

The Guide for Students

WWU Career Services Center
GUIDE TO COVER LETTERS AND OTHER
CORRESPONDENCE



CAREER SERVICES CENTER

a unit of Academic and Career Development Services

Old Main 280

Bellingham, WA 98225-9002

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HOW THE CAREER SERVICES CENTER CAN HELP YOU FIND A JOB OR INTERNSHIP

We invite you to take full advantage of the services offered by the WWU Career Services Center. For more information visit Old Main 280 or view our website at www.wwu.edu/careers . Here are just a few resources that may help you as you search for a job or internship:

- Make an [appointment](#) for personalized help from a professional career counselor by calling 360-650-3240 or visit the Career Services Center in Old Main 280 to schedule a meeting
- Get your cover letter and resume reviewed and proofread (it's best to make an appointment in advance, but we can occasionally accommodate walk-in resume checks with peer advisor staff)
- Use [Optimal Resume](#) or review the [Guide to Resumes](#) to learn how to craft an effective resume
- Sign up for free [Viking CareerLink](#) job and internship listings
- Check out our [special events](#) where you can network with employers
- [Interview](#) with recruiters on campus
- Review our [graduate surveys](#) and see where past WWU graduates have gone on to work or intern
- [Invite a professional](#) or peer advisor from the Career Services Center to speak to your club, class or student staff
- Attend a workshop on resume writing, interviewing, job search and more. Check our [website](#) for details and dates
- Do you have ideas on how we can help you? [Tell us](#) what you need and we'll do our best to help

INTRODUCTION TO JOB SEARCH LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Written communication, both hard copy and e-mail, serves many purposes in a job search. Your correspondence:

- facilitates communication between professionals (remember: as of now, you are a professional)
- highlights and demonstrates your skills, experience and potential
- serves as an important writing sample
- provides a record and reminder of interactions during the application process
- fosters networking relationships

Regardless of your profession or industry, written and verbal communication skills are always at the top of employers' desired qualifications list. Before you send any written material, be sure to consult the WWU Career Services Center in Old Main 280, the WWU Writing Center in Wilson Library, your professors and/or contacts in your professional field. They will be happy to proofread your letters or provide you with guidance.

TYPES OF LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE

In a thorough job search, you will write many types of letters. Cover letters, which accompany and introduce your resume, are the ones you may hear about most (and NEVER send a resume without one), but are not the only letters you will need.

There are similar elements to job search letters, but each letter should be individually tailored and targeted to the recipient. There is no such thing as an effective "form letter" in a job search. You know when you get a form letter in the mail; a prospective employer knows too. A letter that looks like it could have been sent to many random employers is destined for the "reject" pile.

Cover Letters/Letters of Application

This letter is written in response to a specific, advertised job opening. The goal is to get your resume read and generate a job interview. A successful letter demonstrates how your qualifications match the job requirements. At the very least, you must research the organization and study the position description carefully. Organize your letter as follows:

- **Seize Attention:** In one, short, bold sentence tell them what you want and why you are writing. This is where you would mention a referral if you can use their name.
- **Pique Interest:** Describe your qualifications as they **relate to the position** requirements, providing evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. **Give your sales pitch:** Convince the employer that you have the personal qualifications and motivation to perform well in the position.
- **Wrap it Up:** Indicate your availability for an interview.

TYPES OF LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

Letter of Inquiry

This letter seeks out possible openings and generates, if not a job interview, at least an initial information interview. Because many positions are not widely advertised, letters of inquiry are used extensively in job searches. It is structured similarly to the letter of application (see above). An effective letter of inquiry reflects knowledge of the organization and communicates how you can contribute to its needs and goals. Organize this type of letter as follows:

- State why you are particularly attracted to the organization; indicate the areas of the organization that interest you and the type of position you are seeking.
- Highlight your qualifications as they relate to your stated interests.
- Ask to be considered for existing or anticipated openings suited to your qualifications.
- Ask to meet with someone to further discuss your interests and qualifications. Because this is an un-solicited letter the person will probably not call you, so tell them you will follow-up and specify when.

Networking Letters

Use this letter when someone has referred you to a person as a contact for an information interview. Usually, it begins with: "Professor Soandso suggested I contact you regarding information about becoming a language interpreter."

