

# Cover Letters & Professional Correspondence E-GUIDE

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## OVERVIEW

### What is a Cover Letter?

A “cover letter” (also known as a “letter of intent”, “letter of introduction”, or “letter of application”) is a document that accompanies a resume or application for a position. Cover letters set out to answer two major questions for employers: 1) are you qualified for the position I have to offer and 2) are you a good fit for this organization. To answer these questions, the cover letter must present a brief overview of a candidate’s qualifications as they directly relate to the qualifications sought by the employing organization in addition to helping the employer see how the candidate’s passions, values, and/or career goals align with the mission, values, and or/projects of the organization. To do this, just like with resumes, **every cover letter must be tailored to each specific position for which you apply**. Cover letters fill in the essential elements employers want to know that they may not get from a resume alone. The goal of an effective application submission (that is, the total package of resume, cover letter, and any other requested materials) is to obtain an invitation to interview.

### Why is a Cover Letter so Important?

Employers receive hundreds of resumes, especially when they advertise a highly desirable position. Employers often require cover letters to accompany resumes to help them get a better picture of a candidate as a whole. Submitting a cover letter when it is not required may also help you get the attention of a recruiter who is sifting through hundreds of resumes. Cover letters give you the opportunity to target your experience and skills to the specific position you are applying for and should, therefore, be unique to each position for which you apply. Your cover letter must call attention to the skills, talents, and experience the employer is looking for while helping the employer see that you care about and are a good fit for their company. The employer needs to know that you want THIS job at THIS company, not just any job at any company.

Another reason cover letters are important is that a cover letter can explain things that a resume cannot. For example, if large gaps in employment history are present or if a candidate is re-entering the job market/changing the focus of his/her career, a cover letter can explain these circumstances in a positive way.

Finally, it is important to think of a cover letter as a sample of your writing and a little window into your personality. One of the most valuable skill sets to employers in any industry today is written and verbal communication; your cover letter allows an employer to see your level of proficiency in this skill first hand. **PROOFREAD** your cover letter and have it checked for spelling/grammatical errors by at least one other person. Do not rely on spellcheck!

### Cover Letter Golden Rules

It is wise to send a cover letter with any application, even if the materials required for application do not require it. Cover letters are valuable marketing tools that can be the difference between getting the interview and being passed over. Here are some general rules for cover letter construction:

- Cover letters should never be (or even appear to be) generic or mass produced.
- Cover letters should generally NOT exceed one page. Keep it clear, concise and to the point.
- Get feedback and proofread your letter. The cover letter is a sample of your writing and a representation of your level of professionalism – make sure you have at least a few other relevant people (e.g., Career Coach, professor, mentor, etc.) read through it to check for grammatical errors and give recommendations on how to make it stronger and more representative of you.
- Clarify acronyms and avoid colloquialisms, slang, and complicated jargon.

## CONTENT, TYPE, & FORMATTING

### Cover Letter Types

There are two basic types of cover letters, each of which have a specific purpose and relevance:

- **Application Letter:** Used to apply for an open position within an organization; includes pertinent details about your qualifications and requests an interview.

- **Prospecting Letter/Letter of Inquiry:** Used to contact an employer where no known opening exists to express an interest in the organization and request an opportunity to interview for an appropriate position.

### Cover Letter Content & Formatting

Immediately below is a guide for identifying and organizing the content you should include in all cover letters. Later you will see a specific example of each of the different types of cover letters applied to a specific position.

