I worked as a general laborer on a production line, once in a unionized shop and once in an unorganized plant. My ability to appreciate several points of view on labor problems should prove to be a major asset in my future career

performance. My previous supervisor had recommended that I be hired as a first-line foreman after graduation. Although I am enthusiastic about a foreman's position, I think my energies and resourcefulness might be better suited to tactfully handling union-management problems as a third party in the grievance steps. This assignment has been a four-year goal for me in college.

My attached resume better highlights my education and experience. My leadership roles in campus politics should strengthen and support my abilities to serve as Labor Relations Assistant.

I request the opportunity to meet with you personally to further discuss this career opportunity in greater detail. I will call you early next week to arrange for a time that would be convenient for you. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Janet C. Davis

Cover Letter Sample: Targeting specific position posted in major newspaper:

Patricia C. Stevenson
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

January 27, 2014

Mrs. Mary Spenser
Director of Human Resources
Fellowes Printing Company
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mrs. Spenser:

I am writing in response to your January 25th advertisement in the New York Times for an Assistant Director of Marketing at Fellowes Printing Company. I have attached my resume for your review and feel that my background and experience will provide those skills required to successfully contribute to this department in a positive manner.

As outlined in my resume, I have had extensive experience working in the field of Marketing. My tenure at Wasau Insurance Company as a Marketing Coordinator provided me with an opportunity to build experience working in a team oriented

environment, contributing ideas, writing copy drafts, editing, and developing high impact marketing campaigns that included social media, to expand our customer base. Undoubtedly, this experience, combined with the recent completion of my MBA degree in Integrated Marketing Communications, would provide a solid foundation from which to work as the Assistant Director of Marketing.

Additionally, I would contend that the Marketing field requires an individual with excellent organizational abilities, exceptional creativity, and an overall enthusiasm and drive. I feel I possess these characteristics and would be eager to apply these to make a significant contribution to your team.

I request the opportunity to meet with you personally to further discuss this opportunity in greater detail. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience and thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Stevenson

Cover Letter Sample: Targeting specific position posted on website:

Michelle R. Folgers
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 34520
555-708-9253

September 17, 2015

Ms. Sharon Waters
Personnel Director
New York State Police Department
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Ms. Waters:

I am pleased to submit my resume in response to your August 29 listing posted on Benedictine University's Virtual Career Center for a Research and Data Analyst with your department.

The position interests me for several reasons. My education and work experience have prepared me for this position. This December, I will receive my B.A. degree in

Political Science, with a minor in math from Benedictine University. I am familiar with the New York State Police Operations based upon my internship in your Albany office this past summer and upon my research on apprehension rates.

The position you outline is one that I think I can enhance with my quantitative and technical background as well as my active leadership roles. During my last two years at Benedictine, I was elected a College of Liberal Arts Student Senator. This leadership role further strengthened my planning, organizational and communication skills, as we were required to initiate and coordinate many on campus events and represent the student body and their concerns to administration. Furthermore, one of my strongest personal attributes is my commitment to excellence and accountability. These qualities have contributed to my ongoing success in my educational, professional and personal endeavors.

I would appreciate an opportunity to schedule a time to come in to elaborate on my strengths and how I can best meet the needs of your organization. Thank you, in advance for considering my candidacy for this position.

Sincerely,

Michelle R. Folgers

Cover Letter Sample: Follow up cover letter on a previously submitted resume and cover letter:

Timothy L. Jones
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

February 19, 2013

Mr. Charles McAllister
Director of Human Resources
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. McAllister:

I am writing to follow up on a job opening posted by your department approximately six

weeks ago. I feel my background and experience matched those qualifications being sought for the Assistant Director of Personnel and wanted to follow up on the search committee's progress thus far.

Previously, I had spoken to Ms. Margaret Fuller who originally informed me of the available position. Consequently, I sent my resume and a letter of application to your department expressing my interest in the Assistant Director position. I feel my experience in human resources combined with my academic background would provide a solid base from which to function in such a position.

