

PART 4

WRITTEN DOCUMENTS IN ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXTS

In this final part of the course, you'll get into the product of written technical communication by analysing some kinds of documents that are produced in academic and professional settings. First, we'll help you become familiar with some general-purpose letters that may be useful in different kinds of settings. We'll also study e-mail communication, and some pitfalls to avoid as we use such a common genre. Finally, we'll analyse the technical report, another common type of document generated in professional settings. Remember that it is crucial to be aware of the kind of genre we are dealing with in order to follow conventions, layout, etc., but this does not mean that we do not need to go through the steps in the writing process as we have learnt in this course. On the contrary, remember to always plan, draft and revise any piece of writing and, of course, use models as a guide.

4.1 Letters and resumes for academic and professional purposes

Introduction: Points to note

- Most company notepaper is headed. However, if you are writing on unheaded paper, put your address (but not your name) in the top right hand corner. The address of the company you are writing to should appear on the left so that it can be seen through an envelope with a window. If you are writing to a specific individual in the company, his/her name and position goes above the address.
- Dates can cause some confusion. 2/3/0__ means "the second of March" in English letters, but "February third" in American ones. Confusion can be avoided by writing dates as follows: 2 March (or March 2 in the US). The names of the months should not be abbreviated in formal letters.
- When you receive a business letter, there is usually a reference number at the top following the words *Our ref.* This is designed to help the sender to file related correspondence, and you should quote this reference when you reply.
- If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, or you are not sure if you are writing to a man or woman, you should begin *Dear Sir or Madam* (*Gentlemen*: in the USA) and end *Yours faithfully* (*Yours truly* in the USA). If you know the person's surname, begin (for example) *Dear Mrs. Jones* and end *Yours sincerely*. If the person is more of a friend, begin (for example) *Dear Peter*, and end *Best wishes*. In opening and closing salutations and in addresses, it is common not to use full stops and commas.
- Refer to men as *Mr.* Refer to women as *Ms.* unless in previous correspondence from them they have indicated that they use the title *Mrs.* (for married women) or *Miss* (for unmarried women).

Women will often indicate their preferred title by writing it in brackets after their signature, for example: *Catherine Honey (Mrs.)*. Most correspondents will assume you are a man unless told otherwise, so if sign a letter *H. Jones*, most people will reply beginning *Dear Mr. Jones*.

- When you sign your name, it is common practice to type it out as well and to put your position in the company below it. If someone in a company signs a letter on behalf of someone else, the initials *p.p.* (per pro) should be used before the name to indicate this.
- If something is being sent with a letter. *Enc.* or *Encl.* (enclosure) should appear in the bottom left-hand corner of the page.

A) The Covering Letter

When you apply for a job or a scholarship, you may need to fill in a company application form which asks for personal details, your qualifications, and your work history. Alternatively, you may be asked to supply a curriculum vitae, which gives similar information, but which you write yourself. In either case, you will need to write a covering letter to go with the application form or CV. Most jobs will have been advertised in the papers or specialist publications, and before you write your covering letter you should study the wording of the advertisement carefully. Find out exactly what the employer is looking for (example, a certain amount of experience, familiarity with particular languages, etc.). Then, in your covering letter, try to show that you have all the qualities, qualifications, and experience that the employer is looking for. You should not simply repeat all the information in the CV; you should highlight the most important parts.

The standard format for this type of letter is as follows:

- heading
- inside address
- salutation
- body
- closing
- supplementary lines

Exercises



Exercise 1

Read this advertisement and answer the questions that follow.

Systems Programmers to £ 20,000 – London

Our client is a major UK bank whose range of activities is as impressive as the growth of its profits. A bank that is dedicated to a long-term programme of systems development.

With IBM RS/6000, System 38, and VAX hardware driving user-interface PC networks using C, UNIX, FOXPRO, and SYBASE, there's no doubting our client's commitment to systems innovation and investment.

