Always send a cover letter along with an application or resume to an employer. Its purpose is to introduce you and show the prospective employer how your background fits their particular job. Use the cover letter to expand on points from your resume that you feel are especially noteworthy or relevant. You can also let the employer know that you are willing to relocate or that you have a mutual acquaintance. You should demonstrate that you have done your research on the organization and know how you can be an asset to the employer. Prepare an original cover letter for each job – NOT a form letter.

**Cover Letters for Advertised Listings**

1. **Research the Employer**
   Research the prospective employer’s organization to see how your skills and abilities meet the organization’s needs, and how well your values match those promoted by the organization. In your cover letter, show why you are a good fit. Send the letter to a specific person whenever possible; otherwise, use “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Human Resources Manager.”

2. **Analyze the Job Description**
   Take a good look at the job responsibilities and qualifications and design your cover letter to match these as much as you can. Often job listings are short and vague. In this case, draw from your research of similar jobs to infer what skills and abilities might be required. For instance, if you were looking for a job with a bank, it would be appropriate to mention courses and past experience related to finance.

3. **Analyze Your Background**
   Think about your background in relation to the job responsibilities and qualifications. Ask yourself, “What have I done that is similar to what this job entails?” Consider courses taken, classroom projects, past work experience, summer jobs, internships, volunteer experience, extracurricular involvement (on-and off-campus) and travel.

**Beyond Advertised Listings**

**Networking and Research Leads**
You will also write cover letters to employers that you identify in your independent job search. Through networking or research, you will learn of specific openings or job titles that interest you. Be sure to indicate in the first paragraph what position you’re seeking. If a specific person alerted you to the job opening, include that person’s name and professional affiliation (e.g., “Professor Carl Rogers in Vanguard University’s psychology department suggested I contact you about your Sanitary Engineer opening”). Employers receive many letters and resumes. They are more likely to read letters that mention specific people they know.

**Letters of Inquiry**
If you are asking about possible job opportunities, you are sending a letter of inquiry. Address your letter to a specific individual, usually the person who supervises the functional area where you’d like to work. Be as specific as possible about the type of position that interests you. Ideally, your research will reveal the job titles used by this employer. If not, use commonly understood generic job titles in the field. The more specific you are, the clearer it will be that you’ve done your homework and that you know what the employer needs and what you have to offer.

**Emailed Cover Letters**
When applying for employment via email, write your cover letter in the body of an email message. Make sure you include a signature with your email address and phone number. Include the title of the position you are applying for in the subject line of your message. Use a simple font and remove the fancy formatting. Send the message to yourself first to test that the formatting works. If everything looks good, resend to the employer. Make sure you spell check and check your grammar and capitalization. They are just as important in an email cover letter as in paper cover letters.

**Cover Letter Dos & Don’ts**

**Do**
- Use paper that matches your resume
- Write an original cover letter for each employer and position
- State in the first sentence why you are writing
- Show that you know your career goals and how they relate to the position and the organization
- Demonstrate originality and enthusiasm
- Make your points succinctly; every point should support your application
- Proofread for typos and accuracy of address and telephone numbers
- Run Spell Check on your computer before you print your final copy, but remember it cannot detect the wrong form of the word or a homonym
- Print envelopes using a computer printer, if physically mailing
- Keep copies of all materials for your records
- Follow up with the employer - if you don’t hear back after a couple of weeks, inquire if any further information is needed and reiterate your interest

**Don’t**
- Make the letter more than one page
- Use generic, all-purpose cover letters – never copy cover letters
- Exaggerate your skills or experience
THE FOLLOWING IS INTENDED AS A GUIDE. COVER LETTERS SHOULD BE UNIQUE AND ORIGINAL.

Following is a sample introductory paragraph for cover letters.
- My commitment to bringing history alive for students, my extensive hands-on work at the State Department, and the knowledge that I gained as an honors History student at Vanguard University, prompt me to apply for the Irvine Unified School District’s high school social studies teaching position listed on Edjoin.org. I am confident that my lesson-planning abilities, classroom management skills, and engaging teaching style will greatly support Irvine Unified’s tradition of academic excellence.

Following is a sample middle paragraph for cover letters.
- As an intern, I became familiar with the programs Family Care Network offers, the services you provide, the families you serve, and the philosophy behind your organization. I believe my experience and values would make me a strong contributor to the FCNI team. Over the past seven years, I have sought out opportunities to work with at-risk populations. I have been able to develop practical skills and gain experience working with children and youth in preschools, camps, U.S. urban areas, and in Africa. My psychology degree has given me an academic foundation with the theoretical background necessary to work effectively in this field. After completing my senior research project on resiliency in children, I believe more than ever in the work that FCNI is doing and the potential it has to make meaningful changes in the lives of children and families.

Following are sample ending paragraphs for cover letters.
- I have attached my resume for your review. I will be contacting you within two weeks to set up a time to further discuss my qualifications for entry-level positions with Project Management Advisors, Inc. Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to meeting with the representatives of your company in the near future.
- Enclosed is my resume, and I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you. I will call you in a week to confirm receipt of this information and discuss possible next steps. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

The above paragraphs are intended to serve as examples, not to be copied verbatim.
Jordan Miller
1111 Fairview Road • Costa Mesa, CA 92612 • 714.555.1234
JMiller@vanguard.edu

February 28, 2015

Lewis Global Public Relations
575 Market Street, Suite 2550
Irvine, CA 92612

Dear Hiring Manager:

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my resume for your public relations and marketing internship currently advertised on the Lewis Global PR website. I have been interested in your company since I discovered in the Orange County Business Journal that you are one of the fastest growing public relations companies in Orange County. As a senior at Vanguard University, working on a communications degree and Spanish minor, I plan to pursue a career in public relations and marketing.

My public relations projects, communications-based coursework, Spanish proficiency, and enthusiasm for the field have prepared me for this internship. I am currently working with the NAIA athletic affiliation on campus to promote attendance at women’s basketball games. This experience has given me the opportunity to apply marketing tactics and develop strategies to create a successful campaign. My communications coursework has taught me about the processes and effects of communication, and has prepared me to enter public relations with strong verbal and written communication skills. My Spanish proficiency would be non-existent had it not been for my year in Spain which also gave me an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and the global markets that they operate in. All these facets to my education have molded my understanding and interest in public relations, and have paved the way for my career into the field.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I would be excited to arrange an interview with you to discuss the internship opportunity. Of course, I am also available at your convenience. Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Jordan Miller

Enclosure
Dear Ms. Wright:

I enjoyed interviewing with you during your recruiting visit to Vanguard University on October 25. The management trainee program you outlined sounds both challenging and rewarding, and I look forward to your decision concerning an on-site visit.

As mentioned during the interview, I will be graduating in December with a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a concentration in marketing. Through my education and work experience I have gained many skills, as well as an understanding of retailing concepts and dealing with the general public. I have worked for seven years in the retail industry in various positions from sales clerk to assistant department manager. I think my education and work experience would complement Fashion’s management trainee program.

Enclosed is a copy of my college transcript and the list of references that you requested.

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview with Fashion Department Store. The interview served to reinforce my strong interest in becoming a part of your management team. I can be reached at 949.555.4343 or by email at mboles@vanguard.edu should you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Marianne Boles

Enclosures