### General Cover Letter Contents & Format Guide

<p>Your Address City, State, Zip</p> <p>Date (a.g., March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)</p> <p>Name of Inside Addressee** Role/Title of Above Addressee** Organization Name Address City, State, Zip</p> <p><b>Salutation</b> Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr. _____:</p> <p><b>First Paragraph (the introductory paragraph)</b> The main purpose of the first paragraph is to introduce yourself and tell why you are writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You want to grab the employer's attention.</li> <li>• Be specific, including the position for which you are applying and how you learned about it. If you have been referred by someone, mention that person's name here.</li> <li>• You can also introduce your relevant qualifications here to grab the employer's attention, but save the detailed information for the next paragraphs.</li> <li>• Indicate why you are interested in the position and/or why this organization.</li> <li>• Use your community. If someone has referred you to the organization (a current employee, friend, or family member), include his or her name in the first sentence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Second/Third Paragraph (the body paragraphs)</b> The purpose of the body paragraphs is to tell the reader why they should care that you are applying—defend your case for applications!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the employer why you are interested in the position; Show that you've done your research on the company by referencing the specific aspects of their company that impress you. It is important to show candidate to company match.</li> <li>• Describe your qualifications for the type of position you seek using specific examples from academic, work, volunteer, and/or co-curricular experiences.</li> <li>• Connect your accomplishments, skills, and knowledge directly to the type of position, organization, and/or field (use the position description/job announcement as a guide!).</li> <li>• Emphasize a piece of the mission, values, and or goals of the company and how they relate to your values and career goals – show them that you genuinely care about and have seriously thought about being a part of their company!</li> <li>• Avoid repeating facts outlined on your resume by focusing on key concepts.</li> <li>• Not all of your accomplishments are relevant, so only present information about you that is relevant to the reader's decision-making regarding your application.</li> </ul> <p><b>Final Paragraph (the closing paragraph)</b> The purpose of this paragraph is to wrap up the letter and talk about next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use this section to reinforce your interest and summarize your most relevant qualifications</li> <li>• Thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.</li> <li>• Provide information about your availability for a follow up meeting or interview</li> </ul> <p><b>Closing</b> Sincerely/Best Regards,</p> <p>Your Signature (Signed in ink, if sent as a hard copy letter)</p> <p>Your Name (Typed)</p>	<p>(**If you do not have the name of a specific inside individual to whom to address the cover letter, call the department or human resources to see if you can find out to whom your letter should be addressed. As a last resort, use "Personnel Manager", "Hiring Manager", or "Recruiting Representative" above in the title line with the company address and then edit the salutation of the letter to Dear "Personnel Manager", "Hiring Manager", "Recruiting Representative" – as relevant)</p>
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## Cover Letter Sample

2807 North Glebe Rd.  
Arlington, VA, 22207

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Devandra Levitt  
Hiring Manger  
Any Company  
555 Any Street  
Anytown, VA, 22222

Dear Ms. Levitt:

My name is Marilyn Mount and I am writing in response to the open personal stylist position posted on Any Company's career website. I am currently studying fashion merchandising at Marymount University and am slated to graduate in May of 2013. I have always admired the quality products and excellent service provided by Any Company, and would very much like to present myself as an applicant for this position.

In reading your description of the personal stylist position, I understand that you are seeking a candidate with excellent customer service and interpersonal skills paired with a keen eye for current fashion trends. I believe that my professional work experiences in retail sales, serving as Vice President of the Marymount University Fashion Club, and life-long passion for fashion and design have given me the skills and competencies necessary to meet your needs. These experiences have also allowed me to develop strong communication, leadership, multi-tasking, and creative design skills. I am familiar with both the creative and business management aspects of the fashion retail arena and have a results-oriented work ethic that I would love to contribute to the success of Any Company.

I am particularly drawn to this position at Any Company not only because of the opportunity to apply what I have learned in my University studies, but also because of what Any Company represents: quality products and quality service for all. The commitment to excellence Any Company demonstrates through its selective buying and gracious interpersonal interactions with customers has always impressed me and I aspire to work for a company that values the human element of business. I strongly believe that this position at Any Company would allow me to further my career goals while serving an organization with principles that mirror my own.

I would appreciate an opportunity to speak with you further regarding my qualifications and how I might contribute to the Any Company team. I can be reached by phone at (555) 555-5555 or via email at Marilyn\_Mount@marymount.edu. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Regards,



Marilyn Mount

## SENDING PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

While some employers might ask candidates to send their professional documents and/or application materials by mail to a specific office address, the vast majority of employers will typically ask applicants to submit their materials either through an online job application system or via email in the form of attachments.

### Uploading Professional Documents via Website/Online Program

- If an employer requests that you upload your application materials through an online software program or through a secure website, make sure to include your full name and a clear indication of the document's contents in the title of the document before you upload it (e.g. *Mary Marymount Cover Letter* OR *Bernie McDog Finance Resume*) so that it is easy for an employer to identify.
- Pay attention to the guidelines in terms of which format the employer is requesting that you save your document – should it be in Microsoft Word 2010 or above? As a PDF? If it is unclear which format you should upload it as, call the organization's main desk or human resource office to clarify.
- Do not be careless! If you are applying to many jobs at once, do not forget to TRIPLE check that your cover letter is addressed to the correct employer and that it is sufficiently tailored to the particular position for which you are applying. Recruiters can recognize when an applicant is sending out a generic email to all employers!

