

# COVER LETTERS

*Sample cover letters and other messages you will need during the job search*



A cover letter is a vital tool in marketing yourself to prospective employers for several reasons:

- An effective cover letter will draw attention to your qualifications and experiences that are most relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Employers often use letters to assess the written communication skills that you will need for any position.
- A letter provides you the opportunity to convey to a potential employer your interest, enthusiasm, and other personal attributes that are not easily expressed in a resume alone.

Cover letters can play an important role in helping you gain interviews through on-Grounds interviewing and your own off-Grounds search. For these reasons, it is important that you prepare your written job search correspondence with as much care as you used when constructing your resume.

## **When should I send a cover letter?**

Pay attention to times when you need to send a cover letter to a potential employer or contact. If you are conducting an on-Grounds job search, a cover letter may not always be required. It is important to note that unless requested, cover letters cannot be submitted through CAVLink. If you are conducting an off-Grounds job search, sending a cover letter will provide the employer with helpful information to complement the resume. A cover letter can convey your interest and indicate that you are a “match” for the position.

## **What should my cover letter say?**

- Why you are writing and how you learned about the organization or opportunity
- Why you are interested
- Why you are qualified and would be a good “match” for the position
- Do not restate what is on your resume
- Emphasize personal attributes/strengths related to qualifications for the position

## **How do I begin to compose the letter?**

Use your own words! Resist the temptation to compose your letter simply by replacing a few words in the attached samples. Remember, the purpose of your letter is to showcase your individual strengths and your own written communication skills. Use the sample as a guide, but be unique.

## **To whom should the cover letter be addressed?**

If possible, address the cover letter to a specific person, not “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern.” If contact information is not available on CAVLink, use a position title (e.g. Dear Internship Coordinator or Dear Recruitment Manager). Make sure to use current information.

## **How long is a cover letter?**

Cover letters should not exceed four paragraphs or one page in length. They should be clear and use concise sentences and short paragraphs. Use proper business format when constructing your cover letter.

## **Cover Letter Tips - How to Send an Email Cover Letter**

When you apply via email, there are a couple of options. You can write your cover letter directly into an email message (the same rules for writing a proper letter apply) and attach your resume. Or, you can attach both your resume and letter as separate documents to the email address. Send yourself a copy so you’ll have a copy for your records. When you send your cover letter in the body of the email, be sure to include your contact information (email address, phone number, etc.) in your signature, so it’s easy for the hiring manager to get in touch with you. The most important part of sending an email cover letter is to follow the employer’s instructions. If the job posting says to include your cover letter and resume as an attachment, attach Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF files to your message. Save the files with your name, so they don’t get mixed up with other applicant’s materials. Be sure to include a subject line in your email with the position for which you are applying and your name. Include a signature with all your contact information (name, address, phone, and email address) so it’s easy for the hiring manager to get in touch with you.

## **Proof Read**

Again. Using a spell checker is not enough. Many recruiters will dismiss even the most qualified candidate if there is one typo in a cover letter or resume. Reread your letter two or three times, and then give it to someone else who is a strong writer to review. Even if your letter is free of typos, poor grammar also makes a bad impression.

## Sample Format for a Cover Letter

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Your Street Address

City, State, Zip

Date

Contact Person's Name

Position Title

Company

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

In the first paragraph, indicate why you are writing and where you heard about the position. Mention UVa and your year and major(s). Make sure to include the specific position title for which you are applying. If an individual or personal contact referred you to the organization, and/or you've interacted with company representatives at career fairs, info sessions, or other events, mention their names and events you attended. Consider ending the first paragraph with a sentence that identifies 2-4 skills or experiences you have that will help you contribute to the organization. Keep the first paragraph brief and attention grabbing.

In one or two paragraphs, detail how you can contribute to the company. Think about concrete examples that illustrate you have the qualifications and skills you identified at the end of the first paragraph. Tell a story about these previous experiences to help the firm understand that you'll be able to bring these same skill to their team. Make sure not to reproduce your resume in this space, but highlight your most pertinent experiences. If you have access to a position description or job listing, specifically address how your background matches the qualifications they are seeking. Your objectives here are to demonstrate that you are a "match" for the position and to stimulate enough interest that the contact person will want to read your resume. Create a "need" for yourself at the company, and indicate your willingness to contribute to the organization.

