



OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE *Your Future Opportunities*

WRITING

COVER

LETTERS



Purpose

- **Marketing Tool**
- **Introduce reader to your resume**
- **Explain why you are applying for the position**
- **Connect your goals, experiences, and skills with those of position and organization**

THREE STEPS

1. The Introduction

- why you are contacting them – your interest/goal
- position you are applying for
- how you became aware of this position (if applicable, mention a name of a person within their organization that recommended you)

2. Their Need - Your Experience

- address their need; how you meet the qualifications
- be brief when highlighting your best qualifications
- do not replicate the data in your resume
- remember to tell them what you know about their organization and why you want to work for them

3. Conclusion and Contact

- state your interest in an interview
- include where, when, and how you can be reached
- tell employer when you will follow-up; stick to this date

Preparation

- 1. Determine why you want to work for this particular employer.**
- 2. Locate the specific person to address and their title. Make sure to spell their name correctly. If this is not possible, address it to Selection Committee or Director of Human Resources.**
- 3. Tailor your letter to the requirements of the employer.**
- 4. Research information about the organization.**
- 5. Reflect your individuality, be warm and personal but business-like. Don't appear too overconfident.**
- 6. Communicate how your specific abilities may be put to use in the organization.**
- 7. Conclude by taking the initiative - requesting an interview.**
- 8. If applying by email, send it as an attachment. If sending by mail, use the same bond paper as your resume.**

Business Format

Block style format with all text beginning at left margin

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Date

Name, Title

Company

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.....:

Each paragraph starts on left (no indenting)

Double space between paragraphs

Sincerely,

(you will use Enclosure if sending by mail and Attachment if sending by faxing or an email.)

Guidelines for Letter Production

1. For hardcopies

- Use a word processor for quick changes and updates
- Print on a laser quality printer
- Select a common font with a professional appearance
- Send clean original signed with blue or black ink

2. For electronic letters, send both an attachment and a plain text copy in the body of your email

3. Keep a copy on file for reference for follow up

4. Proofread carefully for proper spelling, syntax, grammar, and typos

5. Have your letter critiqued for feedback

OTHER LETTERS USED IN JOB SEARCH

Thank you / Follow-up Letters

- **Send within 48 hours to key person(s)**
- **Be personal, specific, and sincere in your thanks**
- **Provide any additional information requested or relevant**
- **Another way to market yourself**
- **Customize letter for each unique situation**
- **Use the same guidelines for letter production**
- **Don't forget to proofread**

TYPES OF THANK YOU LETTERS

- 1. Following the Job Interview**
- 2. Following an Informational Interview**
- 3. Accepting a Job Offer**
- 4. Declining a Job Offer**

OTHER LETTERS

- 1. Letter of Application**
- 2. Request for Additional Information**

SUMMARY OF COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

1. Opening Paragraph - Make it good!

- Establish tone
- Name Position applying for and how you learned about it
- Mention name of person who might have referred you

2. Body Paragraph - Critical content section

- Why do you want to work for them - do research
- Acknowledge skill required and give examples of your matching skills, work experiences, accomplishments and how they will transfer
- Here is where you will put your adaptive skills as well

3. Closing Paragraph - Push for the interview

- Refer to additional documents - resume, portfolio, reference letters, writing sample(s) - can also be mentioned in first paragraph
- Give a designated date/time you will call for an interview
- Make it easy for them to contact you