### Emailing Professional Documents with a Cover Letter

When emailing your resume and/or other application materials, you can either use the body of the email for your cover letter, attach a cover letter as a PDF or Word document, or both.

- If attaching a cover letter, include a short email with your full length cover letter attached, following the formatting guidelines.
- If using the body of the email for your cover letter, you can delete the mailing and return addresses, and the date. Also, after your closure, skip one line and type your name instead of skipping four lines for a signature.
- Include your resume as an attachment. You can also cut and paste your resume into the body of your email, which will allow the employer to view your resume even if they cannot open your attachment. When including your resume in the body of the email, left justify everything, replace bullets with dashes, and start each piece of information on a new line as document formatting is often disrupted when copied and pasted into the body of an email.
- Follow appropriate email etiquette (see below).

## EMAIL ETIQUETTE

### What NOT to do:

To: ebanks@xcoadvertising.com  
 From: Ilovebeerandparties@yahoo.com  
 Subject: My DREAM job!  
 Cc: mymom@hotmail.com  
 Bcc:  
 Attached: resume.doc; cover letter.doc; transcript.doc; future-goals.doc; 25-page essay about my life.doc; family-photos.jpg; mydog.jpg;

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I AM WRITING TO APPLY FOR THE ADVERTISING JOB. THANX!?! TTYL.

### What TO do!

Because your correspondence says a lot about you, you should be aware of basic email etiquette:

- When possible, be brief without leaving out necessary details.
- Remember to include a professional salutation and greeting. In professional correspondence, it is proper etiquette to address the recipient formally (i.e. Dear Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.) and include a first sentence of greeting (e.g., starting an email with something like, "Greetings, I hope this letter finds you well..."). Address person with Mr., Ms., and Dr. when in doubt. If you are replying to a message where the person has used only his/her first name, then it is okay to address the message using their name. In the example above, begin your message with "Dear Mr. Hodge:"
- Use proper grammar and spelling.

- NEVER use shorthand (plz, thanx...) or emoticons.
- Always use please and thank you!
- Write in a positive tone – communicate in a respectful, friendly, and approachable manner. Avoid negativity!
- Do not use all uppercase letters as it appears as though you are SCREAMING.
- Pay attention to your email address! What does it say about you? It should be professional. Avoid addresses like [beerman@yahoo.com](mailto:beerman@yahoo.com) or [cupcakehottie@gmail.com](mailto:cupcakehottie@gmail.com).
- Limit email attachments.
- Be careful with your subject line. Be aware of word choices, as some filters will consider your message to be 'spam' and possibly will not send the message.
- If you include a signature line with your emails, be sure that it is professional. Avoid sending quotations. Remove any automatic signatures by Yahoo, AOL, etc.
- Reply with history. Including the history of the email exchanges is a courtesy to the employer. Email is the primary form of communication in most businesses today and some people receive hundreds of emails a day. Do not expect the employer to remember who you are or your previous email exchanges. Include the history as a helpful reminder.

## SAMPLE APPLICATION EMAILS

### Sample Email Template (if including cover letter in body of email)

To: [bsmith@firmx.com](mailto:bsmith@firmx.com)  
 From: [Mary\\_Marymount@gmail.com](mailto:Mary_Marymount@gmail.com)  
 Subject: Mary Marymount – Grant Writing Intern Application  
 Attached: Mary Marymount resume.doc; Marymount Professional References.doc

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Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing to apply for the Grant Writing Intern position for the Fall of 2015 as posted on the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Washington, DC Website. I am currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English at Marymount University and believe that my education, skills and experiences as well as my interest in your organization make me a highly qualified candidate for the internship. I am considering nonprofit development as a career and am seeking an internship opportunity that will allow me to learn more about nonprofit operations as well as develop my writing ability. The Mission of BBBS is in line with my values of community service and a commitment to the development of youth. I have attached my resume for your consideration.

As a rising senior at Marymount, I have gained a broad range of on-campus and student organization experience. As an Editorial Staff Member for The Banner, Marymount's student-run campus newspaper, and a Staff Writing for BlueINK, Marymount's literary journal, I have developed excellent researching, writing, and editing skills. As the Vice President of the Student Government Association, I have overseen the grant-giving process for student engagements and activities. This experience has given me exposure to the grants process from the grant-givers perspective. In addition, with a wide range of activity, volunteer, and work commitments, I have developed solid time-management and organizational skills to remain a successful student. I hope to apply these experience and skills to working with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Washington, DC as a Grant Writing Intern.

