

## JOB SEARCH LETTERS

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Writing concise, persuasive letters is an essential part of the job search process.

Whether you write a letter to network with alumni, follow up on your interview, or send thanks to an interviewer, effective communication before, during and after landing a job can set the tone for your employment experience. A letter is often the first tangible evidence an employer has of your qualifications.

The Career Center staff can assist you with any stage of the letter-writing process, from brainstorming to polishing your final draft. Stop by the Career Center to pick up a copy of our Career Guide to Job Search Letters, or to meet in person with a staff member.

### Cover Letters

Cover letters are a specific form of job letter that accompany resumes—and they're perhaps the most important of all the job letters. A cover letter introduces you to an employer, and gives you an opportunity to supplement and expand upon your resume. While the content of a resume is generally quite focused, a cover letter can give the reader a better sense of your personality, and can do an excellent job selling the writer—that's you—to a potential employer.

*A good cover letter will be:*

- Customized to suit the particular employer and position
- Free of grammatical errors or typos
- Well-worded and concise
- Free of slang or other informal usages
- Able to clearly demonstrate that your qualifications match the employer's needs
- Originally worded, not copied verbatim from this booklet or another source
- Highly legible with a clean, simple font 10 to 12 points in size
- Printed on high quality, woven bond resume paper

A cover letter should not repeat the information included in your resume. Instead, it should enhance your resume by emphasizing specific details about your qualifications, goals, experience, and personality. A cover letter, in short, is a marketing piece about you—and so it should entice a potential employer to want to learn more about you and your qualifications by reading your resume.

Before you begin writing your cover letter, research the company by visiting the employer's website and talking to current employees. Use this information to demonstrate your knowledge about the employer, and to establish a clear correlation between your qualifications and the employer's needs. Use specific language that appears in the job posting to demonstrate that you clearly understand the requirements and are prepared to meet them.

- [Outline](#)
- [Internship](#)
- [Job Posting](#)
- [Job-Career Fair](#)

## Networking Letters

Gathering information about your intended career field is critically important. Job seekers benefit enormously from making personal contact with people in their desired field, and getting a clear sense of what a job in that field is like.

Since the vast majority of job seekers find positions through networking, never underestimate the value of making contacts with and seeking advice from a wide variety of people. Frequently, friends and family members are excellent sources of this kind of information. Valpo alumni are also a great resource—and our alumni are typically very generous when sharing their time and expertise for this purpose.

Write networking letters to inquire about the nature of a particular job, types of entry-level positions, and required qualifications. You can also use networking letters to ask for advice about what you can be doing while you're still in school to best prepare yourself for internships and full-time employment.

- [Networking Letter Sample](#)

## Thank You Letters

Thank you letters are an important part of the job search process, yet many job seekers don't send them. All employers appreciate such courtesies, however, and the most successful job candidates often distinguish themselves from their competitors by attending to such important details.

*Your thank you letter should be:*

- Sent within 24 hours of the interview or appointment
- At least a few paragraphs in length, but no longer than one page
- Addressed to each person who participated in the interview
- Addressed correctly, with accurate spelling and job title(s)

Typically, a handwritten note on simple stationery is a good choice for a thank-you letter. If your handwriting is difficult to read, type a letter instead. You could send an personalized e-mail, which may be the most expedient. .

- [Sample--Thank You Letter](#)

## Follow-up Letters

When you interview for a job, always request a time-frame for the hiring decision.

If you know the designated date, and a week or so passes beyond this date, it's completely appropriate to send a reminder e-mail or letter to the employer or hiring representative. If two week pass after you've written this letter and you still haven't heard from the employer, contact the Career Center for additional suggestions.

- [Sample--Follow-Up Letter](#)

## Letters to Accept or Decline Job Offers

Once you've received an offer of employment, you'll need to carefully evaluate the offer, and then make the decision to accept or decline. If you accept an offer, communicate your enthusiasm and enumerate the steps you'll take before you begin work. Be sure to specify and confirm details such as your position, salary and starting date.

If you choose to decline a job offer, indicate that you've considered the offer, but have decided to decline. If possible, give your reason or reasons for rejecting the offer. Be gracious, and express your sincere appreciation for the opportunity and the employer's interest in you.

- [Sample--Accept or Decline Job Offer](#)

#### Rejection Follow-Up Letters

Frequently, an employer will appreciate your skills but hire another candidate. You might not want to write off the employer altogether, however, because future positions may become available. If, after the interview, you think you would be interested in working for the employer in a different position—or even in the same position if it becomes available again—send a letter to politely indicate your continued interest in the organization, and request that the employer keep you in mind for future openings.

- [Sample--Rejection Follow-Up Letter](#)

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