



Chase Career Center

# **Cover Letter Guide for MSBAs**



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 full-time positions, outreach, prospecting, letters of inquiry, etc. 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 Business Analyst”. 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: “bossyboss@gmail.com” will not impress
- Include your first and last name in the name of files that you attach to an email (ex. Joseph Jones Resume.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. If inclusion of a cover letter is optional, always submit one.

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, 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; 3-4 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

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

121 Presidents Drive  
Amherst, MA 01002

December 7, 2020

Tami Taylor  
Human Resources Manager  
Data Unlimited  
227 W. Monroe Street  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Taylor:

I am writing to apply for the Data Analyst position within Data Unlimited, recently advertised on the Handshake system. As a graduate student in the Isenberg School of Management within UMass Amherst, I will graduate this May with a Master of Science in Business Analytics. Well-versed in Microsoft Excel and Tableau, my academic preparation and work experience make me an ideal fit for this position.

Through my coursework, I have gained exposure to data management and analysis within a variety of functions, including operations, human resources, finance and accounting. As an undergraduate, I also served as President of the Student Leadership Board, 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 at UMass.

Additionally, I served as a Processing Analyst at State Street Global Services this past fall. 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