

CREATING YOUR JOB SEARCH TOOLS

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. Page 1 is an outline, Pages 2 and 3 are examples.

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 the address.

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
City, State | Email Address | LinkedIn

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 - career fair, employee connection, or online. Express how interested you are in the position and how you hope to be a beneficial member of the team.

Body Paragraph: This is the critical content section. It can be one or two paragraphs.
Have a sentence or two acknowledging why the organization/company is important and stands out to you. Do research! (Why them?) Reference the skills required for the open position and how you have utilized said skills in previous projects, classes or work. 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, but utilize this space to give further insight into the project and your soft skills.

Closing Paragraph: Short recap.
Refer to documents enclosed or available, such as your portfolio with resume, reference letters, a reference sheet and, if applicable, writing samples. 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, but if there is an option to submit one please do so.

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Sample Cover Letter #1 – Employment

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



Indicate where you heard about the position.



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



Use strong action words to describe your experiences and achievements.



M. Mudd

Claremont, CA | mike_mudd@hmc.edu | linkedin-mikemudd

March 6, 20XX

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

Dear Mr. Bowman:

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, and I enjoyed talking to Jose Hernandez about your organization.

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.

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. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 909.621.4444 to mike_mudd@hmc.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Mike Mudd

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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 the person's name.



Polly Gonn

Claremont, CA | polly_gonn@hmc.edu | linkedin-polly-gonn

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.

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