



**Post Makes It Personal**

Office of Career Services  
North 103  
203.591.7467  
[careerdev@post.edu](mailto:careerdev@post.edu)



## PROFESSIONAL LETTER GUIDE

## Access To Career Services' Online Letter Builder

With a little knowledge and strategy, you'll be writing high-quality, professional letters to help you secure the job you want.

Before you begin using the online career tools, you will need to create an account with an access code.

### Create Your Account

1. To locate the access code, log onto Blackboard and go to the **Student Services** tab. Scroll down and the code will be listed at the bottom of the **Career Services** announcement, on the right side.
2. Once you have your access code, create an account: Go to the Post University Career Services' online career tools at [post.optimalrésumé.com](http://post.optimalrésumé.com).

You will only be asked to create an account once and then you will have access to all of the online career tools.

### New Letter

To create a new letter, log into [post.optimalrésumé.com](http://post.optimalrésumé.com) and follow these steps:

1. Watch the 20-minute video tutorial to get a preview of how to use the online letter builder.
2. Select **Create Your Letter**, name it, and select **Start Letter**.
3. Browse **Letter Types** or **Samples**, and select a format.

### Existing Letter

If you have an existing letter, log into [post.optimalrésumé.com](http://post.optimalrésumé.com) and sign into your account.

1. Select **Create New Letter**, name it, and select **Start Letter**.
2. Find the **Letter Type** or **Sample** you would like to use.
3. Copy and paste the content from your current letter into the letter sections that you choose.

## Types of Letters

As a general rule, you should always send a letter along with your résumé unless directed otherwise.

You'll have to write a variety of letters during your job search from the time you start looking and even after you've landed the position. The chart below outlines the letters you may have to write.

<b>Cover Letter and Specific Job Response Letter</b>	Expresses interest in a particular position and outlines how you meet or exceed the requirements. Draw upon your past experiences and achievements to demonstrate how you can contribute. Make it clear why your skills, interests and experience make you a perfect fit for that particular opportunity.
<b>Employer Inquiry Letter</b>	Expresses your interest in working for a particular company without knowledge of specific job openings. It is a type of cold-call letter in which the writer attempts to capture the interest of the employer. It must express a flexible attitude and attempt to sell the employer on one's general qualifications. It should have catchy, high impact language, and be no more than four paragraphs in length.
<b>Email Letter</b>	All correspondence with an employer should be formal with pristine grammar and spelling. It is a reflection of your writing skills, so take the time to proofread, and don't use standard acronyms that you might use with your friends. It is always important to follow the employer's instructions on how to submit your cover letter and résumé. You should write these emails as professionally as any other correspondence you send. (You never know where it may be forwarded!)
<b>Broadcast Letter</b>	Does not address a specific individual about a specific position. It is focused on uncovering opportunities. Should paint a picture of someone with a strong, marketable skillset, and it should highlight your key experiences and qualifications that may be attractive to a prospective employer.
<b>Networking Letter</b>	Job seekers often rely on friends and contacts to find job openings. A networking letter is used to address these contacts and inquire about advice and job opportunities. The objective is to reintroduce yourself to the recipient, show your interest in a particular career field or company, and convince them to want to offer advice or ideas to help your job search.
<b>Follow-Up Letter</b>	This letter is used to remind the employer about your interview and to inquire about your status as an applicant. A follow-up letter reaffirms your organizational skills and professionalism. It is important to express your continued interest in the position, as well as to highlight any significant points discussed during the interview to remind your potential employer that you're perfect for the position.
<b>Thank-You Letter</b>	After interviewing with an employer, you <i>must</i> send a thank-you letter. Make no mistake: This small token of consideration can often make the difference in an employer's hiring decision. Short and to the point, a thank-you letter should reflect your enthusiasm for the position and briefly highlight some of the major

	points discussed during your interview.
<b>Reminder Letter</b>	Before an interview, you should consider sending a reminder letter to remind the employer of your scheduled meeting so they can prepare accordingly. A reminder letter not only reminds the employer of the event, but more importantly, it shows your initiative and organization.
<b>Acceptance Letter</b>	In the event that you are given a job offer, you should contact the employer with an acceptance letter to thank them for the opportunity and to confirm your acceptance. It should be brief and express your excitement for your new job and should reflect the qualities you plan to bring to the table.
<b>Reference Letter</b>	You should be able to provide the employer a list of references when asked. Always confirm with your references, beforehand, that it is ok to use their names and contact information. Consider providing your references with the employer's contact information and a brief description of the position so they can be prepared.