In the closing paragraph, thank readers for their time and consideration. Share your contact information (one email address and phone number – the same ones you share on your resume) and mention that you look forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely/Best regards/professional closing of choice,

(Signature) Full Name

## Sample Cover Letter for Internships and Full-Time Jobs

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2xx 14th Street, Apt #x  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
December 5, 20xx

Brittanie Bosselait  
University Recruiting  
Booz | Allen | Hamilton  
8283 Greensboro Drive  
McLean, VA 22102

**NOTE:** If an employer has a name that men or women may use (e.g., Alex), you may wish to begin your letter "Dear Alex Smith" instead of "Dear Mr. Smith" in case Alex is a woman. A former female UVa career counselor named Alex often received emails from students, faculty, and recruiters addressed to "Mr." – do not make the same mistake!

Dear Ms. Bosselait:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me at the Fall Engineering Career Fair and for all of the information you shared about Booz|Allen|Hamilton during the information session that you hosted On-Grounds at the University of Virginia. I am writing to apply for an internship with Booz|Allen|Hamilton during the summer of 20xx and appreciate you encouraging me to do so. I believe my business and internship experience along with my strong academic performance has prepared me for such an opportunity and will allow me the chance to contribute as an intern in a highly effective and professional manner.

I am currently pursuing a double major in Systems Engineering and Economics and a minor in Engineering Business. Viewing your internship request, I learned that you are seeking academically successful engineers with a business background. I am confident that I have both the strong academics and pertinent business experience that you are seeking. I have worked for three summers and most recently, I served as an Intern in the SAP Procurement & Materials Team with Kellogg Brown &

Root (KBR), a global engineering firm. My internship culminated in the presentation of my summer-long research project, focused on business analysis of real-time reporting of e-commerce activity, to an array of upper management. As such, I believe I can provide the communication and presentation skills you desire along with strong analytical abilities.

Attached is my resume for review. Please feel free to contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by e-mail at xxxxx@virginia.edu if you have any questions or if you would like additional credentials in support of my application. Thank you for your time and serious consideration, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nate Hopke

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xxx University Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
Email address

January 17, 20xx

Mr. Garret M. Hansen  
Lucent Technologies Network Systems GmbH  
90411 Nuremberg  
Germany

Dear Mr. Hansen:

I am currently a fourth-year electrical engineering student who will graduate from the University of Virginia in May of 20xx, and I am writing to apply for Lucent's Marketing Associate position in Nuremberg, Germany. I became aware of this opportunity through the University of Virginia's Center for Engineering Career Development, and I believe I have the skills as well as the enthusiasm to work for the Customer Centre in Germany.

By viewing your supplementary information and Lucent's website, I learned that you are seeking candidates with strong presentation and technical abilities. I am confident that I have the background and skills you are seeking. Having a strong technical background, working for the UVA Solar Airship Program, and GE Financial Assurance, I am able to present technical information to both engineering and non-technical personnel. Academically, I have presented both my thesis proposal and my thesis technical report to my peers and my professor. With the Airship Program, I have presented formal and informal presentations not only to the team members, but also to other students and to faculty members. I also created PowerPoint presentations for one of GE's projects. In addition, I have further developed my management skills as the VP of Engineering of the UVA Solar Airship Program (20xx). I managed the different engineering teams and helped set the team's short and long term goals. I also worked closely with the VP of Business to determine the team's budget and helped with fundraising and advertising.

Attached is my resume for review. I hope to join your team in Germany. If you have any questions, please contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email me at hoos03@virginia.edu. Thank you for your time and I look forward in meeting you in April.

Best regards,

Jefferson Cavalier

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ADDRESS INFORMATION HERE

Dear Ms. de Goey:

Over the last few weeks, I met with you and many of your coworkers to learn about Deloitte and how to become a member of the Deloitte team. After hearing presentations, talking to representatives at events and career fairs and reading about an available position on the firm's website and CAVLink at the University of Virginia, I am interested in a Federal Business Technology Analyst position with your firm upon completion of my degree. I will be graduating this May with a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering. I believe the fit between my skills and interests and your needs would make me an asset to your organization.

I initially became interested in consulting because of the opportunity to work with intelligent, driven and creative people. However, it is the fact that consultants utilize their skills to solve real world issues that motivated me to apply for a position

at Deloitte. As a BTA, I want to apply my strong problem solving skills and creativity to help clients solve business and IT problems or capitalize on business opportunities. Through my coursework, I have developed the abilities to perform research, integrate information, determine the best solution, and design a plan for its implementation. Many of my courses allowed me to take the work a step further by testing proposals in the real world in areas ranging from medical device design to the improvement of preexisting consumer products. Just as important as the specific abilities I developed through my coursework is the mindset that I formed – a mindset that values practical solutions and visible results. I believe my abilities and mindset would make a career with Deloitte particularly rewarding for me and beneficial for Deloitte’s clients.

