Corresponding with Employers

Job search correspondence—cover letters, thank you emails, acceptance letters, declining letters, etc.—usually receive a lot less attention from students than a resume. However, they are just as, if not more, important in your job search strategy.

With today’s technology, a majority of job search correspondence will be sent via email. Keep your communication professional and always use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Just like your resume, ensure that your correspondence is a positive reflection of you.

Cover Letters

The type of correspondence most frequently utilized in the job search process is the cover letter. Cover letters serve as an introduction of yourself and your resume to the employer. A great cover letter should immediately catch the interest of the recruiter and encourage them to continue reading the resume.

A strong cover letter is crucial for success in the job search process. It is difficult for an employer to think a candidate is qualified if a cover letter is filled with typographical errors, poor grammar, redundancy, and run-on sentences, or if it lacks focus and sincere interest.

Customize your cover letter for the specific company and job you are targeting. BBA Career Services does not recommend sending a mass-produced letter to a potential recruiter. They will most likely spot it immediately. To customize your letter, note the targeted position and how you heard about it. Show that you have researched the company and have a clear career objective in mind. Express why you are interested in the specific position. Make the connection between yourself (i.e., your skills, abilities, and experiences) and the job requirements. BBA Career Services can assist you with this by reviewing and offering suggestions on your cover letter rough drafts.

Some common cover letter mistakes:
- Too lengthy
- Lacks passion, interest, and substance
- Not tailored to the specific company/position (form letters)
- Proves to the reader that the job seeker has failed to make the connection between the job seeker and the employer
- Poorly written

Formatting tips:
- Text size should be 10-12 point font, use the same font type as used on your resume
- Cover letters should be 1 page (approximately 3-4 paragraphs)
- Block-style business letter format or resume header format with all information left justified
- Save resumes and cover letters as PDFs when emailing to employers
Building the Cover Letter

Sections of the Cover Letter

Sender Information: Include your address at the top left of your document. The date the document is sent should appear next, below the sender’s address information. You may also choose to place your information in a header matching the format of your resume.

Recipient/Employer Information: The recipient’s name should appear at the left margin, below the date and sender’s information. Include the full name (first and last) spelled correctly, title, department/division, company name, and address. If you are uncertain about any of the above information, you can try to find the name and position title on LinkedIn. If you cannot find the information, address the document to “Hiring Manager” or “Recruiting Manager.”

Salutation: The salutation should be in business style, preferably “Dear Mr. or Ms. ______”. Do not address the employer by first name in a cover letter. If you cannot locate the contact name, then use “Dear Recruiter” or “Dear Hiring Manager.”

Introduction Paragraph: Use an opening line to catch the reader’s attention, and avoid opening phrases like, “My name is Jill...” The introduction should identify the position that you are seeking, mention your education and graduation year, refer to how you learned of the organization and/or of the position, and illustrate that your skills match the qualifications. You are seeking to convince the recruiter that you are the ideal candidate for the position and will spend the rest of your letter showing, not telling, that you have these qualifications. Develop a thesis statement to transition into the body of the letter.

Body Paragraphs: The next section of your letter is the body or the core of your message and should be 1-2 paragraphs. In the introduction, you made the initial connection between the job qualifications and your skill set. Now, you must prove that the claim you made in the first paragraph is actually true. Review the job description carefully and thoroughly. Tailor your cover letter to include the requirements that you fulfill and then note any other special things about yourself that may also be related to the position.

There are two basic formats for writing your body paragraphs:

1. In a **Structured Approach**, you will take the qualifications you mentioned in the introduction and, **one by one**, give an example, story, anecdote, or evidence illustrating your mastery of that skill. This approach follows a formulaic “claim-evidence” pattern. For example, if they list “excellent organizational skills” as a required qualification, then you should indicate **how and/or what** you did in a previous position or leadership role that exhibited that skill. For example, “While serving as Vice President for Corporate Outreach for the Asian Business Student Association, I was able to successfully schedule guest speakers and manage logistics for an evening networking event in which approximately 100 Asian Business Student Association members and 10 employers participated. The evening was a great success.”

2. A **Fluid Approach** uses a more fluid method by telling a story or two and extracting your evidence from the story. For instance, you could use one experience that illustrates both your leadership abilities and financial analysis skills. You might have one paragraph describing the incident and then another explaining why that incident is relevant.

You should avoid being too formulaic with your approach. Generally speaking, you want to strike a balance between structure and fluidity. However, there is no “right” way to structure your cover letter. BBA Career Services can assist you in writing your cover letter, but make sure to adapt sample letters to your own needs and style.

