

## Cover Letters

The cover letter is an important part of the job search process. A cover letter (when requested) always accompanies the resume when it is sent to a potential employer. The most effective letters are interesting, informative, and concise.

### JANE Q. DOE

123 Main Street | Iowa City, IA | 52242  
(515)296-7787 | jane-doe@uiowa.edu

Date

Name of Contact Person

Their Title

Organization Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Contact Person (Mr./Ms. and last name):

*(If a contact name is not listed, call the organization to ask for the appropriate contact. If you cannot locate a specific individual, address your letter to Members of the Search Committee or Human Resources Director.)*

#### Opening Paragraph

Use this paragraph to get the employer's attention. Show your initiative, and what you have learned about the company that makes it attractive to you. Identify what position you are applying for and how you learned about the position. If you have been referred to the position by someone in your network, include that information here. Your goal is to convince the employer that you are a strong candidate qualified for an interview.

#### Body of the Letter

This section of the letter is where you justify why you should be considered as a candidate. Relate your qualifications to the specific job requirements, using examples of your experiences and achievements to convey your knowledge and skills. Do not simply duplicate the information your resume; rather highlight or add pertinent details of interest to the employer. Use wording similar to the job description and make a connection between your experiences and the duties/tasks of the position.

#### Closing Paragraph

The final paragraph is used to express an interest in an opportunity to interview for the position or to meet to discuss your qualifications. Indicate a willingness to supply the employer with additional information. Also, indicate that you will take the next step, which may be a follow-up phone call *(be sure to mark your calendar and then make the call)*. Remember to thank the employer for reviewing your application.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature* (use black ink)

Your typed name

Enclosure *(if you are including a resume or another document with your cover letter)*

# Cover Letters: Utilizing the Job Description

When writing your cover letter, it is important to relate your skills and knowledge to the position for which you're applying. What related experiences can you emphasize to show a connection between your abilities and the position? Also, think about developing your cover letter from the employer's perspective. If roles were reversed and you were hiring for this position, would you consider yourself a strong candidate qualified for an interview? In short, have you sold yourself on paper and linked your experiences to what is asked within the job description and desired qualifications?

The following position was posted on Handshake, the University of Iowa's online job and internship database. The underlined text illustrates where the applicant intends to detail their experiences that connect to that particular job task or desired skill. The following cover letter will demonstrate how the applicant relates their experiences to the job description.

## Job Posting

**Job Title:** Sales Account Executive  
(Full-time)

**Organization:** KWKB-TV

**Location:** Iowa City, Cedar Rapids,  
Waterloo, IA

**Industry:** Media/Broadcast; Communication;  
Television; Sales

## Description

KWKB CW 20 has an immediate opening for a highly motivated Account Executive. The primary responsibility of our Account Executives is to sell commercial advertising time and other station products to local advertisers and/or advertising agencies. KWKB programming includes America's Next Top Model, Gossip Girl, and Vampire Diaries. This is a tremendous opportunity for a highly motivated individual to join a progressive company.

## Responsibilities

- Generate revenue for station by retaining current business and developing new business
- Contact local advertising agencies and direct advertisers
- Attract advertisers to sell products and services via broadcast television
- Make sales presentations to all classifications of advertisers to obtain orders for advertising time and use of commercial production facilities
- Attain budgeted revenue goals through effective solicitations and promotions

## Desired Skills

- Strong planning and organizational skills
- Proficient in MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Previous media sales experience a plus, other sales experience preferred
- Must be accountable and reliable

## Sample Cover Letter

**Ryan Kennedy**

123 Market St, Iowa City, IA 52242  
(515) 234-5678; ryan-kennedy@uiowa.edu

March 22, 20XX

Joy Anderson  
Senior Account Executive  
KWKB-TV  
501 1st Avenue  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Dear Ms. Anderson:

I am writing to express interest in the Sales Account Executive position posted on the KWKB-TV website. I am excited to work for one of the region's most recognized and accomplished television stations and would like to be considered as a candidate for this position.

As my resume indicates, I am currently the Advertising Manager for The Daily Iowa (*DI*), the University of Iowa's student newspaper. In my position, I manage the accounts of more than 200 businesses that choose to advertise in the DI. Through working with a variety of companies in the Iowa City area, I understand the importance of cultivating customer relationships through personal contacts, and I am devoted to providing clients the best experience possible. I also have experience with creating promotions to generate revenue. For example, I developed a "Buy Two Ads, Get One Free" promotion that I presented to local businesses to encourage them to advertise in special editions of the DI that were distributed during summer orientation programs. This promotion increased summer ad sales of 35%. I pride myself on being dedicated to my work and not afraid to take on challenges.

In addition to my advertising knowledge, I also possess several years of retail experience. As the Assistant Manager of a large retail chain, I have learned to be organized, efficient, and accountable. Through this experience, I understand how providing quality customer service is vital to repeat business.

My experiences have given me an understanding of the advertising sales industry and make me a competitive candidate for the Sales Account Executive position. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this position in detail. Please feel free to contact me should you need additional information. Thank you for reviewing my materials. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

*Ryan Kennedy*

Ryan Kennedy

*Please note:* The underlined text illustrates the direct connections to the job description the applicant made when writing their cover letter. Do not underline in your actual cover letter—this is intended for learning purposes only.

## Online Portfolios

An online portfolio is a method to display your work and can be personalized to target your audience and industry. This tool is frequently used in film/video, design, journalism and publishing, or other positions that may require examples of your work. Often, online portfolios are a blog, or a personalized website organized to show your work for an employer or potential client to skim quickly.

