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# UNIT 20 JOB RELATED LETTERS

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## 20.1 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you will be able to write:

- an application letter that will get you an interview,
- follow-up and job enquiry letters,
- letters accepting and declining job offers, and
- request for letters of recommendation.

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## 20.2 INTRODUCTION

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A call for an interview usually follows after we have submitted a CV (curriculum vitae) and a well written cover letter. These help in introducing us you to a potential employer. We have discussed the different aspects of a CV and job application letter in Unit 16. However, professional life also requires you to write other letters which are related to job search.

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## 20.3 WRITING JOB APPLICATION LETTERS

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An application letter is one of the most important job-search letters you need to write. An effective letter can get you a phone call for an interview, but a poorly written application letter usually spells continued unemployment. Remember

A Résumé includes Your name Date of Birth Your address Your telephone number and email Your education Awards and /or honours you have received Your past work experience, arranged chronologically Activities and Hobbies References
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that you may be competing with many other applicants. Many employers want to weed out unqualified applicants before the interview. They would first like to see an application, or résumé detailing the background of the applicant.

So, the whole idea of writing a job application letter is to sell yourself in writing: to market your skills, abilities, knowledge and experience. The main aim of the application letter and the accompanying résumé is to attract the attention of the person who screens and hires job applicants. That means, the application letter should be written in such a way that the writer calls you for an interview.

The letter has to then accomplish three tasks:

- it should catch the reader's attention;
- it should convince the reader that you are a qualified candidate for the job, and
- it should request an interview.

*Read this letter of job application and note what the letter says.*

#### Application for the post of Programmer

Dear Human Resources Director:

I just read an article in **The Hindu**, *Opportunity Plus* about Global Solutions' new computer centre at Himayatnagar, Hyderabad. I would like to apply for a position as an entry-level programmer at the centre.

I understand that Global Solutions produces both in-house and customer documentation. My technical-writing skills, as described in the enclosed résumé, are well suited to your company. I am a recent graduate of Bhubhaneshwar Institute of Technology in Bhubhaneshwar with a Degree in Computer Science. In addition to having taken a broad range of courses, I served as a computer consultant at the college's computer center where I helped train computer users on new systems. You can refer to Prof. V Parthasarathy at the Institute, who was supervising my work.

I will be happy to meet with you at your convenience and discuss how my education and experience match your needs. You can reach me at my home address, at (040) 233-1552, or at prachinath@gmail.com.

Sincerely,  
Prachi Nath

What does Prachi write in her letter? She first *identifies the job by title* (*Application for the post of Programmer*) and *lets the reader know how she heard about it* (*The Hindu, Opportunity Plus*). She then goes on to *summarize her qualifications for the job, specifically her work experience and activities*, in the next paragraph. She also *makes a reference to the enclosed résumé*. She also gives references: persons whom the prospective employer can get in touch with for further information. She ends her letter *by asking for an interview, stating where she can be reached*.

When you contact an employer for the first time, it is better to send a hard copy of your résumé and cover letter. We do use email for this purpose, but we should email our résumé only when we have been invited or instructed to do so. That is, the advertisement specifically asks us to send emails to the employer's web site or you have been asked to do so in a telephonic or verbal conversation. Otherwise, you are safer sending a résumé and cover letter via hard copy.

#### ✓ Check Your Progress 1

Here are some Classifieds from the newspaper. Choose one of these advertisements and write a letter applying for a job.

**SECRETARY PART-TIME**

Small Manufacturing Concern  
 Must know MS word, MS EXCEL.  
 Salary open, Hours flexible.  
 Write to gk rao@ibcm.ac.in  
 Call at 9445178621

**WORK ON A SHIP THIS SUMMER**

For details, contact:  
 Benny Matthew, Fantasia Crews, BOX.153,  
 Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Wanted Reception clerk/ telephonist at Magma Inc. Must have  
 Computers, with 2 years experience. Apply to :  
 Magma Design Automation India Pvt. Ltd.  
 Prestige Tech Park, Jupiter (2A) Block, 6th Floor  
 Sarjapur-Marathahalli Ring Road  
 Kadabeesanahalli Village, Varthur Hobli  
 Bangalore-560 087.

### 20.3.1 Writing Application Follow Up Letters

If our application letter and résumé fails to bring a response within a month or so, we might follow them up with a second letter to keep our file active. This follow-up letter also gives us a chance to update our original application with any recent job-related information:

Since applying to you on March 23 for a Lecturer's position, I have been awarded my PhD degree in Linguistics from University of Delhi. My thesis has been recommended for publication by my examiners...

Please find enclosed a copy of my PhD certificate. I request you to include this in my file.

Even if you have received a letter acknowledging your application and saying that it will be kept on file, it is always useful to send a follow-up letter three months later to show that you are still interested. Here is a sample for you to read:

Three months have elapsed since I applied to you for the post of Assistant Registrar (sales), but I wish to let you know that I am still very interested in joining your institution.

I recently completed a four week temporary assignment at an insurance agency, and had learnt to use the on-line computer system. This experience will surely help me for the position I have applied in your organization.