OTHER TYPES OF CORRESPONDENCE

Most of your job search letters will be written to seek out employment opportunities. However, there will be occasions that require other forms of correspondence. These should be prepared carefully and professionally. As with cover letters and resumes, be sure to have someone else proofread your documents.

Thank You Letter

This is one of the most important yet least used forms of correspondence. It establishes goodwill, expresses appreciation and can strengthen your candidacy. Make sure that everyone who helps you receives a thank-you letter.

When used to follow up on interviews, this letter should be sent within 24 hours, if possible, to everyone who interviewed you. Keep your letter brief and concise. Restate your interest in the position, reemphasize your strongest qualifications and express your sincere appreciation.

Emails

You will often correspond with employers and contacts via email. Be sure to communicate professionally, clearly and use correct grammar.

Acceptance Letter

This letter is used to accept a job offer and to confirm the terms of employment (salary, starting date, etc.). Often, this letter follows a telephone conversation during which details of the offer and terms of employment are discussed. Some employers will specifically request that you respond in writing. Even when this is not the case, write a formal letter of acceptance to project your professionalism and avoid any confusion about your employment.

OTHER TYPES OF CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

Withdrawal Letter

Once you accept a position, you have an ethical obligation to inform all other employers of your decision to withdraw your application from consideration. Express appreciation for the employer's consideration and state simply that you have accepted other employment.

Letter Declining a Job Offer

Employers aren't the only ones who send rejection letters. You may decide to decline job offers that don't fit your personal objectives and interests. Rejecting an offer should be done tactfully. Indicate that you have given the offer careful consideration and have decided not to accept it. Be sure to thank the employer for the offer and for considering you as a candidate.

Personal Statement

The personal statement is a key component for application to educational programs and financial support (i.e. assistantships). This typically comprises of a brief history about yourself while addressing your academic and career goals. It is your "voice" and allows you to portray relevant experiences that showcase your strengths and preparation.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Five Second Review: Give it the once-over; is your cover letter:

- ✓ Free of typos and spelling errors?
- ✓ Proofread by someone for grammatical and punctuation errors?
- ✓ Typed in the same font as your resume?
- ✓ Organized and prioritized?
- ✓ Full of action verbs describing experience, skills, and knowledge?
- ✓ Specifically addressing the person in charge for hiring for the job and using a colon after the person's name?
- ✓ Signed personally by you in blue or black ink?
- ✓ On the same color paper as your resume?

Fifteen Minute Review: After further reflection, does your cover letter:

- ✓ State specifically the job title for which you are applying?
- ✓ State specifically how you found out about the job posting?
- ✓ Specifically address qualifications listed in the job announcement or list any qualifications you have if this is a letter of inquiry?
- ✓ Emphasize internships, relevant job experience, relevant coursework, or professional society activities?
- ✓ Show your enthusiasm in wanting the position for which you are applying?
- ✓ Stay away from statements such as "I feel", "I think", and "I believe"?
- ✓ Describe your personal attributes that would relate to company culture or how you would fit in the organization?
- ✓ Address any names of people who referred you?
- ✓ Have the appropriate number of paragraphs (3-5)?
- ✓ State interest in scheduling an interview with a company representative?
- ✓ Provide your contact information, i.e., phone and email?
- ✓ Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration?

Your Street
City, State, Zip Code
[1 space]
Date
[3 spaces]

Name of Individual
Title of Individual
Name of Employer
Street Address or PO Box Number
City, State, Zip Code
[1 space]

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name: (Note: Make every effort to find out who should be addressed in a letter. If you don't have a name, you may use any of the following salutations: Dear Sir/Madam; Dear Hiring Manager; or To Whom It May Concern)

[1 space]

Opening Paragraph. Attract attention. Clearly state the reason for writing, naming the position or type of work for which you are applying. Identify how you heard of the opening or how the employer's name was obtained (i.e., the Career Services Center informed me of your opening or Professor Smith in the Technology Department at

Western Washington University recommended that I contact you.)

[1 space]

Second (and Third) Paragraph. State your reason for writing this particular employer. Specify concrete reasons for the type of work you desire. Highlight: **your skills**; your goals; and/or how your education, experiences and other qualifications support your capacity to succeed in this job (in this organization.) **"Show your Stuff!" Describe what you can do for the employer rather than what the employer can do for you.** Significant accomplishments can be noted, but the resume should not be repeated any more than absolutely necessary. Basically, you are emphasizing your key qualifications – selling yourself -- elaborating on background areas which will attract the employer for the specific career field or job you want.

