

# JOB SEARCH LETTERS

## 1. COVER LETTER

Accompanies your resume when you are applying for a specific position. The key purpose is to engage the reader, so that he/she will read your resume; therefore, it should be customized to the position you are applying for. The most effective cover letters are addressed to a specific person; if the listing does not include contact information, do some research to find out who you should send it to. The cover letter can be an attachment to an e-mail, in the body of e-mail, or uploaded to an Applicant Tracking System.

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## 2. LETTER OF INQUIRY

Sent to a company of interest when the type of position you are interested in is not advertised. Your focus should be on the key skills and qualifications you have that directly relate to the company's current needs, emerging challenges, specific products/services, and/or customers. It is similar to a cover letter and you should attach your resume.

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## 3. REQUEST FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Used for the purpose of expanding your network and learning more about your field of interest, this letter briefly describes your background and goals; the main point, however, is to outline the type of information or advice you are seeking. In this type of letter, it is *inappropriate* to request a meeting about job openings or opportunities; therefore, you should not attach your resume.

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## 4. THANK YOU / FOLLOW-UP LETTER

This letter, which comes after an interview, is welcomed and expected by employers. Much more than a simple "thanks," it is used to place yourself at the forefront of your interviewer's mind by: thanking the person for his/her time, reminding him/her of your key qualifications, and re-stating your sincere interest in both the position and the company. Make sure you get the interviewer's business card to ensure proper spelling of the interviewer's name and title. E-mail is an appropriate method; as a subject line use "Interview Follow-up."

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# DO'S AND DON'TS

## DO

- Use the samples on the following pages as guidelines
- Customize your letters to the company / position of interest
- Make your best effort to address your letters to specific people (“Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:”)
- If necessary, address your letter “Dear Recruiter” or “Dear Hiring Manager” rather than “To Whom It May Concern”
- Use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation and letter format
- Open with a compelling statement designed to grab the reader’s attention
- Have a Career Counselor review your letter when writing one for the first time
- If sending by e-mail, use your e-mail message to further promote your qualifications
- Follow up; call the person within a week of sending your letter\*

## DON'T

- *Don't* indent paragraphs
- *Don't* forget to attach your resume if you've referenced it in your e-mail
- *Don't* address a letter to “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern”
- *Don't* assume that all you need to do is send a resume; persistence and follow-up are key
- *Don't* send the *exact* same “thank you” letter to every person you interviewed with
- *Don't* send a hard copy of your letter / resume when the printing quality is poor or difficult to read
- *Don't* e-mail your letter / resume from your work e-mail account
- *Don't* forget to get your interviewer’s business card before leaving an interview
- *Don't* neglect to update anyone who referred you to a company on your progress

\* When calling an employer to follow up on a resume sent, be conscious of his/her time and make sure to state your purpose for calling early in the conversation; try something like, “Hello Ms. Jones, my name is Sam Student and I’m calling to follow up on a resume that I emailed to you last Friday for the Systems Administrator position that was recently posted on the FAMU Handshake website. The role looked like an excellent fit for my background and I was hoping to speak with you about it further. Do you have a couple of minutes now, or would it be possible to schedule some time in the near future?”

## PREPARING TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

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*Before you start writing your cover letter, look at the job description and identify all of the qualifications and responsibilities. Write those in the left-hand column below. For each item in the left-hand column, think of something from your past experiences (academic, work, sometimes personal) that **proves** you have the experience and skills necessary to perform the job described in the job posting. You will use some of these examples in your cover letter.*

<b>Qualifications/Responsibilities</b> <i>from job description</i>	<b>My Experience/Qualifications</b> <i>may or may not be on resume</i>

# COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Your name (optional) Your return address Phone Email  Date  Name of the contact person Title Name of organization/company Address City, ST Zip
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This traditional business letter heading is acceptable OR you can replace it with the same heading as your resume (which should contain your name and contact information)



Dear Mr. or Ms. (last name):

**First paragraph: reason for writing the letter**

How did you learn about this job opening?  
 If you have been referred by a contact, include the person's name.  
 What is the title of the position and the reference number (if listed)?  
 Why do you want to work for this organization?  
 Briefly convey your knowledge of their products, services, and/or projects.

