

# COVER AND THANK YOU LETTERS

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[www.bu.edu/eng/careers](http://www.bu.edu/eng/careers)

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## **COVER LETTERS**

The purpose of a cover letter is to entice the reader to flip the page and give your resume a long, hard look. The cover letter demonstrates how your background fits the particular job and organization to which you are applying. The cover letter introduces your resume and is what the prospective employer will see first. A cover letter provides an opportunity to:

- Elaborate on your career objective.
- Demonstrate that you have some knowledge about the employer and are making an informed decision.
  - The more you know about the organization the better you will be able to tailor your experience and skills to fit their needs.
- Target your special interests, qualifications, and/or experiences to the needs of the organization.
- Describe the unique personal qualities that you would bring to the position.
- Gives you the opportunity to explain dark spots in academic history or gaps in work history.
  - Do this in an inconspicuous manner as to not draw attention to it.

### **Types of cover letters**

#### Letter of Application

- To apply for an announced position currently available.
- A solicited letter.

#### Letter of Inquiry

- To express interest in working for a particular employer, even if you are uncertain if positions are currently available.
- An unsolicited letter.

#### Networking Letters

- To ask for help and/or advice in your career search.
- To seek out special consideration due to mutual acquaintances.
- To set up information interviews.

### **Guidelines for cover letters**

- Each cover letter should be an original, addressed to a specific individual. If you do not know the name of the person, your salutation should be appropriate for either sex, such as Dear Human Resources Manager; Dear Sir or Madam; or To Whom it May Concern. CAUTION: Never use Dear Sir unless you know for CERTAIN the person reading your letter is a male.
- Personalize each cover letter, making it relevant and tailored to the job for which you are applying. You want to show how your skills and experience will directly contribute to the position you are applying for.
- Do not merely repeat what is in your resume. Call attention to and elaborate on items in your resume. Take advantage of this opportunity to provide special information that is not on your resume, but which may be of particular interest to the employer.
- Use clear, concise language and correct grammar.
- Limit your letter to one typewritten page (two-four typed paragraphs).
- A cover letter should reflect your personality, however, it is a business letter and should not deviate widely from conventional format or tone.
- When salary history or requirements are requested by the employer, it is best to state a range. You should research the field in which you are applying to get a handle on what the market rate salary is for a person with your experience and education.

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Telephone Number

Today's Date

Ms. Ann James  
Vice President of Marketing Research  
International Widget Corporation  
College Relations Building 202-2  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08358

Dear Ms. James:

*First sentence: This sentence should be your thesis statement, explaining why you are writing the letter. The first sentence should include specifically which position you are applying for (use a job code when applicable) and how you heard of the job opening.*

*Rest of Opening Paragraph: You can use this space to explain your general qualifications for the position in which you are applying: you've just graduated in that field or you have extensive experience, etc. Where applicable, mention a specific referral, including a personal contact within the organization, a mutual associate or acquaintance of the employer, or an article in a specific periodical, etc.*

*Body of Letter: Explain why you are interested in working for this particular employer and specify your reasons for desiring the position. Link your skills and abilities to the specific job qualifications mentioned in the job description. Point out relevant work experience and/or related education, but do more than reiterate information that is contained in your resume. Emphasize and expand on one or two of your most relevant qualifications. Be sure to write this section in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter as an example of your written and communication skills. This is also the section to add salary requirements (only if the company has asked you to supply the information).*

*Closing Paragraph: Pave the way for an interview by offering to call the employer by a specified date, by asking for an appointment, or by some similar suggestion to facilitate an immediate and favorable reply. A positive request is harder to ignore than a vague hope. State your appreciation and thanks for being considered.*

Sincerely yours,

(sign here)  
Karen E. Jones

Enclosure (you are noting that you have enclosed your resume)

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Telephone Number

Today's Date

Ms. Ann James  
Vice President of Marketing Research  
International Widget Corporation  
College Relations Building 202-2  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08358

Dear Ms. James:

*First sentence: Unlike the Letter of Application, this section isn't as easy to write. The first sentence should be your thesis statement, explaining why you are writing the letter. This sentence should include which area or specific position you would like to be considered for.*

*Rest of Opening Paragraph: You can use this space to explain your general qualifications for the area or position in which you would like to be considered: you've just graduated in that field or you have extensive experience, etc. Where applicable, mention a specific referral, including a personal contact within the organization, a mutual associate or acquaintance of the employer, or an article in a specific periodical, etc.*

*Body of Letter: Explain why you are interested in working for this particular employer and/or specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. Point out relevant work experience and/or related education, but do more than reiterate information that is contained in your resume. Emphasize and expand on one or two of your most relevant qualifications. Be sure to write this section in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter as an example of your writing and communication skills. This is also the section to add salary requirements (only if the company has asked you to supply the information).*

*Closing Paragraph: Pave the way for an interview by offering to call the employer by a specified date, by asking for an appointment, or by some similar suggestion to facilitate an immediate and favorable reply. A positive request is harder to ignore than a vague hope. State your appreciation and thanks for being considered.*

Sincerely yours,

(sign here)  
Karen E. Jones

Enclosure (you are noting that you have enclosed your resume)

34 Second Street  
Troy, New York 12180  
(617) 222-3333

September 1, 2015

Mr. James Roberts  
Recruiting Coordinator  
Consulting Firm Associates  
500 Main Street  
Wellesley, MA 02146

Dear Mr. Roberts:

I read with interest your job posting for a Technology Analyst on your company website. You will note from my enclosed resume that I will be graduating from Boston University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biomedical Engineering, and am very interested in pursuing opportunities with Consulting Firm Associates.