[1 space]

Closing Paragraph. Restate your interest by indicating your availability for a personal interview. Either suggest a time or state your willingness to come at the convenience of the individual employer. End on a strong note. Indicate your resume is enclosed (and your placement file has been forwarded-if appropriate).

[1 space]

Sincerely yours,

[3 spaces]

(Signature)

Full Name Typed or use digital signature

[1 space]

Enclosure:

Cover Letter or Letter of Application for a Specific Advertised Job

In this example, the cover letter addresses the qualifications sought by this employer:

- Bachelor degree in a life science
- Ability to accurately perform repetitive tasks
- Experience complying with written protocols
- Experience stocking and maintaining a laboratory
- Experience creating and maintaining data spreadsheets
- Strong attention to detail
- Able to work independently without supervision
- Excellent communication skills in a team environment

1592 29th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-0000
rhbush@mail.net

June 1, 2014

Mr. Al Gee
Manager, Human Resources
Health BioScience, Inc.
51 University Street
Seattle, WA 98191

Dear Mr. Gee:

I am applying for the position of Lab Assistant at BioScience Inc. that was recently advertised in Western Washington University's Viking CareerLink. I am confident that my education and experience in research laboratory techniques will prove to be an effective match for your qualifications.

BioScience is seeking a candidate with the ability to accurately perform repetitive tasks in compliance with written protocols while at the same time paying careful attention to details. As a Lab Assistant supporting research teams in Western Washington University's Toxicology Lab, I conducted a variety of chemical analyses, each many times over. Every series had to be identical and accurate.

To support research projects, I took the initiative to create and maintain spreadsheets which facilitated timely analysis of detailed data. In an effort to meet precise research needs, I communicated closely with several teams to effectively maintain the lab's stock of chemicals and other materials. Working without supervision, I made time management a priority and typically finished tasks ahead of schedule.

My degree in cell biology and genetics also provides me with knowledge and skills which I can contribute to your organization. For example, in my developmental biology lab I used the model organism *Arabidopsis thaliana* to investigate the mechanisms which control the balance between cell proliferation and differentiation during development. This study and the processes involved are directly relevant to research currently being conducted by BioScience Inc.

I am excited to have the opportunity to contribute my skills, experience and passion for research to your company. I will follow up with you next week to make sure you have all the information you need. In the meantime, if you require additional information or would like to schedule an interview, I can be reached at (360) 676-0000 or rhbush@mail.net. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Rose Bush

Rose Bush

Enclosure: Resume

Letter of Inquiry

Although there is no advertised internship, this student demonstrates knowledge of the field and the skills required. He also makes reference to previous interns from WWU.

1212 Nylon Drive
Bellingham, WA 98223
360-666-7898
Paul.E.Esther@hotmail.net

March 15, 2014

Ms. Dee Vine, Human Resources Manager
International Sportswear, Inc.
7897 23rd Ave. SW
Auburn, WA 98044

Dear Ms. Vine:

I am writing to inquire about human resources internships at International Sportswear, Inc. Several of my classmates have interned with your company and they are very enthusiastic about their experience in your department. I am currently studying Business Administration with a minor in Accounting at Western Washington University (WWU). My educational background, experience and interest will allow me to be an effective contributor to your department.

As a Peer Advisor at WWU's International Programs and Exchanges, I have experience with communicating complex policies and procedures in a sensitive manner. I advise students individually and in small groups about study abroad program options, costs and scholarships, and application procedures. Working in a team environment, I assist in organizing information sessions and special events to provide orientation for new students. To provide families with complete information, I designed and wrote a brochure to address frequently asked questions. In an effort to make this information even more accessible, I am currently consulting with our webmaster to find ways to make this available on our website.

In addition to strong leadership and advising skills, I have several years of administrative experience. At Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, and Benson Construction Company, I provided office support such as answering multi-line telephones, filing confidential records, managing business correspondence, and data entry. As a receptionist, I provided visitors with basic information, made appropriate referrals, and scheduled meetings when needed. Because of my background in accounting, I was hired to tutor accounting students at Whatcom Community College.

