

Lesson 3

Professional

Writing

&

Plagiarism

ENCP6000

Career Management for Engineers

NORTHEASTERN
•
1898

Learning Objectives

1. Be familiar with the different types of professional writing within the job search process
2. Review templates and examples of professional writing
3. Be able to write professionally with confidence
4. Understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it



What is Professional Writing?

- All types of written communication used in and around the workplace
 - Networking letter
 - Thank you notes
 - Emails from recruiters, employers, colleagues
 - Cover Letter



Cover Letters



Cover Letters

Why should I hire you?

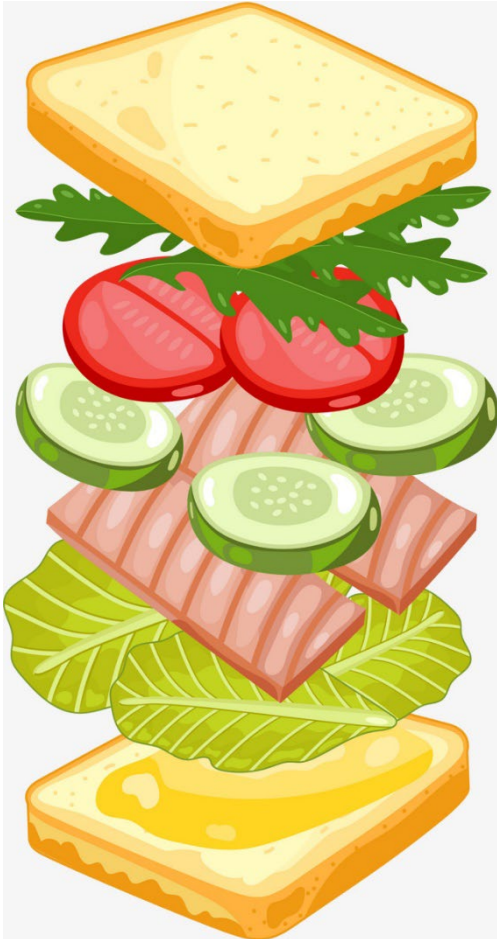
Why are you interested in this job?

Why are you making a career/geography change?

Is there a relevant accomplishment you can share?



Think Sandwich!



First paragraph – indicate the role you are interested in, and provide some basic information about you

Second paragraph – review your experience and qualifications;
make a connection to the job!

Third paragraph – thank the employer for their consideration and leave it open for next steps

TIPS & TRICKS

- Don't assume the reader knows what you are talking about
- Don't ramble
- Don't use in appropriate humor

- Do check grammar and spelling
- Do use the same heading as your resume
- Do show your personality
- Do customize for each application
- Do send a cover letter when required or optional



For the details – choose one of these examples!!!

The Inside Address

Human Relations Department
Trip Advisor
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Mr. James Storey
Human Relations Department
Trip Advisor
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Mr. James Storey
Trip Advisor
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Hiring Manager
Trip Advisor
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Trip Advisor
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

The Greeting & Closing

Dear Mr. Jones,

Dear Ms. Smith,

Dear Human Resources Recruiter,

Dear Human Resources,

Dear Hiring Manager,

Respectfully,

Sincerely,



Avoid the Following Greetings

- Dear Esteemed Sir or Madame (way too formal)
- Dear Ms. Laura Meyer (use Ms., Mr. or Miss & last name only)
- Dear Laura (way too casual for a cover letter)
- Dear Meyer (considered very casual street language – always use Ms. or Mr. when using the last name)

...and Use These Instead!

Dear Ms. Meyer (female)

Dear Mr. Meyer (male)

Dear Miss Meyer



Cover Letter Sample and Review

- Let's look at a couple sample job descriptions and associated cover letters
- Evaluate them and determine:
 - Are the three components included?
 - Has the applicant used an appropriate salutation and closing?
 - Has the student made specific connections to the job description?
 - Any other comments or feedback for Sachin?