We are looking for SYSTEMS PROGRAMMERS with C and UNIX skills, who can show us 2 years' experience of delivering advanced banking and online information systems. Above all, we need flexible thinkers who appreciate the commercial realities and priorities of the banking industry.

Show us these qualities, and our client can offer you a competitive salary plus many banking benefits. If your talents and ambitions are ready for such a move, please send your CV, quoting Ref.349, to:

Harriet Bradman at Compro Recruitment Services, 318 Leadhill Street, London EC1
1DR.

1. Who placed the advertisement?
2. What software does the current system use?
3. What specific characteristics or qualities are required?
4. What benefits come with the job?

Exercise 2

A certain David Manning has applied for the job advertised in Exercise 1. Before reading his letter, tick the items you think he should mention in replying to the advertisement.

Do you think he should:

1. begin with a reference to where he saw the job advertised?
2. give details of the subjects he studied at school?
3. list briefly the subjects he studied at school?
4. be honest and admit that he lacks exactly the required experience?
5. indicate his current level of responsibility?
6. explain why the company would benefit if they employed him?
7. say when he will be available for interview?

Exercise 3

Now read the letter and compare your predictions. Do you think it is a good letter? Discuss the reasons for your opinion.

22 Carlyle Crescent
London WC1H 9BH

18 June 200____

Yr Ref: 349

Ms H Bradman
Compro Recruitment Services
318 Leadhill Street
London EC1 1DR

Dear Ms Bradman

I wish to apply for the post of Systems Programmer, which was advertised in this month's edition of IT World.

I am currently a Systems Programmer at GCG Merchant Bank where I have two years' experience of specialized programming for the financial sector. I am familiar with C/UNIX, LAN/WAN technology, and relational databases.

Prior to taking over my current post, I worked for Data International as a Trainee Systems Programmer, where I was involved in the development of a new online information system for a financial services company.

My experience in the fields of both banking and online information services has given me the necessary commercial and technical awareness to be able to make a valuable contribution to the systems development programme of your client.

Please let me know if there is any further information you require.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

David Manning

B) The Resume or Curriculum Vitae

Every linguistic group and more precisely every profession has its own peculiarities when it comes to resume writing, and it is important to follow the conventions and organize the information the way you are expected to. Following are some samples of curriculum vitae. Follow the scheme, learn to steps and finally be ready to write your own.

Exercises

Exercise 1

Read the following job advertisement and answer the questions below:

Wanted Engineering Staff

Communicate, a go-ahead company involved in the design, development, and production of VHF/UHF communications equipment and accessories, are looking for engineers for the followings jobs.

Trainee Service Engineers (two posts)

Applicants should either have practical knowledge in RF communications or have qualifications in the field of electronics with /without practical knowledge.

Salary: Negotiable, depending on experience.

Service Engineer

Applicant should have at least two years' experience in servicing VHF/UHF communications equipment down to component level. The successful applicant will be servicing land-mobile, marine, and amateur radio products.

Salary: According to experience

Analog RF Design/Development Engineer

Applicants should have an HNC or BSc in Electronics or Telecommunications and should have experience in RF product design with an understanding of mechanical assembly.

Salary: According to qualifications and experience

CVs for the attention of:

Mr. Clark
Head of Personnel
Communicate (UK) Limited
Lewis Avenue
LONDON NWS 1BR

1. What is the name of the company?
2. What are its activities?
3. Where is the company based?
4. How many posts are vacant?
5. Which posts are available to those without experience?
6. How do you apply for a post?
7. Who is Mr. Clark?
8. What salaries are offered?