I have strong communication skills, excel at problem-solving, and have the ability to work easily with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, I am highly organized, energetic, and able to meet project timelines consistently. Please refer to my enclosed resume for further description of my qualifications. I will call the week of March 30th to inquire about the possibility of setting up an appointment to meet with you. In the meantime, you can reach me at 360-666-7898 or Paul.E.Esther@hotmail.net if you would like further information. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,
Paul E. Esther
Paul E. Esther

Enclosure: Resume

555 N. Forest St.
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-789-6541
wooh23@students.wvu.edu

May 11, 2014

Rick O'Shea, Chief Engineer
Aero Interiors
3225 Woburn Street
Bellingham, WA 98226

Dear Mr. O'Shea:

During a recent conversation Dr. Mary Stinger encouraged me to contact you regarding materials and processing engineer positions at Aero Interiors. Dr. Stinger has former students who have interned and worked in your department and she speaks very highly of their experience working with you. I will graduate in June with a Bachelor of Science in Plastics Engineering Technology and a minor in Manufacturing & Supply Chain Management from Western Washington University (WWU). Your company's focus on aircraft interior integration and implementation of lean manufacturing principals matches my experience and education.

To succeed in this position, an engineer must manage detail; have knowledge of CATIA V5, Excel, and possess modification experience in a manufacturing environment to develop efficient aircraft interior designs. I have been involved with the theory, design and production of a wide variety of plastic parts. My more notable projects and work highlights include:

- Prototyping and testing dip molded bladders for use with aerospace manufacturer AeroComposites.
- Aiding the Value Stream Mapping of aerospace manufacturer JeTech.
- Designing and manufacturing a prepreg bridge for the National SAMPE competition
- Evaluating the effects of wood flour and PE regrind on the flexural stiffness of composite wood 3 point bend bars. I devised a spreadsheet to analyze a specified number of unidirectional plies at specific orientations and their effects on coupling
- Working at K2 Sports as a Quality Assurance Intern.
- Using Lean Manufacturing and 6 Sigma techniques to increase the efficiency in several case studies. My work was recognized and I was invited to compete in a regional case study competition which focused on supply chain social responsibility practices

Given my education and experience, I am confident that I can be an effective contributor to Heath Tecna. I will call your office next week to set up a time where we can meet. In the meantime if you have questions, I can be reached at (206) 300 6351. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Holly Wood
Holly Wood

Enclosure: Resume

Networking Inquiry Letter

If you are actively networking, you may get referrals to contacts that may have jobs or internships to offer. Follow up on those referrals as soon as possible. Be sure to also send a thank you to the nice person in your network who made the referral!

Networking Letter Requesting an Information Interview

606 Bay View Dr. #3
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 738-9876
Roberta_Hernandez@yahoo.com

July 6, 2014

Mr. Frank Nelson, Director, Personnel Services
Apex Communications
18205 Alderwood Blvd.
Lynnwood, WA 98036

Dear Mr. Nelson:

At the June 19th meeting of the Public Relations Society of America, your former co-worker, John Miserati, encouraged me to contact you to learn more about the field of public relations. John spoke very highly of your firm and thought that you would have excellent insights to share with a new professional in the field. I will graduate in August from Western Washington University with a major in Communication and a minor in Journalism. I understand that Apex Communications consults with clients from both the private and nonprofit sectors and that is one of the reasons that I am so interested in meeting with you.

As a Public Relations Intern at Belfair Planned Parenthood, I wrote media and outreach pieces supporting a major public relations campaign aimed at increasing access to health screenings for low-income women. These included press releases, public service announcements, and articles which I distributed to regional print, broadcast, and new media outlets. To make better use of new media, I developed a social media campaign using Twitter, facebook, LinkedIn, and other online communities. My social networking promotions plan was effective and is now the model for other public relations campaigns.

Because this campaign was supported by corporate sponsors, I collaborated with the public relations departments at General Hospital, Advanced Digital Imaging, and BioPharmaceuticals Inc. This experience gave me insights into the similarities and differences between corporate and nonprofit public relations best practices.

I am very excited about the opportunity to meet with you and will call during the week of July 15th to inquire about the possibility of setting up an in-person or phone appointment with you. In the meantime, you can reach me at (360) 738-9876 or Roberta_Hernandez@wahoo.com if you would like further information. Thank you for your consideration, and I appreciate any time that you might be able to share with me.