Job Description

TripAdvisor Vacation Rentals Software Engineering Co-op TripAdvisor, the market leader in travel research, is seeking a talented Software Engineer Co-op for the Vacation Rentals team in its Boston office at North Station. The Vacation Rentals team, a separate business unit within TripAdvisor, is building the next big product - making it easy for our customers to research and book vacation rental. As a Software Engineering co-op, your work will encompass the key areas of execution for the Vacation Rentals business including building APIs, micro-services, web UIs, native apps, all on a PCI compliant platform. We move quickly, projects are short (in average 3 days), and you will ship features every day used by millions of people. TripAdvisor is well known for having an extremely strong engineering organization ? you will be working with the best and getting stuff done, in the fastest growing area of an incredibly profitable, growing, fun company.

Qualifications

- Working towards a BS or MS in Computer Science or equivalent
- Be available for co-op January 2017- June 2017
- You have a solid foundation in data structures, OO Design with rock-solid programming skills
- You have some hands-on knowledge of Linux, Java, JavaScript and related open source technologies such as Apache, Tomcat, and MySQL
- You have strong interpersonal skills, analytical skills, combined with intellectual curiosity. A desire and ability to "get things done" are essential requirements
- You want to work in a rapidly changing, collaborative, and iterative product development environment



Your heading should match your resume heading

SACHIN SHAH

123 Broadway, Malden, MA 02148

shah.s@husky.neu.edu | 617-878-1234

Hiring Manager
Human Relations Department TripAdvisor LLC
400 First Ave
Needham, MA 02494

The inside address should include the name, title and business of the company. If you know the name of the recruiter or HR individual, include it here.

Dear Hiring Manager:

Use last name only in the greeting or salutation, or title if name isn't known.

I am writing to express my interest and apply for your job listing for a Software Engineer Co-op, which I found on Northeastern's Co-op network. I am a diligent, self-motivated and analytical computer systems engineering graduate student at Northeastern University. I enjoy being challenged and working on projects that require me to work outside my comfort zone and knowledge set, while continuing to learn new languages and develop techniques that are important to gain more practical experience and add to the success of an organization.

As a computer systems engineer, My technical expertise includes cross-platform proficiency (Windows, Linux), strong foundation in programming languages (including C, C++, C#, Java, and SQL); and advanced knowledge of developer applications, tools, methodologies and best practices (including OOD, web-development using open source technologies like Apache Tomcat, Spring MVC) and engineering big-data systems. I have a strong interest in information technology and business applications. The professional experience as a mainframe developer at Accenture for one year, helped me explore the domain of the use of technology to attain business goals. As a proactive and enthusiastic developer, my tasks included analyzing functional business requirements and managing all facets of product development lifecycle which includes developing of COBOL/DB2 applications using JCLs/PROCs. My active listening skills helped in handling problems and taking improvement advice. I have been repeatedly recognized for developing innovative solutions and have received appreciation for proving credible work which resulted in leading heights of achieving targets.

TripAdvisor is well known for having an extremely strong engineering organization who believes working with the best and valuing perfection. This is what excites me about working at TripAdvisor. I have excellent time management skills that help me to define priorities and implement activities tailored to meet deadlines. I am eager to face the challenges to develop creative and innovative systems solution for TripAdvisor.

I look forward discussing about this opportunity further with you. You can contact me at 617-878-1234 or shah.s@husky.neu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Include a closing.

Include a space for your signature before your typed name.

Sachin Shah



And another option...

Posh started as a group passionate computer scientists looking to create and change the expectations of what is possible. With high hopes for conversational AI and the lack of tools available for it, the team at Posh set out to enable developers to easily leverage these advanced technologies and define the new way to interact with users.