**Second paragraph: an overview of your skills**

What 3-4 key skills do you have that relate to this position?  
 Match your experience to the job description.  
 Make it easy for the employer to see how you are qualified for the job.  
 Draw on skills from work experience, volunteer experience, internships or co-ops, and classes.

**Third paragraph: specific accomplishments / examples of how you've used your skills\***

What projects did you work on – either at a job or as part of a class?  
 Use the PAR formula – Problem-Action-Result.  
 \*If your experience is limited, you might not need this third paragraph.

**Fourth paragraph: closing**

What action will you take?  
 Where can they reach you?  
 If you list a cell phone number, be prepared to answer a call from an employer at any time.  
 Make sure that your outgoing voicemail greeting is professional.  
 State that you look forward to an interview.  
 Thank the person for their consideration of your application.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Cover Letter

*Recent MIS graduate with on-campus, internship, and project experience*

Student Address  
City, ST Zip  
Phone  
Email

June 10, 2020

Employer Name  
Employer Title  
Company Name  
Company Address  
City, ST Zip

Dear Ms. [Last Name]:

Attached is my resume for the position of **Systems Analyst**, advertised on Handshake at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). I was interested to read about your new partnership with S. A. Industries and believe that my proficiency in Spanish would be an added asset to your work in Latin American markets.

The Systems Analyst position requires experience in financial applications software, end-user consulting, and database management. I recently graduated in the top 10% of my class with a B.S. in Management Information Systems. This degree from FAMU afforded me training on a variety of systems and software applications.

My specific relevant work experience includes:

- **Programmer and help desk assistant** at the Teaching and Learning Center, where I gained valuable exposure to complex computer operations, and provided telephone assistance to hundreds of staff and faculty throughout the university.
- **Systems analyst** at Chase Bank, working in a department of six people to support financial operations (6-month internship).
- **Technical support analyst**, assisting a local nonprofit to identify emerging technology needs and evaluate current equipment/systems (course project).

I look forward to an opportunity to meet with you to discuss your needs, my qualifications and how I can contribute to the success of [Company Name]. You can reach me at (850) 934-xxxx or via e-mail at student@yahoo.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Cover Letter

*Criminal Justice major looking for a position in human services*

Student Address  
City, ST Zip  
Phone  
Email

August 12, 2020

Employer Name  
Employer Title  
Company Name  
Company Address  
City, ST Zip

Dear Mr. [Last Name]:

Attached is my resume for the **Direct Care Counselor** position posted on idealist.org. Through my work for YMCA programs, I have become familiar with the array of services that you provide to children and youth throughout Florida. Please consider me an enthusiastic candidate!

For the past two years I have worked with children and youth of different age groups in a variety of YMCA programs. I easily establish relationships with children and their parents. I have strong communication skills, am fluent in Spanish, and am approachable and trustworthy. Most of my work has involved organizing activities and motivating youth to participate to build relationships, as well as self-esteem and confidence.

I have an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice and am completing my B.S. in Criminology and Justice Studies at Florida A&M University. I am dedicated to this field and believe that my interests and skills are a match for this position and the overall mission of the organization.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss your needs and my qualifications. You can reach me at (850) 934-xxxx or via e-mail at student@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Cover Letter

*Mechanical Engineering student inquiring about internship/co-op opportunities (no posting)*

Student Address

City, ST Zip

Phone

Email

July 1, 2020

Employer Name

Employer Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, ST Zip

Dear Ms. [Last Name]:

I am writing to inquire about the possibility of a Mechanical Engineering internship or co-op at [Company]. As I enter my third year of mechanical engineering coursework at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, I find the opportunities to apply my skills and gain engineering experience at [Company] very exciting. A musician myself, I grew up with [Company]'s unique sound products and have always found them fascinating. I have enjoyed witnessing the introduction of important technologies such as the Wave® music system, wireless surround sound, and noise cancelling headphones. It is [Company]'s commitment to diverse research and innovation that initially inspired me to study engineering.

Having worked in residential home development for several years, I have learned that few things come easily and thus have always maintained a strong work ethic and desire to succeed. I am a committed student eager to learn and grow as a professional. To date I have completed several relevant courses that include the study of materials behavior, 3D CAD modeling, and electronics. Additionally, I believe that my personal interest in your company and outstanding academic record make me an ideal applicant for an internship or co-op at [Company].

