Cover Letters Workshop

Engineering Career Services
Our Goal:
Provide resources and opportunities to help engineering students develop professional skills and obtain full-time employment upon graduation.

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Student Guide to Employment

Step 1: Understand Employers and the College Recruiting Process
Step 2: Determine Career Goals and Skillset
Step 3: Identify Preliminary Target Employers and Industries

Step 4: Develop Effective Marketing Materials
Step 5: Search for Specific Employment Opportunities and Research

Step 6: Network (at Career Fairs and Otherwise)
Step 7: Interview and Follow-up
Step 8: Evaluate Offers
Step 9: Sign Employment Contract and Celebrate

Step 10: Inform Engineering Career Services and Discontinue Your Job Search

See the ECS website for information on all ten steps
What will we discuss?

- Professional e-mail communications
- Cover Letter vs. Prospect Letter
- Analyzing a Job Description
- Parts of a cover letter and best practices
- Thank you letters
- Website resources and samples

Feel free to ask questions at any time!
E-mail Communications

• Acceptable in pre- and post-job submissions or Career Fair interactions
• Timing: Professionally Proactive
• Content: Concise, Excited, Thankful, Resume
• Referrals are common practice, so e-mail
Which to use?

**Prospect Letter**
- Introduction of yourself to a company
- Language ties to best fit with company culture
- Focuses on summary of skills

**Cover Letter**
- Applying to a specific job
- Language is tailored to job description and company culture
- Focuses on specific demonstrated examples
Analyze the Job Description

• Highlight keywords that are used throughout company website and job description(s)
• Reflect on your experiences that match
• Find a hook!
• Practice handout – highlight the keywords!
Header and Salutation

• Left-adjusted block of your contact, theirs and date.

• Do you know who it’s going to? Adjust contact and salutation based on that.

• General yet professional is fine: “To the Hiring Committee”, “To Whom It May Concern”, “Dear Ms. XYZ”
First Paragraph

• What you are applying for and where you found
• General introduction and qualification
• Hook sentence(s) – something you already know about them/position, referral, excitement about their mission/products
Middle/Matching Paragraph

- Overview summary sentence of your technical and professional skills for this job
- **Specific** examples of how you match job description qualifications
- Add other examples if they are of high quality and reflect the business values of company
Closing Paragraph

• Transition: “As you can see by my above experiences, I would be an excellent ...”
• Give them a contact number & e-mail for interview set up, not specific days/times
• Thank the reader for time and consideration
• Close simply. “Sincerely,”
Thank You Letters

• Hand-written letters are nice but not necessary and hard to deliver
• E-mail communication is acceptable and preferred
• Content: Thank them for time and opportunity to discuss positions. Tell them 1 thing you learned about them. Remind them of 1-2 strengths or qualifications that you will bring. Close like a cover letter with contact information and thank you.
Resources

• Engineering Career Services website
• About.com (all of these, search: cover letter)
• Careerbuilder.com
• Quintcareers.com
• Monster.com
• Vault.com