Closing Paragraph: Reiterate your interest in the position/company. Refer back to one special attribute about yourself that qualifies you for the job and makes you stand out. Initiate the next step for the reader. If appropriate, indicate when you will follow up with the reader on the status of your application (note: a majority of positions posted in RecruitMcCombs do not contain specific contact information, and you will not be able to follow up with the employer). Let the reader know where and when you can be reached or let them know when you will be in touch with them. Close with a thank you.

Valediction/Close: If you are sending your cover letter electronically as a word document, simply type your name directly below your professional closing. An actual signature is not required when sending electronically. If you choose to include your signature as a scanned jpeg, place it after your closing and above the typed version of your name.

Rarely, you may be asked to submit paper copies of your cover letter and resume. If so, you will need to sign your cover letter by hand and specify which documents are attached. This tells the reader to look for additional documents and will remind them to keep the documents together.
Cover Letter Template

Full-Block Format

Choose either a traditional block or resume header (both are acceptable for cover letters)

RESUME HEADER (matches your resume):

TRADITIONAL BLOCK HEADER:

Heading: (DO NOT include your name)
Your Address
City, State Zip Code

Date of Letter

Mr./Ms. First & Last Name
Recruiter’s Title
Department Name
Organization Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name Only: (use full name if Mr./Ms./Dr. is uncertain)

Introduction (1st paragraph):
Refer to how you learned about the employer or the job and name drop if possible (e.g., previous conversation, meeting, correspondence, or job posting). Explain why you are writing and include your degree, major, and year in school or graduation date. Lay down the foundation for your letter, clearly stating why you are qualified and previewing the points you will elaborate on in the following paragraphs. This paragraph ends with a thesis statement of some kind.

Body (approximately 1 - 2 paragraphs):
This is the core of your letter. Highlight and explain relevant accomplishments (e.g., achievements, skills, experiences, attributes). Make the connection between you, your qualifications, and the requirements of the job, tying it in with the introduction.

(3rd paragraph, if necessary):
You can highlight one special skill or experience that may set you apart from other candidates. State why you are interested in working for this employer and your interest in this type of work. You could break the above information into multiple paragraphs for easier readability.

Closing Paragraph (last paragraph):
Thank the recipient, restate your interest, state the action you expect from the recipient (e.g., an interview, an application, a phone call), reiterate a strength or why you should be selected, and indicate your next plan of action and/or offer a specific date of expected action. Provide contact information for employer questions or to reach you for an interview. If you indicate a course of action, you MUST follow through.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (handwritten)
Typed Name

Suggestion for electronic cover letters: If you have an electronic signature, such as a JPG of your handwritten signature, you may use it here. If not, select a different font that looks like script.

Formatting Tips:
- Font type should match your resume and font size should be 10-12 point
- Keep to one page
- All information should be left justified in a block-style business letter format as shown

Choose either a traditional block or resume header (both are acceptable for cover letters)
Southwestern Energy Company is a growing independent energy company primarily engaged in natural gas and crude oil exploration, development and production within North America. We are also focused on creating and capturing additional value through our natural gas gathering and marketing businesses, which we refer to as Midstream Services. Our primary business is the exploration for and production of natural gas within North America, with our current operations being principally focused on development of the unconventional gas reservoir located on the Arkansas side of the Arkoma Basin, which we refer to as the Fayetteville Shale play. We are also actively engaged in exploration and production activities in Oklahoma, Texas, Pennsylvania, and New Brunswick, Canada.

Job Title: Accounting Intern
Position Function: Accounting - Tax
Open To: Current Students
Required Degree(s): BBA or MPA
Job Type: Internship
Job City: Houston, TX
Job Salary: Salary Only

Job Responsibilities/Qualifications:
- Working towards four-year degree in Accounting or Finance
- Advanced Microsoft Excel skills; ability to create complex spreadsheets
- Ability to meet deadlines
- General accounting experience preferred
- Strong analytical skills
- Organizational skills
- Strong communication skills
- Team player
- Detail oriented
- Ability to multitask
- Desire to work in fast-paced, learning intensive environment

Job Contact Information
Job Contact Name: Ms. Kimberly Merrick, Recruiting Manager
Address: 2350 North Houston Parkway, Houston, TX 77032

Dear Ms. Merrick:

I am very interested in the Accounting Intern position at Southwestern Energy currently posted on RecruitMcCombs. Currently, I am a junior at The University of Texas at Austin majoring in Accounting. I have a strong desire to work in the energy industry, and my previous experience and leadership roles have prepared me well for this position.

