

## Cover Letters

The cover letter is a formal business letter that is often the first contact with a prospective employer. It serves as an introduction of you and your experience. It allows you to express your enthusiasm for the position and why you want to work for their company. Tailor each letter to specific employers.

You might use this formal format if you are attaching the letter with your resume in the email. If you plan to use the cover letter as the body of the email, there is no need to include those addresses.

Avoid using To Whom it May Concern or Dear Sir/Madam. It is best to use Hiring Manager if name is unknown. Use professional pronouns if known. Otherwise, refrain from using binary salutation; instead write out their full name — Dear Miriam Lopez,

Create your signature as a jpeg and insert above your typed name.



Your Name  
Your Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of Contact Person, Title  
Organization/Company  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip



Dear (Contact Person): Mr., Ms., Dr. or Hiring Manager, if unknown

**Opening Paragraph:** Make it brief.

- Establish tone in the first sentence to make the reader want to continue reading.
- Name the job for which you are applying. Tell how you learned about it.
- Mention the name of the person (if any) who referred you to the organization and vacancy.

**Body Paragraph:** This is the critical content section. It can be one or two paragraphs.

- Knowledge of organization/company is important. Do research! (Why them?)
- Acknowledge the skills required for the open position.
- State the most relevant skills/strengths you will bring to the job that parallel those needed to fulfill the position.
- Give examples of select skills and work experience—quantified results, accomplishments and achievements and how they will transfer to the job.
- You may want to build this section from several short paragraphs that separate and emphasize your skills and strengths.
- No need to rehash the entire resume.

**Closing Paragraph:** Request an interview.

- Refer to documents enclosed or available, such as your portfolio with resume, reference letters, a reference sheet and, if applicable, writing samples.
- Assert yourself by telling the contact person you will call him/her on a designated date to set up an interview. Alternatively, state you are available for a personal interview at his/her convenience.
- Make it very easy for the person to contact you. List your best phone number and email as well as days and times when you can be reached. Yes, even though it's on the resume, state it again.

Sincerely,



(Signature)

Typed Name

### Tip:

Many employers ask candidates to apply online at the company website; these sites do not always require cover letters.

## Sample Cover Letter #1 – Employment

Use this format only if attaching your cover letter to an email.



M. Mudd  
340 Foothill Blvd.  
Claremont, CA 91711

March 6, 20XX

Mr. John Bowman, Vice President  
California Federal Credit  
800 Travis Avenue, Suite 1404  
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mr. Bowman:

Indicate where you heard about the position.



I am interested in applying for a position in your organization's management training program, where I can strengthen my knowledge and exposure of the consumer finance industry. Your organization attended the Career Fair at Harvey Mudd College. I enjoyed talking to Jose Hernandez about your organization.

Mention some information about the company to show that you have taken the time to do research.



I plan to pursue a career in financial management and would like to begin my career in banking and consumer finance. I can see from your website that your management program offers a wonderful opportunity to learn both banking and consumer finance. I was impressed by the organization's growth in the past five years, as well as how it is implementing new programs.

Use strong action words to describe your experiences and achievements.



As current president of Harvey Mudd College's Associated Students, I have had the opportunity to strengthen my leadership and organizational skills by planning and coordinating various fundraising and special event activities for the campus community. Through my academic coursework in mathematics, I have also developed strong communicative, analytical and problem-solving skills which will be necessary not only as a management trainee, but also in a future role as a branch manager. Furthermore, while attending college, I gained experience in customer relations and sales through various part-time positions in retail sales and telemarketing. In addition to these experiences, my interpersonal skills, motivation and willingness to learn will also enable me to be a strong candidate for your excellent management training program.

I have attached my resume for your consideration. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications. I plan to contact you within the next week to determine the possibility of arranging an interview time. However, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 909.621.4444 or mike\_mudd@hmc.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Mike Mudd

## Sample Cover Letter #2—Employment

Always address letter to a specific person; it's OK to ask human resources for the correct person's name.

If someone recommended you for the position, definitely mention that person's name.

Be proactive by letting the company know when you will follow up. Make sure you call within the time you specify. Also, be sure to include your contact information.

Polly Gonn  
1567 Breese Avenue, Apt. #560  
Claremont, CA 91711

March 20, 20XX

Mark Patterson, Section Manager  
Hewlett-Packard Inc.  
16399 W. Bennett Drive  
San Diego, CA 92717

Dear Mark Patterson:

I am applying for the position of systems analyst in your San Diego office, as advertised in Harvey Mudd College's newsletter. My friend John Brown is employed in the Los Angeles office and highly recommends Hewlett-Packard.

Early in my coursework in computer science and mathematics at Harvey Mudd College, I began seriously considering future employment with the Hewlett-Packard Company. We use a number of your products in our laboratory work. The design, precision and reliability of these products are impressive. More recently, I noted in a professional computing journal that you are undertaking a new project to apply microcomputers in automatic control systems.

Many of my electives were in the fields of control systems and computers, and I worked for three summers in microcomputer applications. I believe that I am well qualified to begin my career employment on your new project; I know that it is directly related to my interests.

I have attached my resume for your consideration. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my education and experience could benefit your organization. I will contact you by phone within five to seven days to discuss the possibility of an interview.

If you need to reach me, my phone number is (909) 627-5555 and my email is polly\_gonn@hmc.edu.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Polly Gonn

Attachment