My courses often required function as part of a team. This experience helped me develop the skills needed to be an effective team member including the ability to communicate efficiently and effectively with others. I have learned that I possess the flexibility and professionalism necessary to succeed in a group setting, and am excited about the opportunity to draw upon these same attributes when interacting directly with clients and coworkers. As a firm that prides itself on not only developing recommendations but taking the process a step further to deliver tangible results, I believe my experiences are compatible with the mission of Deloitte. I look forward to the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you at your convenience.

If there is any other information I can provide you with that would be helpful as you assess my candidacy, please contact me at PHONE or at EMAIL. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance for reviewing my attached credentials.

Closing,

NAME

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September 22, 20xx

Human Resources Department  
International Truck and Engine Corporation

Dear Human Resources Manager:

I am a senior Mechanical Engineering student at the University of Virginia. I am emailing you because I am very interested in a full-time entry-level position with International Truck and Engine Corporation. I have had a strong interest in the automotive community ever since my father first took me out to the garage to work on our vehicles. My current project vehicle is a 1986 K5 Blazer. While at UVA, my largest project has been the SAE Mini Baja Competition, and I am the President of our team here. We utilize SolidWorks and COSMOS for our modeling and analysis of our frame and suspension components so I am very familiar with these programs.

I first learned of International Truck and Engine Corporation through my father, who drove a tractor trailer for years. He would tell me about all the different types of tractors, who made their engines, and which ones were the best. I later saw advertisements on television for the International Power Stroke Diesel and as I come to a close in my college career I realized that I should further my research into your company. I read on your website that you are a fairly large company with many different disciplines, which truly excited me. The ability to see multiple different aspects of a project and how they interact with each other is very important for younger engineers to gain experience with project management. Through my work on the SAE Baja cars, I have had the ability to manage multiple different teams and integrate their designs into one complete vehicle. Also, as the lead of one of those teams, I have had the opportunity to design, analyze, and fabricate multiple components and then incorporate them into a finalized car.

This past summer, I was granted an internship position with NASA under the USRP program. In this position, I conducted multiple CFD analyses using CFDdesign. The skills which I gained from using this program would be immensely useful for setting up and analyzing intake flow rates and exhaust flow rates and EGT’s via the heat transfer capabilities. I also created multiple CAD drawings of mounting brackets for experimental equipment to fly on a DC-8 aircraft.

Attached, please find a copy of my resume. I will be contacting you in the coming weeks to discuss further opportunities within your company. Please feel free to contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email at [xxxxx@virginia.edu](mailto:xxxxx@virginia.edu) if you have any questions. Thank you for your time and serious consideration.

Sincerely,

NAME

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Dear Booz Allen Hamilton Recruitment team,

I am a fourth year student at the University of Virginia majoring in Mechanical Engineering as well as minoring in Engineering Business and am writing to apply for the Systems Engineering position at Booz Allen Hamilton. While I have harnessed the technical skills through the Mechanical Engineering degree, I am also fascinated by the systems development lifecycle and the integration of product teams and groups that a systems engineering career presents. I enjoyed speaking to Megan Cuthbertson at the Engineering Career fair as well as talking to some UVa alumni that currently work at Booz Allen Hamilton. After learning more about the company, I believe that I have the strong technical skills, academic background, and enthusiasm to work for and contribute to the successful atmosphere of Booz Allen Hamilton.

The projects I contributed to and the experiences I was exposed to during two summer internships helped hone my analytical and interpersonal skills. During my time as an intern at the SI organization, I was a part of a team whose job was to interview multiple employees within the company to obtain information and opinions on the current government proposal process and the systems engineering lifecycle. Through this experience, I was able to interact with people on all different levels from recent college graduates to senior level executives. After interpreting each person's responses, I briefed a presentation that outlined what aspects of the government contract system needed to be improved and possible ways to improve them. At Sotera Defense Solutions, I also worked on a team to synthesize and analyze information from open source documents as well as information from briefings from different program contract managers. Both summer experiences allowed me to communicate with numerous members of the respective organizations, compile information, and present the results in a briefing to higher level managers.