For the past year, I have volunteered at the Community Tax Office in southeast Austin preparing tax returns for low income families. I enjoy the challenge of gathering client information in order to maximize their tax refunds. I have also been recognized for my ability to explain the IRS regulations in simple terms that help clients understand the process.

In addition, I am the Treasurer for my business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi. I utilize Excel to track membership dues, external contributions, and the fraternity’s expenditures. The total budget I manage for the organization is approximately $100,000. I also present a financial update and corresponding statements to our advisory board on a quarterly basis.

I am excited about the potential in the energy industry and believe that my background makes me a great candidate for an internship in accounting at Southwestern Energy. I have enclosed my resume for your review and will reach out to you within two weeks to further discuss this opportunity. If you have any questions about my qualifications, please feel free to contact me at (512) 867-5309 or Thomas.Antone@utexas.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas Antone
## Applying Outside RecruitMcCombs

1234 Dean Keeton, Apt.1  
Austin, TX 78712  

September 27, 20XX  

Ms. Carolyn Sylvestor  
Recruiter  
Pacific Technology  
2745 Topanga Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 94005  

Dear Ms. Sylvestor:  

I am very excited to discover Pacific Technology is hiring a Social Media intern for this summer. Currently, I am a junior Marketing major at The University of Texas at Austin with a strong desire to work in the technology industry. I believe my experiences and skills in social media, graphics, and quantitative tools will provide a strong foundation to succeed in this internship.  

I gained a sincere interest and excitement in social media through serving as the Social Media coordinator for my student organization, Texas Teens. I created and scheduled all social media activity with HootSuite, resulting in a 40% increase in impressions and 25% increase in membership applications from the previous year. Additionally, I was able to gain expertise in Photoshop and Canva during my time as a Peer Coach in BBA Career Services where I designed advertising for workshops, events, and images for the department social media spotlights.  

Finally, I have developed strong quantitative skills throughout my academic classes. Recently, I was able to create a database for a small business in Austin, Texas and with a pivot table able to summarize and sort monthly and yearly sales data. Balancing my academic life and extra-curricular activities has taught me to prioritize deadlines and allowed me to understand that I perform well in a fast-paced environment.  

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how I can make impactful contributions to Pacific Technology. Please contact me at your earliest convenience at (512) 555-5555 or Lucy.Longhorn@utexas.edu. Thank you for your consideration.  

Sincerely,  
Lucy Longhorn

## Opportunity Through Your Network

805 Saint Cloud Rd., Apt. 101  
Austin, TX 78712  

September 6, 20XX  

Mr. Javier Flores  
Recruiter  
Austin Consulting  
400 Bee Caves Road  
Austin, TX 78700  

Dear Mr. Flores:  

My professor, Dr. Mary Collins, suggested I contact you regarding employment opportunities available at Austin Consulting. I will graduate in May 20XX from The University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance, and I am interested in a career in the consulting industry. I enjoy problem solving with the use of technology.  

One of my proudest accomplishments in college has been maintaining an overall 3.75 GPA while working 25 hours a week. Working part-time at the Co-op Bookstore has enabled me to gain valuable customer service and supervisory skills. In addition, I have been actively involved as a Vice President for the University Consulting Group. My responsibilities in this role include planning site visits to consulting firms and bringing in guest speakers for general meetings. My enclosed resume details all of my qualifications for a position with Austin Consulting.  

I would like the opportunity to discuss my qualifications and interest with you further. Please contact me at your earliest convenience at (512) 555-9999 or at Cam.Longhorn@utexas.edu. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.  

Sincerely,  
Cam Longhorn
Applying Without a Specific Job Posting

805 Saint Cloud Rd., Apt. 101
Austin, TX 78712

September 12, 20XX

Recruiting Manager
ABC Real Estate
1357 West Lucas Street
Austin, TX 78712

Dear Recruiting Manager:

A recent article in the Austin Business Journal naming ABC Real Estate as one of the top ten firms in the local market really caught my attention. I am impressed by the success of your organization, as well as the CEO’s commitment to giving back to the local community. I am currently a student at The University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a degree in Management. I plan to graduate May 20XX.

Like your CEO, I am committed to giving back to my community. In my hometown, I started an annual charity chili cook-off, which has raised $40,000 in the past three years for the Midland Boys and Girls Club. This money has helped pay for sports equipment for children in the after-school program. Although I now live in Austin, I continue to be involved with the charity cook-off and other activities through the Boys and Girls Club.