I have attached my resume for further review. Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information. I will look forward to your response regarding my candidacy soon.

Sincerely,

Timothy L. Jones

Sample Thank You Letter following phone interview:

Susan P. Arnold
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 34520
555-708-9253

November 07, 2007

Ms. Carol G. Robinson
Chief Financial Officer

Xerox Resources Department
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Ms. Robinson:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on the telephone last week, regarding the status of the Finance and Information Systems Manager position at Xerox. I appreciate your candor and encouragement.

As stated in my interview, I am confident in my abilities to successfully perform the duties dictated by such a position. Additionally, I feel my philosophical and practical orientations parallel those standards upheld by your department. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the overall mission of the Xerox Corporation.

Please do not hesitate to telephone should you have any questions or require any additional information. I will look forward to your response regarding your decision.

Sincerely,

Susan P. Arnold

Sample Thank You Letter following interview:

Phyllis T. Burns
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

April 14, 2008

Mr. Larry Anderson
President
Petroleum Waste, Inc.

12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your group for the time spent with me last Thursday and Friday. I appreciate the information that you and your staff provided on the available Site Manager Position and feel that my background would provide a positive addition to your staff.

Undoubtedly, the Site Manager position provides a challenging and exciting opportunity for any individual. However, I feel my background and academic coursework have prepared me for such a position. I believe I have the skills and experience needed to successfully perform as a Site Manager for Petroleum Waste, Incorporated, and I am confident that my personality and work ethic would provide a positive facet to your staff.

I thank you and your group again for your time and consideration, and I will look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Phyllis T. Burns

Sample Thank You Letter following interview:

STEVEN D. JORGENSEN
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

February 15, 2015

Mr. Paul Gardner
Director of Human Resources
Texas Oil Company
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. Gardner:

I want to thank you and your staff members at Texas Oil Company for taking the time to meet with me last Thursday. I feel the day went extremely well and I appreciate having the opportunity to speak with each of you.

During our conversations I gained an understanding of how your petrophysics group interacts with geological and geophysical staff. I feel that with my geology background and open hole log interpretation skills, particularly with Dipmeter, I could quickly make a significant and positive contribution to your company.

Again, I thank you and your staff for your time and consideration, and I will look forward to your response regarding my candidacy soon.

Sincerely,

Steven Jorgensen

Sample Thank You Letter following Informational Interview:

Richard E. Hart
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

September 25, 2008

Mrs. Jennifer Rollins
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Jennifer:

Thank you for taking time out of your day to discuss some ideas regarding my job search. Your input and information have been of tremendous assistance. Also, the leads and contacts that you gave me are truly appreciated.

As you suggested, I have contacted Mr. John Bradbury and have scheduled an appointment to meet with him early next week. Additionally, I have had two interviews since our luncheon, and I incorporated some of your suggestions into my discussions with the prospective employers. Your comments were very helpful and seemed to make a favorable impression.

Again, thank you for all of your assistance and support. If ever there is anything I can do for you, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Hart

Sample Letter of Acceptance of Job Offer:

Cheryl Ayers
123 Main Street
Lisle, Illinois 60532
555-708-9253

March 30, 2008

Mr. James T. McFarland
Director of Research
Chicago Police Department
12345 Main Boulevard
Oak Brook, Illinois 60322

Dear Mr. McFarland:

I want to thank you and Ms. Gordon for giving me the opportunity to work with the Chicago Police Department. I am very pleased to accept the position as a research and data analyst with your planning unit. The position requires exactly the kind of work I want to do, and I know that I will do a good job for you.

As we discussed, I shall begin work on July 1, 2004. In the meantime, I shall complete the necessary employment forms and meet with the Human Resources Director as scheduled. I am extremely confident that this opportunity will result in a positive experience for both the Chicago Police Department and myself.

I enjoyed my interviews with you and Ms. Gordon and look forward to beginning my new job with the Chicago Police Department in the Planning Unit.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Ayers