Sincerely,

Roberta Hernandez

Roberta Hernandez

Enclosure: Resume

Thank You Letter

Always follow up every meeting, phone conversation, interview or other contact with a thank you letter. It demonstrates professionalism, follow up skills and keeps you on the hiring manager's radar screen.

11082 Highland Park Drive
College Place, WA 99324
johnhireme@hotmail.com

November 10, 2014

Mr. Ready Tohire, Personnel Director
The Progressive Company
1550 Business Drive
Seattle, WA 97850

Dear Mr. Tohire:

I sincerely appreciate all the time you spent with me at the recent Career Fair held at Western Washington University (WWU) on November 7, 2014. The information you gave me regarding employment with your organization has helped me clarify my career goals and makes me even more enthusiastic about applying for the position of Management Trainee at the Progressive Company.

You may recall that I interned with the Best & Brightest Inc. As a Management Intern, my responsibilities included budgeting, cost analysis and staffing two branch offices. I attended board meetings, prepared and presented statistical reports to other administrative personnel and acted as a liaison between staff and management at the head office. During our conversation at the WWU Career Fair, you mentioned that this experience would be of value to your organization.

Because you were interested in the hands-on approach of our university curriculum, I am enclosing a copy of my transcripts along with an additional copy of my resume. I will call you during the week of November 23rd to follow up on our conversation. In the meantime, if you need additional information, please contact me at (360) 666-1313 or email me at johnhireme@hotmail.com. After reviewing the information you provided me, I am even more enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with your company. Again, thank you so much for providing me with assistance!

Sincerely,

John Hireme
John Hireme

Enclosures: Transcripts
Resume

Follow-up to Online Application and Networking Activity.

If a contact directs you to apply online, be sure to send a written thanks and let them know that you've applied.

Barbara Seville
2147 NE 145th Street
Seattle, WA 98106
(206) 989-6565
Barbara.Seville@rossinimail.com

February 2, 2014

Mr. Don Basilio, Recruiter
Teach in Korea
1818 N. Granville St.
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada K9N 5W6

Dear Mr. Basilio:

Thank you for your very inspiring presentation in Dr. Bartolo's English Writing Studies Seminar at Western Washington University. As you suggested I visited K-ESL Recruiting's website and have completed the online application for a position as an Assistant English Teacher in a Korean elementary school. This position fits very well with my education, experience and career interests. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and successfully completed classes relevant to English grammar and language acquisition. Moreover, I have extensive experience coaching, tutoring and teaching students.

During your presentation you emphasized that being an English teacher requires attention to detail, the ability to motivate, patience, and the capability to effectively communicate ideas and concepts in a clear and concise manner. As an assistant coach for the University's women's softball team, I tracked each athlete's academic progress and class attendance, and ran a team study hall where I tutored athletes and helped with college assignments, papers and projects. I also facilitated successful and productive team practices on a daily basis. I implemented and ran drills and exercises that ensured that the team learned, developed and honed their skills both individually and as a unit.

During my three summers as a softball camp coach at SportYouth, I fostered an atmosphere where young athletes from the ages of 10 - 17 could learn and develop their skills. I ensured activities were performed in a fun and productive manner, while maintaining a timely schedule. I ran hour long practice sessions where the athletes learned individual techniques and different styles of teamwork. I monitored their performance during games and provided them with sensitive feedback.

I am especially interested in positions in Korean school because of my positive experience as a conversation partner for a Korean university student who was studying ESL at Western Washington University. We met several times a week to discuss current events, enjoy cultural activities all with the goal of improving her English language fluency.

Given my education and experience working with children, I am confident that I have the abilities to be an effective and successful English teacher. I have enclosed a copy of my resume and submitted my online application. To further discuss my qualifications in an interview, I can be reached at (206) 989-6565 or Barbara.Seville@rossinimail.com. I look forward to talking with you again. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Seville

Barbara Seville
Enclosure: Resume

Email for Resume and Cover Letter Attachments

Approach email correspondence as you would other communications with prospective employers and contacts. It should be professional, grammatically correct and concise. Note that you should include contact information below your signature.