Qualifications:

- Computer science background, or similar, with proficiency in Python and general software development practices
- This role will involve using Posh libraries and tools to design, implement, and test chatbot solutions using Pause, our Python-based programming language for chatbot scripting
- Strong proficiency in English and English grammar is a must
- Bilingual (esp. with Spanish, French, etc.) is a plus

Python Chatbot Engineer

Dear Hiring Manager,

"OK Google! Tell me a joke", "Hey Siri, Call Mom" - and probably a lot more requests are made by we humans to the AI assistants daily, and guess what, they obey each and every one of it (unlike we humans). Chatbots have become so real, that while ordering your favourite Basil Fried Rice with Crispy Chicken online, you won't even realize if you talked to a human being or a robot! I have been curious about the fact that how machines can think and learn like humans which led me to develop specific interests in deep learning technologies and trying to find solutions to such problems at scale.

I believe I will be a great fit for the Python Chatbot Engineer position because I have a significant experience developing production level scripts using Python.

I have experience working in the software industry for 3 years and this has helped me develop my analytical and problem-solving skills. Not only did it affect the way I approach problems, but also made me realize critical business considerations which needs to be made while developing a product. One of the unique traits of mine include developing a system keeping the end user in mind. For instance, a research journal I published in Springer required me to think from the perspective of the people diagnosed with the disease. Viewing the problem from the end user point of view gave me clarity about the approach I need to take for solving the problem and it acts as a motivating factor for other projects I undertake. I usually ask myself, is there a better way to do this task? How much will it affect the end-user? Is it simple or am I trying to make it more complex? Questions like that make me think about developing a product in a way in which it creates maximum user impact.

Having worked in a startup previously, I can develop a product end-to-end and design production grade scripts coupled with version control. Creating intelligent autonomous videos in this video first era is essential and I helped scale their video production rate from 30 videos / day to an average of 300 videos / day. What really excited me was the fact that I was creating an impact on millions of people while trying to help small business scale their processes. Currently, I am developing an automodeller software to suggest best machine learning algorithms given any dataset as part of my research work here at Northeastern University

I wanted to close with a quick story of Posh Technologies which make me more curious and excited. A day ago, I visited the Posh website, just to have a little conversation with "Poshie Bot". After about 15 mins of virtual conversation with Poshie, I came to know on what channels does Posh integrate with, what a conversational AI is, how it handles security, who are on the Post team and a whole lot of other stuff about Posh. I find it really exciting to see how can one strike a very human like conversation with an agent and I feel giving it more intelligence and life like effect is something I find it exciting enough to work on and that is the kind of work I want to be doing.

Thank you for taking the time to read my note, I am incredibly excited to have the opportunity to be considered for this position.



Recruiters

Sometimes Recruiters or Human Resources Representatives reach out directly regarding a job opportunity, interview, or offer.

It is important that you:

- Confirm it is not a scam – check email addresses, webpages, LinkedIn
- Are **NOT** being offered contract work (you are not able to accept contract work)
- Are not sharing personal information prior to an offer (passport, SSN, Visa documents, etc...)
- If something seems odd don't hesitate to reach out to your co-op advisor!
- Throughout all your communication is it important to correspond professionally.



Contract Work

From: **Larson, Morgan** <mlarson@populusgroup.com>

Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2019 at 1:16 PM

Subject: POPULUS GROUP: Job Opprotunity - Medtronic, Inc.

To: julka.k@husky.neu.edu <julka.k@husky.neu.edu>




NO!

Hello Kelvin,

You were referred to us by the Medtronic, Inc Program Office for a contract position. I understand they would like to extend this role to you. If you choose to proceed with the offer, Populus Group will become your employer and handle all of your human resource needs, all payroll and expense processing, and you will have the option to participate in several benefits designed for contingent workers.

I would like to schedule a 15 minute call with you to walk through the job specifics, onboarding process, and to answer any questions you have, please let me know what day and time works best for you.

I look forward to speaking with you.



