

# The. Cover Letter. Guide.

UMass**Amherst**

Isenberg School of Management  
Chase Career Center

Multiple forms of correspondence are important during your job search. While your resume is your primary marketing tool, other documents serve as key supporting materials and create an overall picture of who you are.

Whether in traditional letter form or transmitted via email, all correspondence should be professional in language and tone and use traditional business letter formatting. Use the same style font as on your resume and be sure the font is large enough to be easily read – between 10-12 pt.

### Correspondence Types

Correspondence for job seekers can include cover letters for internships or full-time positions, email outreach, and “prospecting” or letters of inquiry. Letters and emails should be individually written and tailored to the individual or opportunity.

### Email Communications

Whenever contacting a prospective employer via email, communicate with the same care as you would in a formal business setting or other professional document. An email message to a prospective employer is not casual and should never simply indicate “see attached resume.” You want to be brief, but not stale. Format an email with appropriate salutations, proper spelling and grammar and a professional signature line.

- In the subject line, make the reason for your email clear and succinct: “Application for Analyst Internship.” Pay attention to whether or not they ask you to put specific phrases, job reference numbers or names in your subject line
- **Proofread!** Spellcheck won’t catch words spelled correctly but misused (ex. “their” instead of “there”). Review your emails carefully for tone and grammar before sending them
- Don’t use emoticons or other common email or text messaging expressions. Avoid all caps, which can be interpreted as “yelling”, or all lowercase letters, which is overly casual
- Your email address should also convey a professional tone: “bigpimpin@gmail.com” will not impress
- Include your first and last name in the name of files that you attach to an email (ex. JosephJonesResume.doc). Many employers save all attached documents to an applicant folder; you want them to be able to locate your documents easily

### Cover Letters

The cover letter introduces you and your resume and is a vital part of the application process. It should be no longer than one page – a letter that is longer runs the risk of not being read, and should be sent only if requested.

A well-developed cover letter can get your resume read; conversely, a poorly written or missing cover letter may hinder your consideration for a position. It is important to write in a way that communicates genuine enthusiasm and interest for the position and the employer. Each letter should be personalized for the organization, individual, and position, including keywords from the job posting, and should not just repeat what is already in your resume. **Do not use a template that has not been properly tailored to the specific job.** Your cover letter should reflect the requirements and skills the company is seeking in the job description.

The proper form of a cover letter (see template on following page) includes your contact information at the top, followed by the date, followed by the company/employer information. Whenever possible, avoid using “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern” as salutations. A cover letter should be addressed to an individual by name or a department when applicable, or at the very least, address your letter “Dear Hiring Manager”. You may want to visit the company’s website to find the specific contact name. It is also acceptable to call the organization’s front desk to inquire to whom you should direct your letter or the name of the position supervisor. Going this extra step is a good way of demonstrating your interest in the position. A cover letter is typically three to four paragraphs, including:

### Introduction paragraph

This is where you introduce yourself and specify the position for which you are applying. Indicate how you found the position: for example, through an online job posting, IsenbergWorks, market research, or a referral by a current employee. Explain what about the organization and position appeals to you. This is where you highlight that you’ve done

your research by mentioning one of the employer's recent accomplishments, projects, or tenets of their mission statement. Finally, complete the paragraph by stating, in one sentence, why you would be a strong candidate for the position. This shouldn't be a long paragraph; 4-5 sentences will suffice.

### **Body paragraph(s)**

This is where you summarize your qualifications *in relation to the position for which you are applying*. You want to demonstrate what you have to offer the employer (not what you hope to gain from them). Tie your skillset and experience to two or three themes or qualifications that the employer has stated it is looking for in an applicant. Emphasize your abilities; do not simply restate points from your resume. Use this opportunity to explain more about your skills. Expand on where you developed them, how you have used them to accomplish a notable result, why you are adept at utilizing them. Weave together your academic background, activities, and work experience to provide the reader with a more robust picture of what you can bring to the organization. This should be the longest and/or most in-depth paragraph(s) of your letter.

### **Conclusion paragraph**

This is where you restate your interest in the organization and summarize, in a sentence or two, what you have to offer. Provide your contact information again and indicate any next steps you plan to pursue. For example, you may indicate plans to follow up with a phone call at a certain time or a day, or request a meeting to discuss the position in detail. Finally, be sure to thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Keep copies of all the application materials you send out. If you hear nothing after a couple of weeks, you can follow up with the employer to inquire if any further information is needed and to reiterate your interest.

Keep in mind, there is more than one right way to write a cover letter. Solicit feedback from as many people as possible to gain a clearer sense of how to approach yours.

### **Prospecting Letter/Letter of Inquiry**

A prospecting letter can be an effective way to explore possibilities and gain information about an organization, or even to uncover hidden job opportunities. A prospecting letter should outline your strongest qualifications. Within the letter be sure to indicate your source of information and do some personal marketing. You can request an interview and should express appreciation for the reader's consideration. A prospecting letter should include the following:

- Indicate your interest and reveal the source of the information you have about the employer
- Outline your strongest qualifications. Focus on broader occupational dimensions to describe how your qualifications, experience and motivation match the work environment, demonstrating how you could be an asset
- Your suggested action plan. Request an interview and indicate that you will call during a specific time period to discuss interview possibilities, and express appreciation for the reader's consideration

**For additional assistance, please see the examples below, or make an appointment with Gail Cruise at [gcrui@isenberg.umass.edu](mailto:gcrui@isenberg.umass.edu), who is located within the *Center for Business and Professional Communication*.**

***Sample Cover Letter: Internship***

121 Presidents Drive  
Amherst, MA 01002

November 23, 2017

Forest Hill  
Human Resources  
Earth Our Only Home, Inc.  
5678 Bridge Road  
Somewhere, MA 01203

Dear Mr. Hill:

I was excited to learn about the Assistant Site Manager Intern position for the Boston GreenFest advertised on [internships.com](http://internships.com) and have enclosed my resume for your consideration. A Junior in the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I am pursuing a Management major and am very interested in learning more about site management and sustainability. My excellent interpersonal and organizational skills, as well as my persistent drive to self-start projects, make me a strong candidate for the position.