Olive Green

From: Olive Green
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2014 9:30 AM
To: Anita Knapp
Subject: Management Trainee Internship Application
Attachments: Olive Green Resume Management Internship.docx; Olive Green Cover Letter Management Internship.docx

Dear Ms. Knapp:

Western Washington University's College of Business and Economics recently sent me a posting for House Design's Management Trainee Internship. As a student with a major in management and minor in fine art, I believe I am an exceptional match for a company that describes itself as "*the premier retailer for fine design.*" To complement my education, I also have five seasons of experience in retail and customer service in fast-paced, challenging environments.

As recommended in your Viking CareerLink internship posting, I have completed your online assessment, and am attaching to this email a copy of my resume and cover letter. Once you review all the application materials, I understand that you will be in touch with qualified candidates to schedule interviews on April 15th in the Career Services Center. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact me at greeo@students.wvu.edu or phone 360-555-1212. I am very excited about the opportunity to intern with your organization and sincerely appreciate your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,
Olive Green
516 ½ High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-555-1212
greeo@students.wvu.edu
[Linked In Profile: http://www.linkedin.com/pub/susan-anderson/17/268/230](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/susan-anderson/17/268/230)

Acceptance Letter

July 2, 2014

11082 Highland Park Drive
College Place, WA 99324
656-565-5566
kerryoki@warmmail.com

Ms. Gail Storm
Director
King County Family Network
7878 23rd Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Ms. Storm:

As we discussed on the phone, I am very pleased to accept the position of Youth Program Coordinator at Seattle Family Network. The goals you and the selection committee outlined for the position are well-matched to my strengths and I consider it a privilege to join your team. Thank you for the giving me the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community and organization.

In speaking with Mr. Dusty Dune in the Human Resources Department, I understand that my starting salary will be \$35,000 and health and life insurance benefits along with three weeks annual leave will be provided after 90 days of employment.

I look forward to starting employment on August 1, 2014. If you or Mr. Dune require additional information or paperwork prior to my starting date, please feel free to contact me. Thank you once again for your support throughout this process. I look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely,
Kerry Oki
Kerry Oki

cc: Mr. Dusty Dune

Withdrawal Letter

June 2, 2014

11082 Cascade Drive
Glacier, WA 98324
360-565-5566
Sandy.Shore@yoohoo.com

Ms. Gail Storm
Director
King County Family Network
7878 23rd Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Ms. Storm:

Thank you for considering me for the position of Special Events Intern at the Weatherbell Hotel and Resort. I have been exploring several opportunities and yesterday I was offered a position with a convention center in Seattle. After careful consideration, I have decided to accept their offer so I would like to formally withdraw my application from consideration for your internship.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the time you invested in the application process. I enjoyed meeting you and the entire special events team. Learning about the innovative programs you are planning was fascinating. I have much respect for the Weatherbell Hotel and Resort and wish you and your staff the very best. Once again, thank you for the consideration and good luck finding someone to fill your position!

Respectfully yours,

Sandy Shore
Sandy Shore

Letter Declining a Job Offer

2318 Mary Lane
Bellevue, WA 98000
206-223-9898

June 17, 2014

Ms. Catherine Sohn-Li
Operations Manager
All-Media Company
50 HighTech Plaza
Redmond, WA 98010

Dear Ms. Sohn-Li:

Thank you very much for offering me the Junior Accounts Representative position at All-Media Company. After careful consideration, I regret that I must decline your offer. Although you were most encouraging in outlining future advancement possibilities within the company, I have accepted another opportunity that is more in line with my skills and career goals.

I enjoyed meeting you and the rest of your team. I sincerely appreciate your kind attention throughout this process and wish you continued success in the future.

Sincerely,

Richard Ortiz

Richard Ortiz

WRITING PERSONAL STATEMENTS ESSAYS FOR GRADUATE ADMISSION & SCHOLARSHIPS

The personal statement is a key component for application to educational programs and financial support (i.e. assistantships). This typically comprises of a brief history about yourself while addressing your academic and career goals. It is your “voice” and allows you to portray relevant experiences that showcase your strengths and preparation.

Use clear organization and the mechanics of an academic essay by including a strong opening or thesis, details to support your claims, and a clear summarization.