Again, I am very interested in learning more about your organization and the world of non-profits. I would welcome the opportunity to interview for this position and am available throughout the summer to meet with you. My fall schedule will allow me to work a flexible schedule for up to 10 hours per week starting the first week of September. I will contact you in a few days in hopes of scheduling an interview to talk further. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,  
 (Skip one line and type your name. No need to skip four lines for a signature since this is an e-mail.)

Mary Marymount

## Strong Sample Application Email (if attaching a cover letter):

To: bsmith@firmx.com  
From: Tina\_Thompson@gmail.com  
Subject: Tina Thompson - Application for Account Executive  
Attached: Tina Thompson [resume.doc](#) ; Tina Thompson cover letter.doc

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Dear Mr. Smith:

Greetings, and I hope this email finds you well. I am writing today to express my interest in the Account Executive position with Firm X and am attaching my cover letter and resume for your review. Please let me know if you have any questions concerning these documents. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,  
Tina Thompson

## PROFESSIONAL FOLLOW UP PRACTICES

### Thank You Letters

It is important to **express gratitude** after sending professional correspondence (even if it is a brief “thank you for your time” included in the body of an email) or interaction with another professional, **especially after an interview with a potential employer**. Whether you have a quick informational interview with a current professional over the phone, get an interesting article or job posting passed along from a colleague, receive a reference from a professor, or have a great conversation with a new contact at a networking event – send a thank you! Taking the time to thank someone, even after the smallest of favors, is one of the single best things you can do to establish and maintain a positive professional reputation. Furthermore, given the fast-paced world we live in, expressing gratitude will help you stand out amongst a crowd as many professionals overlook this important piece of professional etiquette as non-essential – their loss!

### GENERAL THANK YOU CORRESPONDENCE ETIQUETTE:

While thank you letters can be hard-copy (typed and printed or handwritten) or emailed, certain forms of thank you correspondence are appropriate for different circumstances. In other words, think of correspondence as a spectrum. If, for instance, you have a colleague send you a valuable article about an industry topic over email – send a thank you email. If you have a 20 minute informational interview over the phone or in person at a local coffee shop, choose your correspondence method based on your personal style and the other individual’s correspondence preference (either a thoughtful email or a hand-written note would be considered appropriate in this case). If you complete a formal on-site interview with an employer, a “thank you” email followed by a handwritten letter is the most appropriate and professional way to follow-up to ensure your thank you is received by the employer. Just remember that if you are sending two thank you correspondences, they should differ slightly so as not to appear redundant.

### Thank You EMAIL Etiquette:

The thank you email should be sent within 24 to 48 hours after every interview for any kind of job, internship, or graduate school. If you interviewed with multiple people, send individual emails to each person who interviewed you at their office email address (make sure you have the right email address by requesting a business card from each interviewer). Modify each email so that no two interviewers receive the same note. This can easily be done by highlighting something specific about the interviewer’s role or contribution to the interview. In the email, express appreciation for the interviewer’s time and consideration of you as a candidate. As a general rule, the thank you email is shorter than the handwritten note.

In the body of the email, continue to address the employer formally (e.g., Ms. Wyatt) unless you are invited to use their first name. If an employer signs an email with a first name only, it is an invitation by the employer to address them by their first name. Signing an email with both first and last names indicates that you should continue to address the person formally. Err on the side of formality as it demonstrates respect and good manners. Refer to aspects of the interview that further confirmed your interest in the job and/or company or that increased your confidence that you are

a good fit for the position. Reiterate your interest in the position; employers will not assume that you are excited about the opportunity. It is your responsibility to express your interest in both the position and the company.

Finally, **PROOFREAD!!** Proofreading is just as important in email as it is in other correspondence. Be sure to check spelling, grammar, typos, etc. Also, keep a copy in your outgoing mailbox or cc: yourself so you have a copy of each message you've sent.

### SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL:

To: jwilson@companyname.com  
From: mmarymount@marymount.edu

Subject: Thank You – Assistant Account Executive Position

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Dear Mr. Wilson:

It was very enjoyable to speak with you today about the assistant account executive position at the Smith Agency. After hearing more about the position, I believe my skills and qualifications are a strong match for your needs and requirements. My experience today, in addition to the creative approach to account management you described, has strengthened my desire to work with you and the staff at Smith Agency.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me and would like to reiterate my interest in working for Smith Agency. I look forward to hearing from you regarding this position.

Sincerely,

Mary Marymount

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Mary Marymount  
mmmarymount@marymount.edu  
2807 North Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22207  
703-123-4567

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/mary-marymount/>

### Thank You LETTER Etiquette:

The thank you letter should be sent within 48 hours after every interview – remember that the mail will be post-marked (i.e., the employer will see the date it was sent). Remember that an employer may not receive a letter sent via post for up to a week (longer if further away or international). Here are some tips for thank you letter writing:

- If hand-written, invest in some neutrally-colored thank you card stationary (something with a simple thank you on the front is fine) and write with a black or blue pen.
- If typing, use a high-quality paper, such as resume paper to print your letter – do **not** forget to sign in black or blue ink.
- Avoid using postage with politically-charged artwork or messages on it.
- Be sure to re-read the thank you email that you sent to the interviewer so as not to repeat any phrases from the email correspondence word-for-word. The whole point of sending a letter in addition to an email is to make a more professional and personal impression on the employer – take the time to do so by going in to more depth!
- As with the email, express appreciation for the interviewer's time and consideration and do **not** forget to send individual letters to the office address of each interviewer if multiple individuals were involved.
- Refer to your interview notes and mention specific aspects of your discussion that further clarified your interest in the position/company and made you confident as the best fit for the position
- Reiterate your interest in the position by specifically highlighting what you hope to gain from the position and what you have to offer.

- Continue to address the employer formally, unless they have specified otherwise in other correspondence.
- **PROOFREAD!!** Proofreading is just as important in email as it is in other correspondence. Be sure to check spelling, grammar, etc.

### SAMPLE HARD COPY THANK YOU LETTER:

Mary Marymount  
2807 North Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22207

November 15, 2014

Joan Killroy  
Area Operations Manager  
ABC Staffing Service  
1210 Delaware Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20000

Dear Ms. Killroy:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Monday. I am very excited about being considered for the Personnel Supervisor's position and the opportunity to work with ABC Staffing Services. After our discussion, I am even more confident that this position would provide a wonderful chance for me to personally grow in my own career, and I would consider it a privilege to work for your organization. It would be an honor to be selected to actively contribute ABC Staffing Services future success.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest working for ABC Staffing Services were strengthened as a result of the interview. I feel that my extensive background in management and customer service will enable me to enter the position as a skilled and knowledgeable Personnel Supervisor. I am confident that my ability to organize under pressure, maintain a calm approach, and my commitment to success will be an asset to the office and staff. In addition, my strong analytical skills would benefit the new direction the company is taking.

I would like to reiterate my enthusiasm for the position, as it is just the sort of opportunity I have been looking for. I look forward to hearing from you once the final decisions are made regarding this position. Please feel free to call me at the telephone number listed above if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and for your interest.

Sincerely,

*Mary Marymount (Signed)*  
Mary Marymount (Typed)

### JOB OFFER CORRESPONDENCE

To make sure you correspond in the most professional, ethical, and responsible way following a job offer, it is important to consider the following scenarios and guidelines:

- **If you get a VERBAL offer**, let the organization know that you are very excited and that you are looking forward to receiving the offer in writing with specifics. This will give you time to absorb the initial excitement of receiving an offer while evaluating the offer details.
  - If you are in the process of interviewing at other organizations, you may want to contact them to let them know that you have received an offer and determine where they are in the recruiting process.
  - Once you know all your job options and your offer deadlines, you can decide whether you are ready to accept an offer or try to negotiate.
- **If/Once you get a WRITTEN job offer**, it is professionally responsible and courteous to acknowledge the correspondence, even if you are not ready to accept or decline it. After you closely read through the details of the offer as specified in the offer letter, you should respond either verbally or in writing – a decision you must

make based on the pattern and mode of communication you have had with the employer, and/or any specific instructions they have given.