Please see my attached resume which contains additional details regarding my qualifications. I'd appreciate an opportunity to speak with you further about any position for which you believe I may be a suitable fit. I can be reached at (850) 934-xxxx or [First1.Last@famuedu](mailto:First1.Last@famuedu).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Cover Letter

*Undeclared first-year student seeking a Science-related position*

Student Address

City, ST Zip

Phone

Email

September 3, 2020

Employer Name

Employer Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, ST Zip

Dear Mr. [Last Name]:

Please accept my resume for the [Title] position, recently posted on [Site]. I am excited about the opportunity, and believe that it would be an excellent fit to my educational background and professional interests.

I am currently an undeclared Science Major, planning to complete my Bachelor's Degree in 2024. One of the career possibilities that I am actively exploring is the [insert] field, in which I would hope to leverage the following skills, experiences and interests:

- Relevant skill, experience or interest
- Relevant skill, experience or interest
- Relevant skill, experience or interest

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss your needs for this position and my qualifications. Please feel free to contact me at (850) 934-xxxx or via e-mail at [First1.Last@famuedu](mailto:First1.Last@famuedu). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Cover Letter

*Computer Science major with relevant hands-on skills*

Student Address

City, ST Zip

Phone

Email

February 15, 2020

Employer Name

Employer Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, ST Zip

Dear Ms. [Last Name]:

I am interested in applying for the Web Developer position which was recently posted on the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Handshake site. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and professional interests.

Your position requires skills in various types of programming and software used in web development. My Computer Science degree program at FAMU emphasizes C, C++, .NET, PHP, Visual Basic, Assembler, Java, and MSSQL. In addition, I have experience using several software programs in web development including Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and Dreamweaver. I have worked with both PC and Mac platforms, and I have gained knowledge of e-commerce applications and content management systems through my academic coursework and professional interests.

My background and career goals seem to match your job requirements well. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively; furthermore, I am genuinely interested in the position and in working for [Company Name]. Your firm has an excellent reputation for training Developers on the latest software languages and technologies, and bringing reliable products to market.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your needs and my qualifications. I can be reached at (850) 934-xxxx or via e-mail at First1.Last@fam.u.edu. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration; I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Cover

*Plastics Engineering major seeking co-op or internship*

Student Address  
City, ST Zip  
Phone  
Email

April 21, 2020

Employer Name  
Employer Title  
Company Name  
Company Address  
City, ST Zip

Dear Mr. [Last Name]:

I am writing to apply for your Plastics Engineering Internship, which was recently posted on the Handshake at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU).

This position requires product design and process development experience, both of which I have been exposed to in my Bachelor's program in Plastics Engineering at FAMU. In addition, I have gained an understanding of the following engineering technologies and techniques:

- Insert skill, technology or technique
- Insert skill, technology or technique
- Insert skill, technology or technique

I noticed that you are also seeking someone who is detail oriented and has excellent communication skills. For the past four years, I have worked as a Customer Service Associate for Shaws Supermarket; in this role, I have been recognized for providing accurate and timely information to customers and supervisors, and have managed my tasks with strong detail and follow-through skills. Throughout my academic career at FAMU, I have needed to effectively utilize time management, prioritization, reporting, documentation and organization skills to successfully complete all assignments and projects. I believe that these skills will help me to succeed in this position, and allow me to contribute to the continued success of [Company Name].

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person, to discuss my qualifications for this role in greater detail. I have attached my resume for your review. Please feel free to contact me at (850) 934-xxxx or via e-mail at [First1.Last@fam.u.edu](mailto:First1.Last@fam.u.edu). Thank you in advance for your consideration; I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Student Name

## Sample Cover Letter

*Art major / Psychology minor seeking a position in an art studio*

Student Address

City, ST Zip

Phone

Email

October 15, 2020

Employer Name

Employer Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, ST Zip

Dear Ms. [Last Name]:

The description that you recently posted on Monster.com for a Studio Assistant appears to be a perfect match to my interests and qualifications.

With my academic background in art and psychology from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), I am confident that I would make a very successful and creative Studio Assistant. Having worked as an Intern for the non-profit organization [Company Name], I have been exposed to a number of business and operational aspects of the art world. My experience as a Library Assistant at FAMU demonstrates my capability of working with others and providing useful information in a timely and professional manner. In addition, my education in psychology has provided me with the ability to listen attentively to customer requests and make appropriate recommendations.