Exercise 2

A certain Charles Dunkin decides to apply for one of the Trainee Service Engineer posts described in the job advertisement above. First, look at his CV below, and then write a covering letter to accompany it.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal details

Name: Charles Dunkin
Date of birth: 30 May 1974
Address: 44 Maxton Street, Bath, BL14 6FH
Marital status: Single

Education

1991-present

Maxwell College of Further Education, Bath
Ordinary National Certificate in Electronics
I will complete my ONC studies in June. I have already successfully completed modules in:
Digital Electronics 1 & 2, Analog Electronics 1 & 2, CAD Computing, Mathematics, Communication Skills

1985-1990

Bath Secondary School
General Certificate of Education
Physics A Mathematics B
English B Geography C
French C

Other qualifications

Clean driving licence

Work experience

Summer 1992

Service technician, Baird Audio-Visual Products, Bath
This vacation job gave me experience of servicing domestic television sets, VCRs, and radios

1990-1991

Trainee Mechanic, Dunkin's Garage, Bath

Summer 1989

Waiter, Western Hotel, Bath

Hobbies/interests

Motorcycle maintenance
Football-College 2nd XI

Referees

Academic

Dr John Coulter
Head of Dept. of Electronics
Maxwell College of
Further Education
BATH BW4 6BN

Work

Ms Jean Cadmus
Head of Personnel
Baird Audio-Visual Prod.
Farrer Lane
BATH BL41 3LH

Exercise 3

Some common expressions used in letters. In each of the following sentences, choose the correct word.

1. I am writing to (apply, request, ask) for the post of Sales Consultant advertised in today's edition of *The Independent*.
2. I enclose my curriculum vitae for the (job, position, work) of Program Manager.

3. As you will see from the enclosed (CV, covering letter, application), I have had several years' experience of Export Sales.
4. I (qualified, left, graduated) from Manchester Technical College with an HND in Electronic Engineering.
5. At present, I am (worked, employed, taken) by Unisys, where I work in the Customer Services Department.
6. I would be grateful if you could send me an application (form, formula, card).
7. While I was at Dell, I was (liable, responsible, charged) for the day-to-day running of the Technical Services Department.
8. At ICL my duties (included, added, completed) installing and testing new computer systems.

Exercise 4

Using the format above, complete your CV with all the relevant information about yourself. Write a draft first, and discuss all doubts with a partner.

Exercise 5

This is a sample of the letter C. Dunkin wrote to apply for the job. Fill in the blanks with the suitable word and the correct form.

provide / apply / enjoy / available / although / hear / suited / advertise / service / qualify / confident /
enclose / complete / equipment / experience

44 Maxton Street
Bath
BL14 6FH

Mr. Clark
Head of Personnel
Communicate (UK) Limited
Tradescant House
Lewis Avenue
LONDON
NV3 1BR

3 April 200---

Dear Mr. Clark

Re: Trainee Service Engineers

I would like _____ for the post of Trainee Service Engineer as _____ in the April issue of Electronics Today. I _____ my CV with the names of two referees.

I consider I am well _____ for this post. I will shortly complete my ONC in Electronics and will be _____ for employment from the end of June. My college work has been good, and I have _____ all my modules successfully to date.

On leaving school, I worked for one year in the family garage. _____ I decided not to continue with this career, it gave me useful work _____. Last summer I spent two months of my vacation working for a small company which repairs electronic _____. This _____ valuable experience in _____ television sets, radios and VCRs. I feel _____ that my work experience, together with my college qualifications, makes me well _____ for the post.

I have a clean driving licence and _____ good health.

I look forward to _____ from you.

Your sincerely

Charles Dunkin

Exercise 6

Write a letter applying for a scholarship to study at a foreign university (e.g. your last year, a postgraduate course, a summer course, etc.). The following cover letter can serve as a guide for the type of information you should include. Don't forget to use the correct layout for a formal letter.

(Heading)
(Date)

(Inside address)

(Salutation)

I would like to apply for a British Council Scholarship to study in Britain. I am in my final year of a 5-year degree course in civil engineering at Munich University. In our last two years we have to choose an optional subject, and I have opted for town planning, with special reference to city centers. My working experience is limited to four months, (July to September of last year and the year before), as an unpaid assistant in the planning office of the Munich City Council.