### **Acknowledging the Job Offer**

*In addition to keeping in mind the reminders below, we encourage you to consult with a Career Coach to get professional assistance on handling offers or making a decision.*

- First and foremost, thank the employer for the opportunity presented.
- If you understand the terms of the offer, indicate that. If you do not, ask for clarification.
- If you are considering various opportunities, indicate that you do not yet have all the information you need to make your decision and ask for a deadline as to when you need to get back to the employer with your answer (most reputable organizations will want you to make a well-informed decision and they are aware job seekers are looking at multiple options.)
- If you are waiting to hear back on another opportunity that you are more interested in, but have to give an answer by the end of the week, tactfully and diplomatically ask the employer for a deadline extension. Do not wait until the last minute to ask.
- If you are considering multiple positions at once, remember to treat everyone with respect; maintaining good relationships with organizations and individuals (who may change organizations) will serve your long-term career success.

### **SAMPLE LETTER: ACKNOWLEDGING A JOB OFFER, neither Accepting nor Declining:**

*\*\*If the following example was sent in email form, your address and contact information would appear below your name at the end; no date necessary since email creates a date/time record.*

Mary Marymount  
2807 N. Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22207

February 1, 2017

Mr. Bob Holton  
National Harbor Marriott  
8899 Jefferson Street  
Prince Georges, MD 27864

Dear Mr. Holton:

The purpose of this response is to acknowledge your letter offering me the catering and sales representative position with the National Harbor Marriott. Thank you very much for offering me this exciting opportunity. I understand the terms of the offer, and will be able to give you my response by your requested deadline of February 16, 2017. I appreciate your allowing me ample time to consider your offer so as to be sure my decision will be in the best interests of both my career goals and the needs of your organization.

In the meantime, I will be in contact with you if I have any additional questions, and I will respond promptly should you need to reach me. Again, thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity.

Warm Regards,  
(your signature)

Mary Marymount

## SAMPLE EMAIL: REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF DEADLINE to Accept or Decline Job Offer:

*\*\*If this were sent as hard-copy, your address and contact info would appear at the top. Since this type of request needs to be handled quickly, most likely you would communicate verbally and use e-mail for confirmation in writing.*

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016

Dr. Cynthia Thomas  
Tennessee Nature Conservancy  
2780 Main Street  
Nashville, TN 38756  
cthomas@naturecon.com

Dear Dr. Thomas:

Thank you for your telephone call and letter that I received yesterday offering me the position of wildlife biologist with the Tennessee Nature Conservancy. I am excited about the opportunity this position offers, both in terms of job duties and location, and I very much appreciate your confidence in offering me the job.

You asked that I make a decision by next week, Tuesday, June 8. This is an important decision, and at this time I feel that I do not have all the information I need in order to return my answer by that date. To confirm our phone conversation of this afternoon, I am asking you to consider extending the decision deadline to June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013. I would very much appreciate such an extension, and assure you that I will be able to make a firm decision by that date.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Bernie McDoogal  
B.S. in Biology Candidate, Marymount University  
2807 North Glebe Road  
123-456-7895  
bmcdooal@marymount.edu

### Declining a Job Offer

- If you choose to decline a job offer, do so courteously, in writing, after making a phone call.
- Never say anything negative in writing about the employer, even if you had a negative experience.
- If you had a very negative experience, we encourage you to share this information with the Center for Career Services; please call 703-284-5960 to schedule an appointment so we can direct you to the appropriate staff member based on the situation.
- A decision to decline an offer is usually based on the fact that your personal circumstances have changed or that another offer is a better fit for your interests and goals. It is fine to state this without giving details about why the declined offer is not a fit.
- It is not necessary to state whose offer you accepted, but you may do so if you wish. If you decide to decline the offer and cite a better offer as the reason, be prepared for the employer to ask about the offer and try to negotiate. If you have already accepted the other offer, you should decline the negotiated offer absolutely. If you have not, be prepared to discuss negotiated terms or ask for the negotiated offer in writing.
- Remember that this employer may be a contact for you in the future. Maintain the relationship with professional, courteous interactions.

## SAMPLE LETTER: DECLINING AN OFFER:

8750 City Road  
Sterling, VA 22060  
703-894-6789  
tmcmmary@marymount.edu

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Ms. Tonya Perez  
International Institute of Human Affairs  
567 Third Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. Perez:

Thank you very much for your telephone call and letter offering me the position of Assistant Project Coordinator with the International Institute of Human Affairs. While I believe firmly in the mission of your organization and appreciate the challenging opportunity you offer, I have had another offer which I believe more closely aligns with my current career goals and interests. Therefore, although it was a difficult decision, as I explained when we spoke by phone this morning, I must decline your offer. I do appreciate all the courtesy and hospitality extended to me by your office, and I wish you the best in your endeavors.