- Read each question carefully and make every effort to understand and respond to it.
- Before writing, consider these questions which may shape your composition:
 - What are your career goals?
 - When did you originally become interested in the field?
 - What people or life events shaped or influenced your goals?
 - How have you learned about the field?
 - What work or volunteer experiences contributed to your knowledge?
 - Are there gaps or discrepancies that should be explained?
 - Have you overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships?
 - What personal characteristics enhance your performance?
 - What skills and traits do you bring to the program?
 - Why are you interested in “x” school?
- Tell a story—but be selective and don’t bore the reader with too much detail.
- Concentrate on your opening paragraph to catch attention but do not use quotes.
- Be “non-generic”—your statement should be personal and analytical.
- Avoid obvious clichés, i.e. medical school applicants saying they are good at science or statements such as “I like working with people”.
- Avoid controversial subjects where readers may have differing opinions from yours—such as religion and politics.
- Type and proofread carefully. DO NOT rely upon spell-check. Have others review.
- Write a draft (it does not have to be perfect initially); seek feedback; **be prepared to edit**. Useful resources include professors, friends, family, professionals you have worked with, and the Writing Center, located in Wilson Library.

References (Available for review in the Career Services Center resource library)

Asher, D. (2008). *Graduate Admission Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press
Stewart, M.A. (2009). *How to Write the Perfect Personal Statement*, Lawrenceville, NJ: Peterson’s, a Nelnet company.

ACTION VERBS

CLERICAL OR DETAIL SKILLS

achieved	dispatched	monitored	retrieved
approved	documented	operated	screened
arranged	executed	organized	specified
catalogued	gathered	prepared	systematized
classified	generated	processed	tabulated
collected	implemented	purchased	validated
compiled	inspected	recorded	

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

addressed	directed	moderated	recruited
arbitrate	drafted	mediated	reported
arranged	edited	motivated	responded
authored	enlisted	negotiated	solicited
collaborated	formulated	persuaded	spoke
cooperated	influenced	promoted	translated
corresponded	interpreted	publicized	verified
developed	lectured	reconciled	wrote

CREATIVE SKILLS

acted	designed	instituted	performed
applied	developed	integrated	proposed
conceptualized	directed	introduced	revamped
created	established	invented	revitalized
composed	founded	originated	shaped
conceived	illustrated	planned	

FINANCIAL SKILLS

administered	balanced	estimated	planned
allocated	budgeted	forecast	researched
analyzed	calculated	marketed	
appraised	computed	managed	
audited	developed	projected	

HELPING SKILLS

advocated	coached	educated	guided
aided	contributed	expedited	referred
assessed	counseled	facilitated	rehabilitated
assisted	demonstrated	familiarized	represented
clarified	diagnosed	fostered	supported

MANAGEMENT AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

acquired	coordinated	headed	planned
administered	delegated	improved	prioritized
analyzed	developed	increased	produced
assigned	directed	reviewed	recommended
attained	eliminated	maximized	scheduled
chaired	evaluated	minimized	streamlined
conserved	executed	obtained	strengthened
consolidated	exceeded	organized	supervised
contracted	expanded	oversaw	

ACTION VERBS (continued)

RESEARCH SKILLS

abstracted	discovered	inspected	reviewed
clarified	evaluated	interpreted	summarized
collected	examined	interviewed	surveyed
critiqued	extracted	investigated	
diagnosed	identified	organized	

TEACHING SKILLS

adapted	coordinated	evaluated	instructed
advised	developed	explained	initiated
coached	enabled	facilitated	persuaded
clarified	encouraged	guided	set
communicated	established	informed	stimulated

TECHNICAL SKILLS

assembled
built
calculated
computed
designed
devised
engineered
fabricated
maintained
operated
overhauled
programmed
remodeled
repaired
solved
trained
upgraded

ADJECTIVES

active
adaptable
adept
aggressive
analytical
assertive
broad-minded
committed
competent
confident
conscientious
creative
culturally aware
dedicated
dependable
determined
diligent
diplomatic
disciplined
effective
efficient

energetic
enterprising
enthusiastic
exceptional
experienced
fair
firm
honest
independent
innovative
instrumental
keen
logical
loyal
mature
methodical
motivated
objective
open-minded
organized
outgoing

personable
poised
positive
practical
productive
receptive
reliable
resilient
resourceful
self-reliant
self-starter
sensitive
sharp
sincere
socially responsible
successful
strong
tactful
team-oriented