As a positive, hard-working individual with over three years of experience in customer service, I believe my qualifications match your requirements. In all of my positions, in both clubs and jobs, I have always enjoyed being around people and bringing them together. I have experience planning events for people from my time spent as a Lifeguard at the community pool in Amherst, Massachusetts, where I was in charge of coordinating weekly exercise classes. From my experience as a child caregiver, I have learned that the best-laid plans can always go wrong and have come to thrive on challenges and to accept the unexpected. Patience, creativity, and quick thinking are skills that transcend and can be applied to any situation. Additionally, I understand how to market events through my involvement in the Isenberg Marketing Club, where I am in charge of promoting meets, fundraisers, and school meetings which improved my use of social media platforms and understanding of outreach. Through working with families, fellow students, and patrons, I have honed and expanded on my ability to communicate effectively and deliver thoughts, ideas, and messages both electronically and in person.

Boston GreenFest enjoys an excellent reputation, both for its principles and culture, and I know I would be a valuable asset to your team in assisting to put on such a momentous event. I would sincerely value the opportunity to learn about site management and the sustainability movement growth from a company like Earth Our Only Home. Should you have any questions or require any further information, please feel free to contact me at [mchaseman@cloud.com](mailto:mchaseman@cloud.com) or (413) 577-0000.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Minutia Chaseman

***Sample Cover Letter: Full-time position***

121 Presidents Drive  
Amherst, MA 01002

January 7, 2018

Tami Taylor  
Human Resources Manager  
I'm So Fancy, Inc.  
227 W. Monroe  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Taylor:

I am writing to apply for the Financial Analyst position recently advertised on the IsenbergWorks system. As a senior in the Isenberg School of Management within UMass Amherst, I will graduate in May with a degree in Finance, with concentrations in Financial Analysis and Corporate Finance. Well-versed in Microsoft Excel, examining financial statements, my academic preparation and work experience make me an ideal fit for this position.

Through my coursework, I have had extensive experience with a variety of financial functions. In my Topics in Corporate Finance class, I devised financial statement models based on \$10,000 of research and analysis to project future growth for the Boston Beer Company; calculated mean returns, standard deviation and correlation coefficients for the stocks of Apple, Chevron, and Microsoft; and analyzed capital structures of firms to determine best ways to optimize debt and equity levels in order to provide the lowest cost of capital. Outside of class, I also served as President of the UMass Finance Society, which helped hone my organizational, interpersonal, and communication capabilities. In my role, I scheduled weekly meetings, led discussions on current industry events, and mentored underclassmen beginning their journey in Isenberg.

Additionally, this past year I served as a Processing Analyst at State Street Global Services. I gained exposure to processing trades, routing client information, and utilizing various software systems such as AWD and MCH. I also learned how to efficiently perform research and communicate the findings to investment representatives and peers. This position allowed me to see how financial concepts and transactions are applied in a real world setting. It encouraged quick thinking, teamwork, and application of knowledge. Given the opportunity, I will bring these abilities, and more, to your company.

I would be proud to be associated with a company that values client relationships and strives to be a global company with a local focus, and I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you further. Please feel to contact me at (413) 577-1212, or [Sam.d.minuteman@cloud.com](mailto:Sam.d.minuteman@cloud.com), should you have questions. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sam D. Minuteman

***Sample Cover Letter: Prospecting***

121 Presidents Drive  
Amherst, MA 01003

September 29, 2018

Arvin Sloane  
Director of Human Resources  
Credit Company XYZ  
820 N. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Sloane:

As a senior Management major within the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, I am preparing to graduate this May and am writing today to inquire about opportunities in your management training program.

My interest in financial management developed in high school and intensified through a variety of experiences during college. My internship with State Street Bank, a local financial services company, convinced me to pursue a career in banking. I know from internship supervisor feedback that I have the analytical skills and motivation needed to build a successful career in banking. When I researched the top banks in Chicago, Credit Company XYZ emerged as having a strong market position, an excellent training program, and a reputation for excellent customer service. While I understand that you do not recruit directly from UMass, I have spoken with Samantha Fein during an informational interview and found there is a strong match between Credit Company XYZ's philosophies and practices, and my own career goals. You provide the kind of professional environment to which I could consistently contribute and further develop my leadership and banking industry skills, while making a significant contribution to your organization.

I have enclosed my resume for your consideration. While my education and experience match your website's list of preferred qualifications for your management trainees, they do not tell the whole story, so I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to speak with you further about this role at a time convenient for you. Please feel free to contact me at (773) 555-1212 or [mark.chase@isenberg.umass.edu](mailto:mark.chase@isenberg.umass.edu). Thank you very much in advance for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Mark Chase