In addition to pursuing my Management degree, I work as a leasing assistant at the apartment complex where I live. I meet with potential residents to show our property and explain the leasing agreement. I also handle maintenance requests and ensure that they are completed in a timely manner. This experience has sparked my interest in a career in property management and real estate.

I believe my values and work ethic make me a great match for opportunities at ABC Real Estate. Enclosed is my resume with additional information regarding my work history and leadership experience. Please contact me at your earliest convenience at (512) 555-9999 or at Cam.Longhorn@utexas.edu. I appreciate your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Cam Longhorn

Post Event Follow-Up

1234 Dean Keeton, Apt. 1
Austin, TX 78712

October 2, 20XX

Ms. Melissa Graham
Lead Recruiter
National Bank
P.O. Box 1341
Wimberley, TX 78676

Dear Ms. Graham:

It was a pleasure meeting you at the National Bank information session last night at The University of Texas at Austin. The presentation regarding the bank’s focus on consumer lending made me even more interested in the Loan Analyst position posted in the RecruitMcCombs system.

I am very impressed by the programs National Bank offered to assist homeowners with refinancing options during and after the housing crisis a few years ago. As I mentioned at the information session, I am currently taking a real estate class and completed a research project on government loan programs for homeowners facing foreclosure. I am well-informed on the current laws, and I am excited about the possibility of putting this knowledge to use at National Bank.

Thank you again for coming to our campus to discuss the career possibilities at National Bank. I have enclosed my resume for your review. Please contact me if you need additional information regarding my background and qualifications. You may reach me by email, Lucy.Longhorn@utexas.edu, or telephone, (512) 555-5555. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Lucy Longhorn
Thank You Emails

BBA Career Services recommends that you always send thank you emails immediately following an interview or an office visit (within 24 hours). Sending an email ensures your thank you message is received in a timely manner. Many students also send thank you emails after meeting an employer at a career fair or an information session as a part of their job search strategy. Some students will send an email and supplement it with a brief, handwritten note on simple, professional blank cards mailed later in the week.

Thank You Email Format & Content
Most employers prefer a succinct and well-written thank you email rather than a longer and more formal thank you letter. Thank you emails are written in a similar format to the cover letter but tend to be a little less formal. Use business language, and do not make your correspondence too friendly or too informal. Do not elaborate on everything that occurred during the interview or conversation, but do comment on something significant or add any relevant item that you forgot to address during the interview. In the body of the email, show sincere gratitude and express your interest to the employer.

To Whom to Send the Thank You Email?
Customarily, a separate and unique thank you correspondence is sent to each person with whom you interviewed. This may get a bit complicated after office visits where you met and interviewed (both formally and informally) with numerous individuals. In this case, send thank you correspondence to all those you interviewed with formally. Ask the head or leader of the team to forward your gratitude to others you met casually or briefly.

Thank You Email Tips

- Send a thank you email as soon as possible (within 24 hours after the interview)
- Personalize the message
- Use single spacing
- Include any additional information forgotten during the interview
- Remind the employer of why they should hire you
- Restate your desire regarding the job
- Double check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar—always proofread
- Don’t forget to thank everyone you met, including those who helped coordinate your interview
Thank You Email Correspondence

Interview Thank You Email

Subject Line:
Thank You - ABC Finance/Accounting Analyst Interview

Email Message:
Dear Ms. Magilicudy,

I wanted to send you a short note to thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to interview me today. I enjoyed meeting with you and the other members of the Accounting Department. I particularly enjoyed learning about your up-and-coming International Division and meeting some of the division’s team members.

As you requested, I am attaching additional references. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any additional information. I look forward to your decision regarding the international audit position. Thank you again, and please express my sincere thanks to the rest of the team.

Sincerely,
Cam Longhorn
Cam.Longhorn@utexas.edu
Finance, May 20XX
512-555-9999

Recruiting Event Thank You Email

Subject Line:
Thank You - XYZ Company at McCombs Career Expo

Email Message:
Dear Mr. Huang,

It was a pleasure to meet you at the McCombs Career Expo yesterday. I appreciate the time you took to discuss internship roles within the New Products Division. The Analyst Internship position sounds like a great opportunity to research and understand customer experiences and use the information to enhance customer engagement initiatives for XYZ Company. I look forward to seeing the Analyst Internship position posted on RecruitMcCombs.

