

Cover Letters & Other Professional Correspondence



YOUR GOALS

- **Engage the Search Committee**

- Try to stand out from the crowd!

- **Communicate Your Fit**

- Explain how your values and goals align with the prospective organization
- The goal is NOT to repeat your resume, but to expand and elaborate on experiences and make it clear how this fits the requirements of the position
- Give a more well rounded vision of you as a candidate (to supplement the objective/formal resume)

- **Communicate Your Vision**

- You are hired based on your “potential”
 - Potential as an employee
 - Perhaps equally important – potential to be a great colleague



STRUCTURE OF THE COVER LETTER

- **Basic Business Letter Format** – match the resume font and style
 - **Includes:**
 - Your name and address (can use heading from Resume)
 - Date
 - Name of addressee, company name, address
 - Salutation: address it to a specific person whenever possible!
 - Sending your employment documents to a specific person increases the chances that they will be seriously reviewed by the company
 - If a name is not listed, call the company to inquire
 - In cases where a name is not available, use “Dear Hiring Professionals,” “Dear Selection Committee” or “Dear Hiring Manager”



STRUCTURE OF THE COVER LETTER

- **Length**
 - Never more than 1 page
 - Suggested: no more than 4-5 paragraphs
- **Formatting**
 - Single Spaced with an space between each paragraph
 - 3-4 spaces between your closing (e.g. “Sincerely” or “Best Regards”) and your typed name
 - **Don’t indent** your paragraphs
 - Use standard margins
 - If submitting a paper copy, sign your name in ink

To Match Resume

DAVIS GUNROCK

dgunrock@gmail.com 301 Shields Ave, Davis, CA 95616 (530) XXX-XXXX

November 10, 2013

Bob Marley
Human Resources Department
National Public Radio
123 Government St.
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Marley,

I am very interested in the position posted on your website for the Public and Medial Relations Specialist. I am a recent graduate of the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. More information.

Body paragraph. Body paragraph. Body paragraph. Body paragraph. Body paragraph.
Body paragraph. Body paragraph. Body paragraph. Body paragraph.

Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph.

Sincerely,

Davis Gunrock

Standard Business Format

Davis Gunrock
301 Shields Ave,
Davis, CA 95616
(530) XXX-XXXX
dgunrock@gmail.com

November 10, 2013

Bob Marley
Human Resources Department
National Public Radio
123 Government St.
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Marley,

I am very interested in the position posted on your website for the Public and Medial Relations Specialist. I am a recent graduate of the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications.

Body paragraph. Body paragraph.

Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph.

Sincerely,

Davis Gunrock

FIRST PARAGRAPH

- **Salutation**

- Use Dr. or Mr. or Ms. as appropriate to the person.
- Do not use “Mrs.” unless you are certain the person is married
- If you are unsure of the gender of the individual, use their full name

- **Introductory Paragraph**

- Briefly state:
 - Position you’re applying for
 - How you found out about the position
 - Who you are (UC Davis student with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry)
 - Where you are in your career (Recent graduate from UCD, Senior, graduating in June etc.)
 - What makes you interested in the position or company (brief)
 - Make yourself stand out from the multitude of other cover letters; show you took the time to research the company; communicate your enthusiasm for the job
 - Name of person who referred you (if applicable)



EXAMPLE

Dear Mr. Marley,

I am very interested in the position posted on your website for the Public Media Relations Specialist. I am a recent graduate of the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. The research I conducted during my time at UC Davis sparked my interest in the way that media is delivered through marketing and advertising. National Public Radio's mission to create a more informed public resonates with me deeply and compliments my passion for supporting high quality journalistic programming. I am confident that my background and qualifications would make me an excellent addition to the Public Relations Department Team.



icc.ucdavis.edu



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UC DAVIS
INTERNSHIP AND
CAREER CENTER

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

What comes next?

This will depend on:

- The type of position
- The type of company or organization
- Your professional background and philosophy

The goal will always be to:

- Match your leading qualifications with their stated needs.
- Demonstrate that you fit in with the organization.
- Articulate how you can *add value* to their organization; how you can contribute to their success
- Do **NOT** talk about what this job will do for you!



BODY PARAGRAPH(S) CONT'D

- Use the **job description** and **information derived from researching the company** as a guide for choosing what you will focus on in your letter
 - Mission Statement and Organizational Values can be helpful in framing the tone of the letter
- Pick a few projects, professional or educational experiences, skills, or personal qualities that support the most important qualifications the company is looking for
 - Use short descriptions and examples if possible to illustrate these
 - Be sure to connect it to the company's needs and explain HOW this particular background experience or quality will add value to the company
- Use an upbeat, professional tone in your writing
- Avoid starting most sentences with "I"



EXAMPLE

This summer while studying abroad, I was able to view American culture from a different perspective and observe media models in other countries. This has increased my interest in news delivery and how it helps to inform citizens. As a senior, I was elected to the position of Senator for the Associated Students of UC Davis, and rose to the challenge of representing the study body while shaping university-wide policy. In this role, I was responsible for creating marketing campaigns to further pertinent student causes and encourage participation in remonstrating against student fee increases. Finally, as a media relations intern at the local KDVS community radio station, I was responsible for developing and implementing a social media marketing strategy. Through these experiences I learned the value of effective communication through all forms of media.



