Cover Letters Best Practices

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

We Are Here to Help YOU!

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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

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:
  - Be Concise, Excited, Thankful
  - Include Resume
- Referrals are common practice, so e-mail
Prospect vs. Cover Letter: 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
Preparing to Write a Cover Letter

• Step 1: Highlight keywords that are used throughout company website and job description(s)
  – Practice handouts – highlight the keywords!

• Step 2: Reflect on your experiences that match
  - Practice!

• Step 3: Find a hook!
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 & email for interview setup, not specific days/times
• Thank the reader for time and consideration
• Close simply: “Sincerely,”
Thank You for Viewing!!!

Full schedule of upcoming career seminars available on ECS website!