### What does a portfolio typically include?

Your resume, digital images of your graphic designs, photographs or artwork, writing samples, and/or video and audio files. Depending on the field, it could include grant proposals, policy analysis, lesson plans...pretty much anything you want an employer to view. Just remember, a portfolio is a curated body of work—only include the best works that are most relevant to the opportunity.

### What else might be in a portfolio?

Newspaper clippings or examples of web content about your work or an award, recommendations, or testimonials can be included but are 'extras'. Whenever possible, draw attention to the results and impact of your work. For an online branding opportunity, create an "About Me" page in your portfolio.

### Should you also have a hard copy portfolio?

Yes! You can include similar documents as above, but also include personal information about what you studied and where, your contact information, and a contents list of the relevant work that you included. Hard copy portfolios are especially useful for candidates that have a physically evident disability; the candidate can immediately counter bias in an interview by showing the employer proof of their ability to do the job via hard copy documents or using their laptop to demo their online portfolio.

Visit [careers.uiowa.edu](https://careers.uiowa.edu) and search for "Portfolios" for more information and links to free website and portfolio products

#### ADVERTISEMENT



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documented  
driving experience.

# Sample Email of Introduction

## When would you send it?

Use emails or letters of introduction when you are interested in an organization/company and you do not see open positions posted on their website.

## Why would you send it?

It is a great way to create a networking opportunity so you can work on becoming a stronger candidate before they do have openings. It can also be a great way to start a conversation about creating an internship opportunity especially for you if they do not have a formal program.


## Who do you send it to?

Typically, you would send an email of introduction to human resources; if the organization is too small to have a human resources division, then send it to the director of the department in which you are interested.

**From:** karen-smith@uiowa.edu

**To:** j.johnson@company.com

**Subject:** Internship Inquiry

 **KarenSmith\_resume.pdf**

Dear Ms. Johnson:

A recent issue of *Non-profit Quarterly* highlighted The Foundation, describing the excellent grant making opportunities that you provide. This funding and your excellent service is essential for many non-profits. As I did not see any internships posted on your website, I am writing regarding my interest in grant making or communications internships with your organization. I am interested in learning more about The Foundation's work, as well as any anticipated internship openings on your staff that will use my experience to your benefit.

I have enclosed my resume for your review; my specific qualifications for an internship include:

- Grant making & grant writing projects with Wells Fargo and the Muscular Dystrophy Association
- 1 year overseeing creative communication strategies for the consulting program of the UI PRSSA chapter
- Writing experience on civic issues for the *Daily Iowan*
- Advanced coursework in Communication Studies as well as Fundraising & Philanthropy Communications

If your schedule permits, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet in person or talk via phone to hear more about The Foundation and your internships. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

**Karen T. Smith**

The University of Iowa

Communication Studies and Fundraising & Philanthropy Communication Certificate

Inspire Director, Iowa Public Relations Student Society of America

Local Government Reporter, The Daily Iowan

Karen-smith@uiowa.edu | (123)-456-7890

## What content should you include?

### First Paragraph

Emphasize knowledge of the organization and why it appeals to you. This could be about a mission/philosophy fit or their achievements or skills that you deem important.

Want to name drop? Do it here. For example:

*My former supervisor, Mr. Marcus Jones, thinks very highly of The Foundation based upon your collaboration on the economic development initiative; he recommended that I contact you regarding a possible internship.*

### Middle

Brief summary of skills, knowledge, and/or experience that apply to this particular organization.

### Final Paragraph

Summarize any next steps regarding follow up. Be clear with your intentions and remember that an in person visit is not always necessary, but could be a phone call or Skype meeting instead. It's okay to do a follow-up email or phone call after two weeks if you have not heard back.

# Acquiring & Maintaining References

## How many?

Plan to identify 3-5 people to use as references and then provide 3-5 for each position applied for, depending on who is the most relevant for each position.

## Who to ask?

Full-time and part-time work supervisors, volunteer coordinators, peer advisors/mentors, professors and academic instructors, academic advisors, and any other person that can speak to your abilities related to the job you are applying for. Do not list parents, friends, family, significant others, etc.

## What to ask?

Schedule a short meeting or phone call with this person (in-person meeting preferred) and ask them to be a positive reference for you. Talk about the position you want and your qualifications so that you and your reference are on the same page about what information is being presented about you. Make sure to ask this person for their preferred contact information so you can include it on your reference page, and remember to say thank you.

## What to provide?

A copy of your current cover letter and resume, and anything else the reference may need from you. **Note: Notify references when you apply to a position.** They will appreciate the heads-up.

## Reference Page

Use the same heading on the top of your reference sheet that you used on the top of your resume—they should match. Write “References” as your section heading and format it so it looks the same as the section headings on your resume.

List 3-5 references, in order of importance for the specific position being applied for. Include their name, relationship to you (i.e. Academic Advisor), their address (professional preferred), phone number, and email.

## Sample Reference Page

### Jackie A. Jorgensen

jackie-jorgensen@uiowa.edu

Present Address:  
500 North Drive  
Iowa City, IA 52240  
(319) 351-0000

Permanent Address:  
411 Windsor Drive  
Dubuque, IA 50312  
(515) 465-1234

### References

#### David Jones, MA

Psychology Teaching Assistant  
University of Iowa  
4 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240  
(319) 400-3030  
david-jones@uiowa.edu

\*Teaching Assistant for Educational Psychology course

#### Carrie Kirk

Internship Coordinator  
Great American Leasing  
625 First St. SE, Suite 800, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
(319) 363-0000  
CarrieL@mchsi.com

\*Former internship supervisor

#### Paul Parker

Manager  
Olive Garden  
24 Racine Ave, West Des Moines, IA 52693  
(319) 344-0481  
paul-parker@hotmail.com

\*Current work supervisor