I am not involved in any current research, but my reading has included many articles and reports, several of which were from Great Britain and USA, on traffic-free shopping centers. It is this particular aspect of town planning that interests me because the centers of many German towns suffer from the dense traffic there. The reason I would like to study in Britain is to have the opportunity of working with those planners who are responsible for present and future developments in this area.

I understand that Leeds and Birmingham universities are heavily engaged in this work, and consequently, I hope that I would be able to do my post-graduate work in one of these. As for the period, at least one year would suit me, starting next autumn or at any time after that.

I look forward to hearing from you.

(Closing)

(Signature)
(Name and surnames)

C) The Enquiry Letter

The following exercises provide good samples of letters of inquiry. They are letters requiring information either from costumer to supplier or vice-versa. They are concise and to the point and they generally follow the same pattern as the covering letter, but in a simplified manner.

Exercises



Exercise 1

Fill in the gaps with the appropriate word from the list below.

send	madam
attention	faithfully
together	project
based	protecting
graphics	sell

PHYSIOLOGICA
17 Princess St. London ECG 7DQ
Telephone 071 9827111
FAX 071 982 7712

Discpro SA
51, rue des Ramonières
86256 POITIERS CÉDEX
France

1 July 200--

For the _____ of the sales manager

Dear Sir or _____

We are a software company _____ in London and are currently developing a Windows-based _____ package for use in universities and research laboratories. We are interested in _____ the programs we _____ from unauthorized copying and duplication.

Could you please _____ us more technical information about your RS-11 software protection system _____ with your current brochure and price list?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours _____

Anne Newson
_____ Director

Exercise 2

Complete this reply to the letter of enquiry above using the prepositions given. You will have to use some prepositions more than once.

for	from	in	to
on	of	with	

251, rue des Ramonières F-86256 POITIERS CÈDEX

DISCPRO SA

Tél (33) 99681031
Télécopie (33) 102163

Réf. PV/KH

5 July 200---

Ms Anne Newson
Project Director
Physiologica
17 Princess St.
London EC1 7DQ
UK

Dear Ms Newson

Thank you _____ your letter _____ 1 July _____ which you expressed an interest _____ the RSP 11 software protection system. Please find enclosed our latest brochure and price list.

_____ the information in your letter, I can confirm that the range of products we supply would be ideal _____ your needs. In particular, I would like to draw your attention _____ the RSP 11W on page 3 which is designed for software protection in both Windows and O/S 2 environments.

As you will see, our protection systems are tailored _____ individual programs. Please let me know whether you would like to arrange a meeting _____ our Technical Director, Mr. Michael Gérard, to prepare a more detailed report _____ your program and particular requirements. He will be in London during the week beginning 15 July.

I look forward to hearing _____ you.

Yours sincerely

P Varenne
Sales Manager

Enc.

Exercise 3

In each of the following sentences, choose the correct word to fill the gap.

1. I would be _____ if you could send me details of your PS 2 range.
a) thankful b) please c) content d) grateful
2. You were _____ to us by our associates.
a) advised b) suggest c) recommended d) informed
3. We were given your _____ by The Chamber of Commerce.
a) identity b) company c) name d) placing
4. Thank you for your letter _____ 19 June.
a) in b) on c) of d) from
5. Please _____ enclosed our current catalogue and price list.
a) find b) look c) receive d) examine
6. We would appreciate _____ you could send us further information on your range of non-impact printers.
a) it that b) this c) when d) it if
7. I would be grateful if you could arrange for your Technical Director _____ on me.
a) will call b) is calling c) to call d) calls
8. We would be grateful _____ an early reply.
a) to b) of c) for d) with
9. Should you require anything further at this time, pleased do not _____ to contact me.
a) avoid b) hesitate c) delay d) prevent