I would appreciate the opportunity to make a substantial contribution to your firm, and would welcome a conversation with you to further discuss my candidacy. I will contact you next week to see if we might arrange a time to speak. In the meantime, please feel free to visit my online portfolio at [www.\[portfolioname\].com](http://www.[portfolioname].com). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample E-Mail of Inquiry

TO: hiringmanager@company.com

FROM: [student@famuedu](mailto:student@famuedu)

SUBJECT: Exploring career opportunities in civil engineering

Dear Mr. / Ms. [Last Name]:

In last week's issue of The Boston Business Journal, I read with great interest about your organization receiving the contract for expansion and renovation of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Congratulations!

I completed my B.S. in Civil Engineering in December and am interested in civil engineering or architectural drafting design opportunities with [Company Name]. My semester-long co-op experience at the Guggenheim Museum in Las Vegas, as well as additional skills gained through a variety of summer internships, would allow me to make an immediate contribution to the Gardner Museum project, or others being handled by your firm. Throughout my employment, I established a reputation as a detail-oriented and goal-directed team player.

Attached is my resume outlining my academic and work experience in more detail. I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss any openings that might be a match to my qualifications. I can be reached at (850) 934-xxxx or via e-mail at [student@famuedu](mailto:student@famuedu).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## **SAMPLE LINKEDIN MESSAGE REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW**

Dear Mr. / Ms. [Last Name]:

I saw through the FAMU Alumni-Student Career Connections group on LinkedIn that you are a Research & Development Engineer at [company name]. I am beginning my final year of study in the B.S. program in Mechanical Engineering at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and want to refine my career focus. I am reaching out to professionals in the field for information and advice regarding current and emerging challenges in the industry. Given your expertise, your perspective and thoughts would be greatly appreciated.

Might we be able to schedule 20-30 minutes of time for meeting? I could easily come to you at a time that is convenient for you. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## **SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER**

Student Address  
City, ST Zip  
Phone  
Email

August 22, 2020

Employer Name  
Company Name  
Company Address  
City, ST Zip

Dear Mr. / Ms. [Last Name]:

Thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the Associate Engineer position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your research and design work.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for [Company] were strengthened as a result of this interview. Your department's newest project using emerging technologies would allow me to contribute immediately with knowledge gained in my advanced-level coursework. Overall, I believe that skills gained through my employment and cooperative education experiences are closely aligned with your needs.

I would greatly welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff. Please feel free to call me at (850) 463-xxxx if I can provide you with additional information to further support my candidacy.

Sincerely,

Student Name

## Sample Thank You E-Mail

TO: hiringmanager@company.com

FROM: [student@famu.edu](mailto:student@famu.edu)

SUBJECT: Thank you for your time

Dear Mr. / Ms. [Last Name]:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Marketing Assistant position. I very much enjoyed meeting with you and hearing about Mark's and Gina's perspectives as recent hires from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. The new projects that you mentioned are of particular interest to me. I believe the skills gained at my summer internship would allow me to make an immediate contribution to the successful launch of these projects.

Since you are going to reach a decision quickly, I would like to highlight the key personal skills that I feel qualify me for the position beyond my marketing experience:

- Ability to juggle many projects simultaneously
- A flexible and creative work attitude
- Articulate, personable and easily approachable
- Goal directed and dependable

I am, of course, looking forward to hearing from you in a positive way and am ready for any "start date" you select. Again, thank you for meeting with me and considering my qualifications. Sincerely,

Student Name

## SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Student Address  
City, ST Zip  
Phone  
Email

July 8, 2020

Employer Name  
Company Name  
City, ST Zip

Dear Mr. / Ms. [Last Name]:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the interview Wednesday morning, and to confirm my strong interest in an entry-level manufacturing engineer/technician position at [Company].

As we discussed, I believe that my academic background – projects and courses – has provided me with a solid foundation in plastics engineering. Additionally, my two years of experience using AutoCAD, as well as sensor testing and maintenance of production text fixtures/equipment, will allow me to hit the ground running.

You might also be interested to know that I recently joined the Central FL Plastics Council, as a volunteer mentor to junior high school students. I am dedicated to working in this industry.

Again, thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Student Name