Unsolicited Emails from Recruiters

How to respond

- First – be careful and before responding, check for validity; there is a lot of phishing happening
- If you do respond because it checks out, be professional
- If a job description is included, review it to see if you are interested and respond to confirm interest in next steps
- If a job description is not included, respond asking for details on the position
- If the recruiter wants to talk to you about contract or full-time positions, politely decline and let them know you are interested in intern opportunities





Scheduling an Interview

We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

- A. I'm available tomorrow!
- B. I'm available Monday at 4pm.
- C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm.
- D. I'm currently out of the country and will be available in two months.
- E.no response
- F. I am not available until after 1:00 tomorrow because I have a doctor's appointment at 11:00 and then need to do my laundry.



We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

- A. I'm available tomorrow!
- B. I'm available Monday at 4pm
- C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday
- D. I'm currently unavailable
- E.no response

Does not provide employer with enough time to schedule arrangements

We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

- A. I'm available tomorrow!
- B. I'm available Monday at 4pm**
- C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm
- D. I'm available only on Monday at 4pm
- E.no response

Too limited - does not
provide employer flexibility



We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

- A. I'm available tomorrow!
- B. I'm available Monday at 4pm
- C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm
- D. I'm currently out of the country, and will be available in two months**
- E.no response

**Too far out - does not
provide employer flexibility**



We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

- A. I'm available tomorrow!
- B. I'm available Monday at 4pm
- C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm
- D. I'm currently out of the country, and will be available in two months
- E.no re **Ummmmm...definitely not**
- F. I am not available until after 1:00 tomorrow because I have a doctor's appointment at 11:00 and then need to do my laundry.



We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

- A. I'm available tomorrow!
- B. I'm available Monday at 4pm
- C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm
- D. I'm currently out of the country, and will be available in two months
- E.no
- F. I am not available until after 1:00 tomorrow because I have a doctor's appointment at 11:00 and then need to do my laundry.

Great choice!



What NOT to do
when responding



Make sure you omit ...

- Information about your personal appointments
- Details regarding scheduling conflicts
- Questions about salary, relocation expenses, housing, commute, benefits, vacation time, before offer
- Questions about what the job entails
 - Except when you receive a cold outreach from a recruiter



From: [REDACTED] >
Date: May 29, 2019 at 18:00:33 EDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: RevTwo Internship

Hi,

I just checked, please schedule my interview any other day then 5th. I have some errands to run on that day. I will be free after 4 on that day.



On Wed, May 29, 2019, 4:44 PM [REDACTED] > wrote:

Hi dave,

Thank you for reaching out to me. Yes I should be available on 5th. Please suggest a time when I shall come for the interview.



On Wed, May 29, 2019, 4:25 PM [REDACTED] > wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

We posted internship positions through your Co-Op program and received your response. We are interested in interviewing you if you are still available to work with us and help build this exciting AI company. We would like to meet you in person at our offices at 745 Atlantic Avenue (across the street from South Station) on Wednesday June 5. Please let us know if you are available that day and we will respond with a time. We would expect the interview to last 90 minutes.

We look forward to meeting you.

Kind Regards,

Responding to an employer!

Thank you for your interest in the Software Developer Co-op position at Nokia. We would like to move forward with your resume and schedule a 30 minute phone screening. Please let us know some dates and times next week that you are available.



Sample Response

Hi *NAME OF CONTACT*,

Thank you for extending me the opportunity to interview for the Software Developer Co-op position at Nokia. The following is my availability for a phone screening next week:

Tuesday 8/6: 3 p.m.-5 p.m.

Wednesday 8/7: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Friday 8/9: 1 p.m.-2 p.m.

Please let me know if you need me to provide additional availability. I look forward to speaking with you.

Best,

YOUR NAME



Thank You Email

- Many people have taken the time to review your resume and invite you to learn more about the role and to learn about you
- Used to thank the interviewers and reaffirm your interest in the position
- Demonstrates professional behavior
- **ALWAYS** send a thank you email within **24 hours** for any and **ALL** interviews (phone screens included!)