I have been involved in academic projects that have further helped my teamwork and analytical problem solving skills. In my Introduction to Engineering class, I worked with four other peers to design an off-road baby stroller. We had a customer that introduced himself to the class and gave criteria for the stroller and how it would be tested. As such, we designed, tested, and pitched our stroller to the customer. In addition, I am currently the team leader for the structures design team for my capstone project. In our team, we are designing and building a weather balloon that will be used to collect radiation data in the atmosphere that will be compared to radiation data models already proposed by NASA. In addition, as a team leader I am responsible for developing schedules, milestones, and deliverables for my team as well as making sure our functions integrate coherently and effectively with other functional teams. We will be working directly with the customer, NASA, throughout the project so I am confident that this experience will allow me to utilize and demonstrate my analytical problem solving and teamwork skills.

Attached to the CAVLink site is my resume for review. Please feel free to contact me at PHONE or at EMAIL if you have any further questions or would like additional credentials. Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards

NAME

## **Letter of Inquiry about Employment possibilities, email**

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Have you identified an organization of interest only to learn that there are no positions currently being advertised? Send a cover letter of inquiry (also known as a prospecting letter) to inquire about potential openings the company anticipates making available or about the possibility of creating an opportunity. These cover letters differ only slightly from a traditional cover letter of application, in which an individual submits a resume and letter to apply to an advertised internship opening. In a cover letter of inquiry, the writer focuses less on targeting the letter towards a specific internship posting and more towards connecting his or her interests and skills with the organization's goals, values, and projects. In other words, how can you contribute to the organization and how could you serve as an asset to their team?

### **Sample intro paragraph:**

Introduce yourself and mention why you are writing (i.e., seeking an internship, inquiring about potential openings, proposing creating an opportunity, etc.). For example:

I am a second-year student at the University of Virginia, majoring in Systems Engineering with an Engineering Business Minor. I am very interested in applying the analytical and quantitative mindset I am developing in the classroom, along with my growing knowledge of basic business principles, to a company that (general description of what you're looking for/interested in). Your organization's (fill in the blank) initiative caught my attention because (provide reasons here). While I was unable to find a formal internship program on your organization's website, I would enjoy speaking with you about working with (name organization) as an intern this summer.

**Body paragraph:**

What skills, abilities, experience, and interests do you most wish to communicate with the reader? Determine what the organization might want in a new hire, identify how you possess these traits, and provide concrete examples to demonstrate how you could potentially contribute.

For example you might begin with: "Over the last two semesters, I have taken an active leadership role in semester-long group projects. I led a five-person team in..."

Proceed to discuss what you have learned from these experiences, how they have shaped your interests, and how the skills you have developed connect with the current efforts of the organization.

**Closing paragraph:**

As you would with a traditional cover letter, thank readers for their time and consideration, and share your contact information.

## Sample Email to Alumni Requesting Assistance

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108 Dabney Station  
Charlottesville, VA 22904

January 29, 20xx

John J. Employer  
ABC Internet Company  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, VA 33333

Dear Mr. Employer,

I received your name from the Hoosonline.com Alumni Directory through the School of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Virginia. I am seeking an internship in the field of computer engineering in order to gain hands-on experience to compliment my academic background. I am very interested in this field, I would greatly appreciate any suggestions or advice that you can offer me at this time.

As a first year student in the School of Engineering and Applied Science at UVa, I have had the opportunity and challenge of juggling the demands of the engineering curriculum. I have learned a lot about time management, working in groups, and the general field of engineering. In addition, I have further developed my problem solving and analytical skills.

If by chance, I could have the opportunity to exchange emails with you to get your advice on careers, and how I might go about getting some quality work experience, that would great. If you wish to reach me, my number is (xxx) xxx-xxxx and my email address is xxxxx@virginia.edu. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Mary Cavalier

## Thank You Notes after Interviews

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Follow-up with employers is a critical step in the interviewing process. It is important to send a thank you note to employers immediately after the interview. A well-written, timely thank you letter tells an employer something important about your personality—that you are courteous and thoughtful. Thank you letters are used to reconfirm and reinforce your interest in a position. They can also provide a format where you can clarify answers you gave in an interview. Email is the most common method of sending a thank-you letter. Sending a thank you letter via email can be useful for getting your correspondence to an employer quickly, particularly if you expect to hear back from the employer soon after the interview. Additional options include mailing a neatly handwritten thank-you letter on a note card or typing a formal thank-you letter.

## General Guidelines

- Always send a thank you letters to people who have spent time interviewing you or providing you with information about careers.
- If more than one person interviewed you, a thank you letter should be addressed to the key decision maker and another to the coordinator of the visit. Both letters may be added to your candidate file, so personalize each letter.
- In your letter to the coordinator, be sure to thank by name each of the individuals with whom you interviewed.
- Reinforce how you see yourself fitting into the organization and satisfying the requirements of the position. Creating a “match” between yourself and the position.
- Although this is a business letter, be personal to the extent that you are comfortable. You may wish to refer to one of the highlights or one of the specific points discussed during the interview; by doing so, you will create a more personal letter and may refresh the interviewer’s memory of you and the interview.
- Keep it brief—no more than one page and three to four paragraphs.
- If you are sending a thank-you letter by mail, make sure to use appropriate stationary.

