

Guide to Writing a Letter of Interest

What is a letter of interest and how do I write one?

A letter of interest (also known as a cover letter) is an introduction of a potential employer to a business, organization, or other entity. The letter of interest is your first opportunity to draw a potential employer's attention to your résumé, employment application, and to get them interested in interviewing you. You are also demonstrating your interest in an organization and letting them know what you have to offer their institution.

Important things to consider when sending a letter of interest:

- Every letter of interest you write is unique to the position you are applying for. For example, a chef wouldn't write the same letter of interest as an accountant.
- These letters should emphasize your unique experiences and skill sets to set you apart from other applicants. It is NOT a list of everything you have ever done, neither is it a single paragraph detailing your need for financial support.
- A letter of interest should always accompany your résumé.

What if I don't have much work experience?

Breathe. It's okay if you don't have too much work experience. Companies are looking for individuals that have transferrable skills, meaning your volunteer experience and other extracurricular activities. You can explain your volunteer work, academic and leadership experience, and any other extracurricular activities you have been involved in.

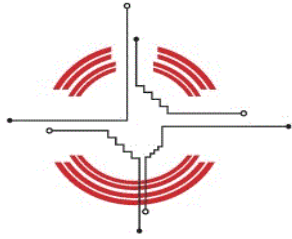
For example, instead of writing:

"I don't have experience as an administrative assistant but I am willing to learn..."

You might write:

"Organizing my extensive homework load, keeping in constant communication with my instructors, planning my semesters, writing various reports and essays under strict deadlines has provided important experience that is necessary for the administrative assistant position."

In the first example, you are making an excuse. The second example is taking everything that you have experienced as a student and transferring that knowledge to the work place.



Office of Career Services

Letter of Interest Must Haves

Write your letter in business format

- 1” margins
- 12 point Times New Roman font
- Black ink only, no italics or bold faced letters
- Make sure your heading aligns to the left side of the page

The length of your letter should never exceed one page

- An employer will not take the time to read more than one page. They have so many applications so don't push it.

Address your letter to a specific person

- Do your research! Who is the Director of Human Resources? Who is in charge of hiring?
- If you can't find a person's name, then address the letter as follows, “Dear, Human Resources Representative” or “Dear [INSERT Organization Name Here] Representative.”

Be consistent

- Use the same format as your résumé.

Be specific

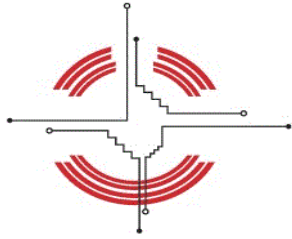
- Your letter should contain information on specific jobs you've had in the past where you learned a lot and were most effective. What were two jobs where you were recognized as a good worker and where you gained valuable skills?

Proofread for spelling and grammar

- **YOU HAVE TO PROOFREAD!** No employer wants to hire someone that has numerous mistakes. Try to impress your potential employer by having a neat and concise letter of interest.
- Have someone like an instructor or someone who writes well proofread your letter.

Save your letter as a PDF

- Not all employers will have the same settings in Microsoft Word. Do not assume your format will transfer to another computer. Save your letter as PDF so your changes won't be altered.



Types of Letters

Traditional Letter of Interest:

- Also known as a cover letter, these letters should inform the organization of who you are and the skills you possess. Letters of interest should be personalized for the specific organization that you are applying with. Research the organization and learn how your experiences match their need.
- What do you have to offer the company? What makes you different? Why do they need you? Show why you are a good fit for them by providing specific details about your past work or volunteer experience.

Prospecting Letter of Interest:

- Sometimes you might be interested in an organization, but they may not be hiring at that time. In this case, send them a letter and tell them you are interested in working for their organization. It is always good to show enthusiasm and to let them know they should keep you on their radar.
- Address your letter to a specific individual in the company. Find out who supervises the department that you are interested in and send them a letter. They would love to hear from potential employees. Be specific about the position that interests you and why you want to work for this organization.

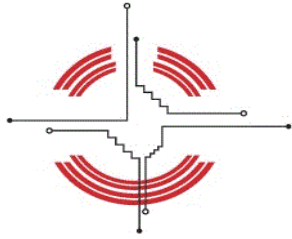
Communicating Like A Professional

Networking

- Networking is a skill that you need to develop to be successful in your career. Networking refers to getting to know people that are in your particular line of work. Look for people that can mentor you in how to get into your desired career field.
- You can send networking emails to people in specific companies that you are interested in. Be sure to write your networking emails as professionally as you would for a letter of interest. Be sure to include specific information like where you found out about them.

Thank you emails/letters

- Sending thank you letters or emails lets employers know that you are a stand up person and shows your character. Be sure to send thank you letters/emails 24 hours after you have had an interview or spoken with a representative from that organization. Keep it short and professional.



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NAVAJO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Office of Career Services

Letter of Interest Template

YOUR NAME

Street or PO Box Address ● City, State, Zip Code ● Reliable Phone Number ● Reliable Email Address

Month, Day, and Year

Person you are sending to (aka addressee)

This person's job title

Organization's name

Business address

City, state, zip code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. LAST NAME:

(Note: If you don't know the person's name, use "Dear INSERT Organization Representative")

Introduction Paragraph:

Keep it short! State the position you are applying for, how you learned about the company and the position, what you like about the company (perhaps their values and reputation), and ask for consideration due to your skills and unique experiences. While expressing your interest in the organization, point out something unique about the company that attracted you to apply. However, do NOT give reasons that are self-centered like "I really need a job" or "I am perfect for this position."

Your Qualifications (Typically, Paragraph 2 and 3):

In one or two paragraphs, detail how your work/volunteer background qualifies you for this position. What skills and unique experiences are you bringing to the organization? These brief paragraphs should emphasize what you can bring to them, instead of what you want from them. Do NOT make it all about what you want. Make this section stronger by focusing on specific jobs/experiences that directly relate to this position.

Conclusion:

Restate your interest in the organization/position and let them know you are committed to this. Request an interview or tell them that you will contact them soon in order to schedule a time to meet. It is acceptable to follow up with an employer to let them know you are interested; it shows that you have initiative.

Sincerely,

Your name