A Biomedical Engineering background will allow me a broad range of technical and problem solving abilities. My experience as a Co-op Engineer further developed these skills as well as advanced my strong interpersonal and communication capabilities. Attached please find a copy of my resume, which further details my qualifications and accomplishments.

I would like very much to meet with you at your convenience to discuss your Technology Analyst position. You may contact me at the above address or by telephone at (617) 222-3333. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Smith

Enclosure

9999 Hampton Street  
Boston, MA 02215  
(617) 222-3333

September 1, 2015

Ms. Diane Strand  
Manager of Human Resources  
Software Company  
2900 Boston Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Ms. Strand:

Since graduating from Boston University in May of 2015, I have become very interested in exploring career opportunities with a Software Company. With a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering I am particularly interested in the area of Systems Analysis. Your firm has an excellent reputation and comes highly recommended to me.

With a degree in Computer Engineering, I have had the opportunity to take courses which have helped to develop my software, project team and programming language skills. Additionally, my experience at Boston University's Computer Center as a Programmer and a Student Consultant for system users has given me valuable exposure to complex computer operations. My enclosed resume provides further details on my qualifications.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my background and opportunities within Software Company. I can be reached at (617) 222-3333. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely yours,

Peppermint Patty

111 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215  
(617) 222-3333

January 1, 2015

Mr. Robert Jones  
Manager  
Technical Inc.  
123 Olympic Highway  
Atlanta, GA 03030

Dear Mr. Jones:

This May I will be joining the ranks of Boston University, College of Engineering alumni like yourself. With graduation close at hand, I have two immediate goals. The first is to use my B.S. degree in Manufacturing Engineering to obtain a position, applying my education and experience in a fast-paced environment. My second goal is to relocate to the Atlanta area within the next six months.

As a successful engineering professional, I hope you can offer some advice as to how I might realize my objectives. I have done some preliminary research about the Atlanta market, but would appreciate whatever firsthand information you can provide about the economic climate and any suggestions you might have regarding my job search.

I expect to be in the Atlanta area during the first two weeks of June and plan to arrange as many informational interviews as I can over this time period. Since you have accomplished what I would like to achieve, it would be most valuable for me to spend some time with you at your convenience. I will call your office next week to make appropriate arrangements.

Thank you for your time and assistance. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Jessie Johnson

9 Hartrick Road  
Westboro, MA 01581  
(617) 222-3333

September 1, 2015

Mr. James Schumack  
Design Engineering Manager  
Aircraft Electric Engines  
100 Main Street  
Lynn, MA 02111

Dear Mr. Schumack:

At the suggestion of Gary Clark of Hamilton Standard, I am writing to request your assistance with my career search. As a recent graduate of Boston University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, my immediate goal is to gain knowledge of the skills and qualifications necessary for success in the private sector.

As a Design Engineering Manager, your advice and/or suggestions would be particularly helpful to me. I believe, with my prior academic and work experience in the development of conceptual designs for automated machinery and mechanical equipment, I can be successful in this type of work.

So that you may familiarize yourself with my background I have enclosed my resume. I will call your office next week to arrange a mutually convenient time for us to meet. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 222-3333.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely yours,

George Costanza

Enclosure

## **THANK YOU LETTERS**

Immediately after interviewing with an employer, send a brief thank you to the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you. Many employers expect to receive thank-you letters within a couple of days of the interview so make sure you are prepared. Thank you letters not only demonstrate good manners and determination, but also provide another opportunity to present a positive image of yourself. Note, a thank you letter should always be sent, regardless of whether or not you expect to receive the job or if you have decided that you are no longer interested in the position for which you interviewed. You never know when you may encounter the interviewer again, either at another company or for another position. The thank you letter should:

- Express your appreciation for the interviewer's time, information and consideration; state the position for which you interviewed and the date the interview took place.
- Reaffirm your interest, mention any important items forgotten in the interview, and include additional qualifications of work experience not included on resume or mentioned in interview.
- Mention your availability for additional interviews at their convenience. Close with a feeling of enthusiasm for the position and organization.

### **Guidelines for thank you letters:**

- Keep your thank you message brief, two to three short paragraphs.
- Each thank you letter should be an original and addressed to the interviewer. If you interviewed with several people at an on-site interview, you need not send a letter to each person, unless the decision will be made by the group, in which case you should send a letter to every person you interviewed with. You should, however, always send a thank you to the individual who arranged the interview or to the individual who will be making the hiring decision.
- Personalize each thank you letter, making it relevant and tailored to the job for which you interviewed. You may want to include some reference to your conversation, referring back to specific issues that were discussed.
- Make sure the tone of your letter is a positive and confident one even if you feel you have little chance for getting the job, however, you don't want to sound too arrogant or overconfident.
- Use unambiguous language and proper grammar.
- Make sure to proofread your letter. You don't want the interviewer to remember you by your poor spelling or grammar skills.
- If it has been communicated to you that the position is to be filled as soon as possible, you might want to send your thank you letter in an e-mail instead of the slower, US Postal system.

