

Every letter you put into the mail will be viewed as a sample of your writing skills, so give careful thought to your correspondence. A standard business letter format, shown in the cover letter outline on the reverse page, is appropriate for all job search and internship communication. Remember to keep copies of your correspondence.

### COVER LETTER

Be sure to include a letter of application, or "cover" letter with every résumé you send to a prospective employer or internship sponsor. The content and style of these few paragraphs will determine the reader's initial impression of you. An interesting and persuasive letter can insure that your résumé will receive consideration. Your objective is to communicate that you have the qualifications to make a positive contribution to the organization, and to do so in such a way that you stand out from other applicants.

### REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Communicate clearly that your intention is to meet with the individual to seek information, not a job. Identify yourself briefly and indicate why you are contacting this particular person. There is no need to elaborate upon your background and attributes; give only enough information to convey your interest in the career field or organization. Mention the dates that you will be in the area, and indicate that you will follow up with a telephone call within a specified period of time to discuss the possibility of a meeting.

### THANK YOU LETTER

Remember to send a thank you note to all those with whom you have met, whether for an informational interview or a job interview. If you are interviewed by several individuals at the same organization, be sure you personalize each letter. You may, for example, wish to make reference to some topic you discussed. Take advantage of the opportunity to reiterate your interest, or to offer supplemental information you did not have an opportunity to share. In addition to expressing appreciation for the interviewer's time, you have a final chance to make a positive impression.

### ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Just as it is critical that you receive a written confirmation of any job offer extended to you over the telephone, it is important that you confirm your acceptance in writing. This could be valuable should any of the terms of your offer be questioned.

### DECLINING AN OFFER

A short letter expressing your appreciation for the offer and the organization's interest in you may help you later on. There is always a chance that you may wish to work for this organization in the future.

### FOLLOWING UP A REJECTION

Acknowledging a rejection with a letter of thanks to the individual with whom you had most contact in the interview process may help keep the lines of communication open, in case you wish to approach the organization at another time.



## OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

*Always direct your letter to a specific person. (You may need to make a phone call to identify the appropriate individual.)*

*Introduce yourself. Clarify the purpose of your letter.*

*In one or two paragraphs, highlight your qualifications for this position or organization. Be specific, but concise.*

*Identify the next step you will take, ideally to set up an interview. Thank the addressee for his or her time and consideration.*

*Be sure to sign your letter!*

*Indicate if résumé or other material is enclosed.*

Date of Letter

Name of Employer  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Full Address

Salutation:

Opening Paragraph: State why you are writing. Identify the position or type of work for which you are applying, explaining how you heard of the opening, or why you selected this organization for inquiry. Mention that you are currently enrolled at Bowdoin College, including your major(s), if appropriate.

Middle Paragraph(s): Sell yourself! Begin with a strong topic sentence linking your experience/skills to the position for which you are applying. Convince the employer that you have an understanding of the career field and that your background and abilities will make you an asset to the organization. Elaborate upon pertinent work experience or relevant education; do not reiterate your entire résumé. Emphasize skills and abilities that relate to the position you are seeking. You may wish to refer the reader to your résumé.

Closing Paragraph: Convey your eagerness for an interview. Mention that you will call within a specified time in the hope of arranging a meeting. If you already have plans to travel to the area, indicate the dates you will be available. (Should logistics preclude a visit, you may simply indicate that you will call to discuss your interest in the organization. If your budget precludes a phone call, you can close by stating that you look forward to hearing from the employer.)

Sincerely,

Your name typed

enclosure

## FORMAT AND AESTHETICS

- *Keep your letter to one page.*
- *Use good quality 8 1/2" by 11" paper matching that of your résumé and envelope.*
  - *Center letter, approximately, on the page.*
- *Single space text of letter; double space between paragraphs.*
  - *Space down four lines from closing to typed name.*
  - *Proofread VERY carefully!*