BODY PARAGRAPH: Addressing an issue

There may be circumstances where you will want to explain a shortcoming in your cover letter.

- This can include: a gap in employment, lack of a required qualification or skill, an unrelated major, etc.
- You may address this in your cover letter in a professional and positive way.
- If you are lacking a qualification, you would want to provide a reason this will not be an issue if you are hired
 - **Example:** “Although I have not used Microsoft Office Access, I have a background of using specialized database systems and I am confident I can adapt to this software very quickly.”



THE FINAL PARAGRAPH

- Final statement about your interest and fit for this position
- What materials you've enclosed
- Willingness to provide additional materials
- Proactive statement: "I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you."
- The business details: availability, best way to contact employer, etc.
- Intentions for follow up (optional)



EXAMPLE

I am confident that my experiences, skills and strong interests in the goals of NPR have prepared me to be a strong candidate for the Public and Media Relations Specialist position. I have attached my resume and a list of references for your review. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you. I will contact you before June 30th to discuss my application. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Davis Gunrock

Davis Gunrock

COVER LETTER TIPS

Remember: A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression

- Always proofread your cover letter carefully
 - DO NOT rely on spell check! (vegetarian vs. veterinarian)
- Have your letter reviewed by ICC staff and/or friends and colleagues
- When applying online, save the letter as a PDF to maintain formatting
- Attach both cover letter & resume in PDF
 - “I have attached a cover letter & resume for your review”



THANK YOU LETTER

- After an interview it is critical that you **send a thank you letter** to each person who interviewed you
 - It can be the difference between getting the job and not
- Always get a business card from each person in the interview so you know who to address the letter to, and their contact information
- Send the letter **24 to 48 hours** after the interview
- Send a unique letter to each interview panel member
- These are brief reminders or a place to add new information
- These are NOT a repeat of your cover letter, resume or interview!



THANK YOU LETTER FORMAT

- The following formats are acceptable:
 - Hard-copy business letter sent via postal mail
 - Email (formal)
 - Hand-written note
- How to choose:
 - Let the culture of the organization and your relationship with the interviewers be your guide
- 2-3 brief paragraphs
- 10-12 point font
- Business format (when applicable)



THANK YOU LETTER CONTENT

- Reiterate your skills, talents, previous experiences, and excitement about the position
- Clarify any information that you think might have been misunderstood during the interview, and include any forgotten points:
 - *Upon further reflection, when discussing my approach to work groups, a more accurate description of my style would be collaborative rather than directive, as I ensure that every member of the team is evenly represented in the project.*
- Don't lose the opportunity to promote yourself one last time. Avoid generic thank you messages; try to incorporate specifics about the interview, your qualifications and your (positive) impression of the company or staff



EXAMPLE: THANK YOU LETTER

Dear Mr. Marley,

It was very enjoyable to speak with you about the assistant public relations specialist position at National Public Radio. The job, as you presented it, seems to be a very good match for my skills and interests. The creative approach to public relations that you described confirmed my desire to work with you.

In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong communication skills, assertiveness and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with clients and within the department. My artistic background will help me to work in NPR's creative environment and provide me with an understanding of the cultural aspects of our work.

I understand your need for administrative support. My detail orientation and organizational skills will help to free you to deal with larger issues. I neglected to mention during my interview that I had worked for two summers as a temporary office worker. This experience helped me to develop my clerical skills.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you soon. Please let me know if I can provide any additional materials that may assist in the decision process.

FOLLOW-UP

- Occasionally, you will apply or interview for a job and you won't hear anything from the employer
 - **After an interview:** wait a week after the date they stated they would have a decision
 - If they did not give you a timeline for when they would notify you, wait 1-2 weeks after you interview to follow up by email
 - **After submitting an application:** wait about 1.5-2 weeks and send an unobtrusive, polite email:
 - "I submitted my application for your __ position last week, and I just wanted to make sure my materials were received. I also want to reiterate my interest in the position; I think it might be a great match, and I'd love to talk with you about it when you're ready to begin scheduling interviews."



EXAMPLE: FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Quality Control Laboratory Assistant Position — ↗ ✕

dward@egplab.com

Quality Control Laboratory Assistant Position

Dear Mr. Arp,

Thank you again for the time you spent with me on Friday, January 3rd to discuss the Quality Control Laboratory Assistant Position. Since our interview, I have remained very excited about this excellent opportunity. I know that my background as a Biotechnology major and my past experience as a Student Advisor in the Community Resource Center will make me an incredible asset to EGP Laboratories.

I wanted follow up to determine if there are any updates regarding the status of the position. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information to assist in the process.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Patricia M. Raidt
pmraidt@ucdavis.edu
(530) XXX-XXXX

THANK YOU!

UC Davis Internship and Career Center

Summer:

Open 10am-4pm

Advising available by appointment

South Hall 2nd floor

Appointments with Career Advisers available:

Call (530) 752-2855

Visit icc.ucdavis.edu

PowerPoint: <http://icc.ucdavis.edu/hire-me-academy.htm>

References: Some content adapted from Purdue Online Writing Lab.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/723/03/>