72 Beacon Street  
Brookline, MA 02146  
(617) 222-3333

November 1, 2015

Sally Jones  
Director of Human Resources  
The Company  
1039 Main Street  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss your opening for an entry-level mechanical engineer. I enjoyed meeting with you and Mr. Marks and learning more about The Company.

I believe that my previous co-op experience at Raytheon and my educational background in mechanical engineering qualifies me for the position. My knowledge of computers, including AutoCad and Pro Engineer, would also be especially valuable to your company. I was particularly impressed and interested in The Company's strong commitment to innovation and growth, as well as its plans to expand into the overseas market.

I would very much like to meet with you again to further discuss this position. You may reach me at (617) 222-3333. Also, if you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

George Costanza

## Email Etiquette and the Job Search

E-mail has traditionally been used as an informal means of communication. However, as it becomes increasingly popular in the job application process, you need to take time to think through the content of your emails and address the message that you might be sending to employers. Emails should be treated no different than any other form of communication you would send to a potential employer.

Although employers don't always read an entire cover letter the first time, they do expect the writer to take the time to include the necessary information in an appropriate way. The following guidelines should be used for email when responding to: potential employers, co-workers, colleagues business members, and college staff and personnel. You will be taken more seriously and will often be giving more credibility. **The tips below also apply to messages sent through LinkedIn, Facebook as well as direct emails.** Common mistakes include:

Using emoticons (:p)  
Being too informal  
Misspellings and poor grammar  
No capitalization  
Spelling words phonetically (how they sound)

Professional email is very different from casual e-mail or instant messenger. Here are some guidelines to consider when writing an email in which you are job prospecting or applying for a job:

- Always introduce yourself the same way you would in a cover letter. Dear Mr./Ms. So and So, I am writing in regard to your posting on...for XYZ position in Engineering.
- Treat your emails as if you were writing a professional cover or thank you letter on paper, but be brief.
- An email to an employer should never just say "see attached". The receiver may not even open the attachment.
- In the subject line, make it obvious why you are writing: "Application for xyz" positions.
- Make sure you change the contact name and the content according to the person and company to whom you are sending the message.
- If you are responding to an email, include the original message in the reply, so the receiver can put your email into the correct context. Also respond within two business days.
- Always spell words correctly.
- Don't just use spell check. It won't catch words that are spelled correctly, but are misused with the context of the sentence
- Never use all capital letters. It can be implied that you are screaming. It is also difficult to read.
- Think about the message an email address can send. Keep it simple (always use your BU email) avoid email addresses like "studmuffin@gmail" or "partygirl@yahoo".
- Read your message carefully. The tone of the email can often be misinterpreted by the way the email is written
- Have someone else proofread it before you send it (this applies to all written materials you send to an employer). It may be easier to find errors if you print it and review it.
- Prior to attaching your resume, scan for viruses.
- Name your document "your name, resume". Employers receive hundreds of resumes via e-mail. If you follow-up by asking them if they received it they won't want to look through 300+ attachments called "resume".
- Do not assume that if an employer is informal that you should be too.
- Don't just reply on e-mail. E-mails can be lost. Follow-ups can be done via telephone or regular mail

**Sample Introduction Email**

To:xtzperson@acompany.org  
From:goodemployee@bu.edu  
Subject: Application for Software Engineer

Dear Ms. XYZ,

I am writing in response to the job posting on jobweb.com for the Software Engineer role at ABC Company (Job # 123). Please accept my attached resume and letter as an application for this position. My skills and experience closely fit the job description, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you,

John Smith

**Sample Cover Letter Email**

To:xtzperson@acompany.org  
From:goodemployee@bu.edu  
Subject: Application for Software Engineer

Dear Ms. XYZ,

I am writing in response to the job posting on jobweb.com for the Software Engineer role at ABC company (Job # 123). Please accept my attached resume as an application for this position.

My experience and personality closely fit the job description, and I am very excited to apply. As a Computer Engineering student at Boston University, I have taken advantage of numerous research and design opportunities on campus and in class, which may be useful in a professional setting like ABC Company. For my Senior Design project my teammates and I designed an app for a client in the healthcare industry that will be used by them this coming fall. As a student worker in the Career Development Office, I also designed an Access database to track student appointments and notes made by the advisors. The position required a high degree of confidentiality as well as a person with the ability to work on a project until it was completed.

In addition to maintaining a strong 3.6 GPA and holding an on-campus job, I have also participated in various campus activities and leadership programs. By working on committees, I was able to demonstrate my leadership, teamwork, and time-management skills, which can be useful in a professional setting such as ABC Company.

I am eager to learn more about the Software Engineer position and would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you in an interview about my qualifications. I can be reached at 617-353-5731 or by email at goodemployee@bu.edu . I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Sincerely, John Smith