## Letter Components

All of your letters should be short and concise. Employers don't enjoy reading lengthy, monotonous autobiographies, nor do they have the time. Keep your correspondence short and to the point, and employers will appreciate it. To do so, it is helpful to understand how you should construct your letter.

When writing letters, there are three basic sections that need to be included:

1. **The Introduction** - Explains why you are writing and is typically one paragraph.
  - If you are applying for a position, identify the position.
  - If an employee of the company referred you, this is where you would mention that
  - If you are sending an interest/inquiry letter, simply indicate the type of work you are seeking.
2. **The Body** - Depending on the letter type, it is typically two to three paragraphs and can include:
  - Asking for assistance in regards to references or networking
  - Highlighting your experience in relation to a potential opening or former conversation
  - Reiterating a previous conversation and how you can/or will contribute
3. **The Closing** – This section summarizes and conveys your plan of action. It is typically one paragraph. Make sure to:
  - Refer the reader to your enclosed resume for additional information
  - Identify what will happen next
  - Ask for the interview
  - Conclude with your contact information, phone and email

## Special Considerations For Cover Letters

The second section, or the body of the cover letter, outlines what you have to offer and should be two to three paragraphs. The body should:

- Display your academic and/or work experience
  - Illustrate the relationship between your skills, experience and the position for which you are applying
  - Describe what strengths you have to offer
  - Identify three reasons for the employer to consider you for the position

You do not need to reiterate everything on your résumé. Instead, briefly highlight how your experiences and qualifications make you the ideal candidate. You simply want to tease the reader and compel them to turn the page and continue reading – or call to set up an interview. By understanding how you can contribute to the success of the company, you can impress upon an employer why they should hire you. Look at the requirements/keywords of a job description and match them to how you qualify. The worksheet below illustrates this. You will find more information and how to draft a worksheet in our [Cover Letter Guide](#).

### EXAMPLE WORKSHEET

JOB REQUIREMENT/ KEYWORDS	HOW DO I QUALIFY?
Fast-paced	Worked in a restaurant
Self-starter, work independently	Classes – required to work within deadlines and follow strict research guidelines; GPA 3.7
Website development, branding, marketing	Internship – Kept company intranet updated and accurate. Logged hundreds of hours researching marketing trends, branding techniques, and topics related to website development...
Strong communication skills: writing, verbal	Internship - Wrote weekly reports and presented minutes at weekly meetings...

# Best Practices For Writing Letters

## Appearance

- Use high-quality, white or cream color, résumé style paper with black ink
- Keep consistent spacing between headings and paragraphs
- Do not depend on Spell Check. Read it out loud, twice and have someone else proofread it
- Write concisely, and keep the letter focused on the issue
- Do not exceed one page

## Personalize your letter

- Always customize your letter
- Call the company, look at their website or talk to others to find the correct contact
- Never address the letter to “Mrs.” Always use “Ms.” because you may not know the marital status of the person
- Check out recent news and/or read the company's website, then incorporate what you learned into your letter to convey interest

## Have a strong opening

- Give a brief statement as to why you feel qualified to fill the job
- Emphasis should always be placed on what you can do for the company

## Showcase your accomplishments

- Include a bulleted area or a similarly targeted section that emphasizes which of your accomplishments are pertinent to the job
- Don't just tell the reader that you are hard-working and motivated – Give examples as to why you say you have these qualities

## Have a proactive closing

- Always initiate further action
- Follow up when you say you will
- Sign your signature in black or blue ink