In the position I have accepted with Public Policy Institute, I will occasionally be on Capitol Hill to attend hearings and monitor legislation, so I look forward to future opportunities to speak with you in the future.

Best regards,

Tom McMary

## Accepting an Offer and Withdrawing From Job Search

*When accepting a job offer, it is your ethical responsibility to:*

- Keep your word.
- Terminate all other job search efforts, as failing to notify employers that you are withdrawing from the job search is discourteous and potentially dishonest.
- If you have accepted an internship position, inform your academic internship mentor.
- Promptly notify other employers who have communicated to you that you are under consideration that you must withdraw your name from their consideration.

## SAMPLE LETTER: ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER:

1234 Yellow Brick Road  
Alexandria, VA 22206  
571-123-1432  
jbern@marymount.edu

September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Mr. Quincy Adams  
Townson Arboretum  
1678 Plant Road  
Killroy, TX 76201

Dear Mr. Adams:

Thank you for your offer of employment as a horticultural associate at Townson Arboretum. As we discussed on the phone this morning, I am delighted to accept your offer and look forward to beginning work with your team in Texas.

You indicated that I will be receiving a salary of \$37,000 per year, and will have initial duties reporting to Tony Tillman. As your offer stated, I will begin work on December 1st. I will call you in late October to see what information or materials I may need before my start date. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for offering me this exciting opportunity. I am very excited about beginning my career with you after graduation.

Sincerely,

Jason Bernie

## SAMPLE LETTER: WITHDRAWING FROM A JOB SEARCH After Accepting Another Job Offer:

8750 City Road  
Sterling, VA 22060  
703-894-6789  
tmcmmary@marymount.edu

April 20th, 2014

Ms. Tonya Perez  
International Institute of Human Affairs  
567 Third Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. Perez:

I want to express my sincerest appreciation for including me in the interview process as you seek candidates for your Assistant Project Manager Position. I have enjoyed meeting with the members of your staff and know you have an outstanding operation.

As I explained when we spoke this morning, I respectfully withdraw from consideration for your position. I have decided to accept another employment offer which I believe very closely matches my current skills and career goals.

My best wishes to you and the staff of the IIHA. I hope we will have the chance to visit at the upcoming International Affairs Conference. Thank you again for the opportunity to explore career possibilities with your office and the courtesies extended to me by so many of your staff.

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Tom McMary

## ADDITIONAL COVER LETTER & CORRESPONDENCE RESOURCES AT THE CENTER FOR CAREER SERVICES

In addition to the information and examples this e-guide offers, the Center for Career Services also provides the following services and materials to support the writing process of your cover letters and other professional correspondences. Our staff strongly encourages ALL students and alumni to take advantage of these FREE resources!

- **Individual Career Appointments**
  - Bring in a job or internship position description that interests you and a Career Coach will sit down with you to discuss how to best tailor your cover letter to capture the employer's attention.
  - Students and alumni can schedule an appointment with a Career Coach by calling 703-284-5960. If you are not able to come in, we are happy to arrange a phone appointment as an alternative – just let us know you are interested in this option when you call!
  - When scheduling an appointment, the more specific information you can provide in terms of what type of positions you are looking for and what background you currently have, the better our Career Coaches can tailor their support during the appointment.
- **Career Services Workshops & Events**
  - Our office hosts a variety of workshops throughout the academic year, several of which focus on cover letter and resume writing, networking, the job and internship search, and professional behavior. In addition, we host industry-specific panel events, which serve as great opportunities to network with current professionals and fellow peers and can even potentially lead to interview opportunities! [For an up-to-date list of upcoming workshops and events, visit our website.](#)
  - If you are a student and would like to request a workshop or presentation on cover letter writing and professional correspondences for an organization or club that you are a part of on campus, please email [career.services@marymount.edu](mailto:career.services@marymount.edu) with your name, club/organization, and potential dates and times for your workshop and we will follow up with you!
- **Print Resources on Interviewing**
  - The Center for Career Services has a library of career resource books in the lobby of our main office in Rowley, Suite 1005 that students can check out for a period of two weeks.
  - For a full list of our print resources, including those specific to cover letter writing and professional correspondence check out [this document](#).