Sincerely,
Lucy Longhorn
Lucy.Longhorn@utexas.edu
Marketing, May 20XX
512-555-5555

Handwritten Interview Thank You Note

Dear Ms. Craven,

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me about the Assistant Account Executive Position at the Smith Agency. In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong writing skills, assertiveness, and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with the department. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you regarding this position. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,
Lucy Longhorn
Emails/Letters Related to Offers

Accepting an Offer

BBA Career Services recommends that you confirm your acceptance and the specifics of the offer in a letter or email to the employer. In most cases, this is sent immediately following a telephone acceptance call or an in-person meeting where you have decided to work for a specific employer. In your acceptance letter, make certain to note the date that you accepted the offer. Confirm the specifics of your acceptance: the salary, job title, responsibilities, and starting date. If your starting date has not yet been confirmed, then note this in the letter along with your anticipated response date. You can then submit the letter with the original signed offer. Always keep a copy of your letter and the signed offer in your files. Don't forget to thank them again for the offer. Feel free to show your enthusiasm and interest in starting your new job with the employer.

Declining an Offer

Always call the employer first with your decision to decline, then follow up with an email. The email should always be a follow-up to the phone call (not text message, or any other means of communicating). In the email, be sincere and gracious. Be certain to thank them for their time and the offer. You should be brief and concise. You do not need to give the employer detailed information about which offer you chose and why, but you may want to stay in touch for future internships or full-time positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accepting an Offer Email</th>
<th>Declining an Offer Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject Line of Email Message:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Subject Line of Email Message:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Research Assistant Position</td>
<td>Thank You - Market Research Assistant Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email Message:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Email Message:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Ms. Lee: This is to confirm my acceptance of the Marketing Research Assistant position in the New Products Division of your company. As we discussed on the telephone this past Tuesday, April 17, my starting date will be June 5, 20XX, and I am to report directly to the Human Resources Department. The salary, bonus structure, and other details have been outlined in your letter to me, of the same date, and are consistent to what was discussed and agreed upon. I am looking forward to spending the summer with your dynamic team. Sincerely, Cam Longhorn Cam Longhorn <a href="mailto:Cam.Longhorn@utexas.edu">Cam.Longhorn@utexas.edu</a> Finance, May 20XX 512-555-9999</td>
<td>Dear Ms. Lee: This letter is to confirm our telephone conversation earlier this morning. After taking considerable time in making a decision regarding my employment for this coming May, I have decided not to accept your job offer as a Market Research Assistant in your New Products Division. I enjoyed meeting with you and your team and learning more about your reputable firm. At this time, however, I have decided to pursue another career opportunity. Thank you again for your time during the recruiting process. I hope we can keep the door open to possibly discuss any future opportunities should they present themselves. Sincerely, Lucy Longhorn Lucy Longhorn <a href="mailto:Lucy.Longhorn@utexas.edu">Lucy.Longhorn@utexas.edu</a> 512-555-5555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

For most on-campus interviews, you will probably not be asked for a list of references. However, it is always better to be prepared with a typed list of references. Usually, these are requested in the employer’s application or during or following the office visit.

Some helpful hints in developing a list of references:
- Typically 3-5 references are sufficient, however, some employers may ask for more or less
- Focus on professional references such as professors, instructors, and former or current supervisors
- Avoid using friends and immediate family as references
- Contact the individuals first and ask if they are willing to serve as positive references
- Consider sending a copy of your resume to your references for them to review your most recent experiences
- Provide your references with an idea of the type of jobs you are pursuing and which employers may contact them
- Confirm with your references the phone number and address they would like used (home and/or work or email)
- If you feel it would be relevant to the job or if the employer requests it, then note personal references such as work colleagues, high school teachers, and neighbors who can give the employer an idea of your personal attributes
- Use paper that matches your resume and cover letter

Note: Have your previous employment places, dates, addresses, phone numbers, supervisors, duties, etc. written out and readily available. This will provide you with a resource for completing employment applications. Sometimes you are asked to do this during an interview or office visit.

Reference List Example

CAMERON (CAM) LONGHORN
Cam.Longhorn@utexas.edu
805 Saint Cloud Road, Apt. 101 ● Austin, TX 78712 ● (512) 555-9999

REFERENCES
Mr. R. J. Reynolds
President
R. J. Reynolds, Inc.
P.O. Box 1234
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 555-5555
RJ.Reynolds@reference1.org

Dr. Susan Smith
Chairman, Department of Finance
The University of Texas at Austin
CBA 6.222
Austin, TX 78712
(512) 111-1111
Susan.Smith@reference2.org

Ms. Katherine Nwokeji
Senior Vice President
Allied Bank
P.O. Box 8426
Dallas, TX 75022
(241) 222-2222
KNwokeji@reference3.org

Tip: In case your reference list is separated from your resume or cover letter, use the same personal information heading format as your resume.