## Sample Thank you letter

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x Chapel Drive  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
February 3, 20xx

Mr. Dave Ong  
College Recruitment  
Maximus  
777 North Garden Blvd  
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Mr. Ong:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you on-Grounds at the University of Virginia on October 28. I appreciate all that you shared about working at Maximus and I also appreciated the time you took to learn about my strengths for this opportunity. I would like to reiterate my interest in working for and contributing to the Maximus team.

After speaking with Sarah Copeland, who interned with your company last summer, attending your company presentation and speaking with you, I have confirmed my belief that Maximus would be a wonderful working environment to learn and grow. Again, thank you for your time and consideration. If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you in the next few weeks.

Sincerely,  
Kendra Curry

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Dear Ms. Taylor,

Thank you very much for inviting me to interview with Northrop Grumman Sperry Marine Systems for the position of Engineer I – Dept. 260. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and interviewing with you, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Davis. I appreciated the time you spent getting to know me and my qualifications for this position. While speaking with each of you, I became even more excited about the opportunity and would like to reiterate my interest in working with and contributing to Northrop Grumman Sperry Marine Systems.

Thank you very much, again and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Sean Smith

# Accepting or Declining a Job Offer

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You have the option of providing written documentation to confirm your acceptance or decline of an offer. Letters responding to offers are used to maintain positive, professional relationships with employers.

## General Guidelines

### Is it appropriate to call or send a letter first?

Always respond to an offer by telephone first, and then follow up with a letter.

### What should an acceptance letter include?

The letter should include basic details such as job title, starting location and date, as well as a statement of appreciation for the opportunity to join the organization and become part of the "team." Other details such as salary, relocation agreement, benefits, and other bonuses should be included in your offer package you receive from the employer.

### What should a letter declining an offer include?

- A statement of appreciation for the offer
- A reason for declining the offer
- A statement, if appropriate, that leaves the door open for some possible future contact

### What format should I use for constructing the letter?

Use proper business format and be brief when constructing an acceptance or decline letter.

## Acceptance Letter

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Use this letter to accept a job offer. Your letter should confirm the terms of your employment (salary, starting date, hours, benefits etc.). Usually employers will telephone first and discuss the terms of employment. Accepting the offer constitutes a moral (not legal) contract between you and the employer.

Name  
Title  
Company  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Ms. Bowman:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your offer to become an IT Project Manager with IBM. As stated in your offer letter that I received on October 11th, my starting salary will be \$67,525, with an added allowance of \$2,500 for moving expenses to be mailed upon receipt of my acceptance letter. I will report to work on June 1, 20xx in Cooperstown, NY.

I am extremely pleased to be given the opportunity to work for IBM. It will be enjoyable to utilize my analytical skills as well as my electrical engineering background to contribute in professional and measureable ways. I look forward to contributing to the IT Team.

Thank you for your consideration in working with me during the recruiting process. My positive experience is one of the major factors in my decision to accept your offer. I look forward to being on your team.

Sincerely,

Mike Howell

# Letter Declining a Job Offer

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Dear Mr. Gerald:

Thank you for your kind offer to become a Project Manager with Celanese. As I mentioned over the telephone, I regret that I have to decline the offer. It was a very difficult decision, but I have decided to take a position with another organization.

I am very impressed with Celanese and the company's commitment to customer service. You and all of the individuals with whom I met during my visit treated me with great consideration and respect. I truly am honored to have been selected for a position. As I continue in my career, I hope to keep the lines of communication open with your company.

Thank you again for your offer, and I hope to have the opportunity to see you in the future.

Sincerely,

Jim Sanders

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Name

Title

Company

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Thank you for your offer to become a Summer Intern with Company X. As I mentioned over the phone, I regret that I have to decline the offer. For the summer, I have chosen to take a position with another company closer to my home in Alexandria, VA.

I appreciated your interest in me, and I enjoyed meeting you and the rest of the Company X team. As I continue in my job search this coming fall for a permanent position, I hope to remain in contact with you and your company.

Thank you again for your time and interest, and I hope to have the opportunity to see you in the future.

Sincerely,

*Quintessential Careers, Commerce Career Services, About.com, Alison Doyle*