Consider the Following...

When writing a thank you email, reflect on these questions:

- Was there a response you could improve on?
 - Did you forget to mention a skill or leave something else out?
- What skills or qualifications do they seem to emphasize?
 - Reinforce them!
- What stuck out to you in response to your questions?
- Look at the notes you took during your interview! They will help personalize each of your thank you emails.
- Only 4% of candidates send them – so stand out – *be distinguishable!*



Sample Thank You

Hi **NAME**,

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss my candidacy for the Software Developer Co-op position at Nokia. I enjoyed speaking with you about **[SPECIFICS YOU DISCUSSED REGARDING THE ROLE]**. I also appreciated learning **[INCLUDE A PERSONALIZED PIECE YOU LEARNED FROM THE INTERVIEW]**. I am very excited at the possibility of joining your team and using the skills I have to further develop within Nokia.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if there is additional information you would like me to provide. I look forward to speaking with you about the next steps.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

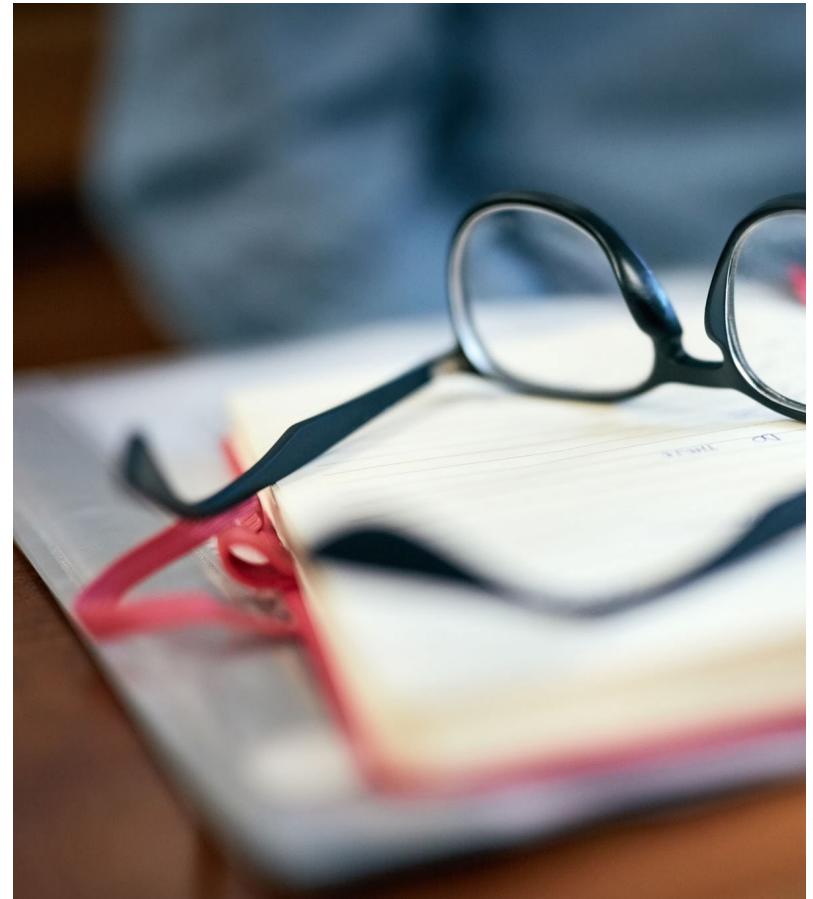


Referrals

When looking for referrals, you first need to:

- Reach out to people **YOU KNOW** who can attest to your skills
- Give them a very brief reason for reaching out

*****Avoid reaching out to random people you do not know and request a referral. They do not know you and cannot speak to your skills and character.*****



Plagiarism



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own



In educational contexts, plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and a breach of journalistic ethics.



Why is plagiarism taken so seriously ?

The reasons are that plagiarism is considered stealing other individuals' work and defeats the purpose of education.

Plagiarism in academia and in business can ruin a writer's credibility and have serious consequences, such as expulsion from school or loss of a job.



Recognize Plagiarism

- Using someone's exact words without quotation marks or citing the source
- Paraphrasing or summarizing someone's words without citing the source
- Stating ideas or research specifically attributed to another person without citing the source

[Northeastern University Citation & Academic Integrity Code](#)



Avoiding Plagiarism

- ✓ Quoting should be used if you are stating the exact words from your source
- ✓ Write summary in your own words, not copied from source
- ✓ Include main points, omitting details, facts etc.
- ✓ Use fewer words than source
- ✓ Be objective and do NOT include interpretation



About Cover Letters

You might think...	But the outcome is...
We have similar experiences/skills, and we are looking for the same type of jobs. Why not just use the same cover letter, or copy most of it anyway?	Your cover letter is more than just a list of your experience and skills. It should also be personalized to show your personality and tailored to the specific company. The employer should be able to get a sense of who you are through your cover letter. If you get selected for an interview, when the employer meets you, they will know you didn't write your cover letter because your personality does not match.
I don't know how to write well, so it's better to copy someone else's because they are a better writer.	Your communication skills will show during your interview, and they will know you didn't write your own cover letter. You would be labeled a liar and will not get the job.
It is also so much easier to copy, why work harder when I can work smarter?	The employer will see that your cover letter is very generic. It will be clear that you found a sample online, copied it and did not even try. Why would they hire you?



What are templates?

- Templates give you general guidance on what to write. It might contain guiding information or fill in blanks for you to flesh out your ideas but will NOT be fully written for you.
- If it is a fully written document, it is an EXAMPLE, not a template. Examples are meant to show you what others have done, but not for you to copy. Never copy an example. Copying an example is copying someone else's work, which is PLAGIARISM.



Sample Cover Letter Templates

RICHARD WILLIAMS

3665 Margaret Street, Houston, TX 47587 • RichardWilliams@gmail.com • (770) 625-9669

[Today's Date]

[Hiring Manager's Name]

123 Company Address

Company's City, State, Zip Code

(xxx) xxx-xxxx

hiring.manager@gmail.com

Dear [Mr./Ms./Mx.] [Hiring Manager's Last Name],

The first paragraph should contain a self-introduction. Write who you are, where your expertise lies, where you found the job posting (or who referred you), and why you want to apply.

The second paragraph should respond directly to the job description. Describe how your relevant experiences, skills, and abilities help you meet the company's needs. To make that easier, you can (and should) literally include words and phrases from the job description here.

- You can also include a bulleted list of your accomplishments
- Make sure you quantify (add numbers to) these bullet points
- A cover letter with numbers is 100% better than one without

To go the extra mile, research the company and try to find out what they are doing — and why — given the current state of their industry. Explain how you can fit into that framework, and help push the company forward and achieve any goals you suspect they have.

The final paragraph is the “call to action” portion of your cover letter. Inform the hiring manager that you'd love to get interviewed. Give them your contact information. Tell them you'll reach out again next week if you don't hear back. Thank them for their time.

Sincerely,

Richard Williams

Your Name

Address, City, ST ZIP Code | Telephone | Email

Date

Recipient Name

Title

Company

Address

City, ST ZIP Code

Dear Recipient Name:

To get started right away, just click any placeholder text (such as this) and start typing to replace it with your own.

Want to insert a picture from your files or add a shape, text box, or table? You got it! On the Insert tab of the ribbon, just click the option you need.

Find even more easy-to-use tools on the Insert tab, such as to add a hyperlink, or insert a comment.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Using AI

It is best to avoid using cover letter generators online. Those are GENERIC and employers will know you've used one because they've seen the same words/sentences used by other people before. Recruiters read so many cover letters per day; they will know.



Questions?



Coming up....

Check Canvas and your Syllabus for this week's assignments.