Sending follow-up letters demonstrates that you are sincerely interested in working for the organization, and that you continue upgrading your skills to make yourself a better employee.

### 20.3.2 Writing Job Enquiry Letters

Some organizations will not consider you for a position unless you fill out a prescribed application form, especially in government organizations such as state and central universities. You have to fill in and submit a completed application form, which is a standardized data sheet. This is used because it helps employers to easily compare the applicant's qualifications and work details. If you wish to apply to such organizations, you may have to write an enquiry letter, which is mailed to request for an application form.

### 20.3.3 Filling Out Application Forms

As we have said earlier, some organizations require an application form instead of a résumé. When filling out an application form, it is necessary that we give information for which we have evidence (a certificate, a letter or a marklist).

If the application form calls for information that you cannot provide, or you have no background in it, for example – voluntary service – then we need to write ‘NOT APPLICABLE’. See how Apoorva fills out a part of the application form:

NAME	APOORVA BALAKRISHNA
FATHER'S NAME	S P BALAKRISHNA
AGE	24 years 3 months
PHONE NUMBER	9844367809
DISABILITIES (Tick in the appropriate box)	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
Visually challenged	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically challenged	<input type="checkbox"/>

Application forms often do not provide sufficient space to give information. Neither do they often have the right questions to help you present your skills and abilities. However, application forms usually have a section “Any other relevant information”. It is good to write “See additional sheet” and give the relevant information in the attached sheets.

#### ✓ Check Your Progress 2

Here is a form for applying for a scholarship for higher studies abroad. Fill out the form.

Please use **BLOCK LETTERS** for completing the application form.

1. Name of the applicant: Mr./Ms./Mrs. ....  
(First name) (Middle Name) (Surname)

2. Age: ..... Sex: Male/Female

3. Occupation and Designation (Where applicable): .....

4. Address for correspondence:.....

Tel No.: ..... Mobile No.: .....E-mail: .....

Permanent Address and Telephone No.:.....

5. Academic Details (Higher Secondary School onwards):  
(Please attach photocopy of marksheet/s)

Name of Examination	Month & Year of Passing	Name of University & College	Class & % of marks or Grades
6. Full particulars of:			
a. Proposed course of programme: .....			
b. Area of specialization: .....			
7. Name & Address of the University/Institution: .....			
<i>(Please attach photocopy of the admission letter from the University confirming your admission to the specified course or invitation letter confirming your participation in the programme)</i>			
8. Duration of the Course/Programme: .....			
9. Estimated Total Cost per annum/duration of course ( <b>IN INDIAN RUPEES ONLY</b> )			
Airfare (One way/Two way – shortest route): Rs. ....			
Tuition or Registration Fee : Rs. ....			
Living Expenses : Rs. ....			
Visa Fee and Others (Please Specify) : Rs. ....			
TOTAL : Rs. ....			
10. Personal/Family Contribution: Rs. ....			
11. Total Annual Family Income: Rs. ....			
<i>(Photocopy of last income tax return or recent pay slip of each earning member of the family to be attached)</i>			
12. Have you applied previously for any scholarship elsewhere: <i>Yes/No</i>			
If yes, please give details:.....			
13. Any other information that may help us in assessing your application: .....			

## 20.4 JOB OFFER LETTERS

When we get a letter announcing a job offer, we may decide to accept the offer or decline it. In either case, we need to write to the person concerned about our decision. In case we need time to make a decision, even then we need to inform the management.

### 20.4.1 Accepting Job Offers

When you receive a job offer that you want to accept, it is important to write a letter confirming your acceptance. It is not always enough to call the employer. What do we include in our letter?

- Begin by accepting the position and expressing thanks
- Identify the job you are accepting
- Restate the terms of your contract (salary, benefits, location...)
- Cover other details (when you can report for work)
- Conclude by saying that you look forward to reporting for work.

We are very happy when we get a job offer, and are enthusiastic to start work. Our letter should convey your enthusiasm and eagerness to cooperate.

*Here is a letter accepting a job offer.*

Dear Sir,

I'm delighted to accept the graphic design position in your advertising department of ABACUS India Pvt. Ltd. at the salary of Rs. 4.5 lakhs per annum.

Accepting the job offer and restating specific terms of contact

Enclosed are the health insurance forms you asked me to complete and sign. I've already given notice to my current employer and will be able to start work on Monday, April 23, 2007.

Other details

The prospect of joining your firm is very exciting. Thank you for giving me this opportunity for what I'm sure will be a challenging future.

Expressing enthusiasm and looking forward to the future

Sincerely,  
Sheetal Swarup

### 20.4.2 Declining Job Offers

If you choose to decline a job offer, do so courteously, in writing, after making a phone call. It is safer not to say anything negative in writing about the employer, even if you've had a negative experience with them while taking the interview or interacting with them.

*Here are two sample letters declining job offers.*

April 20, 2006

Dr. Joan Swietzer  
Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs  
343 Third Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20201-0343

Dear Dr. Swietzer:

Thank you very much for your telephone call and letter offering me the position of Assistant Project Coordinator with the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs. While I believe firmly in the mission of your organization and appreciate the challenging opportunity you offer, I have had another offer which I believe more closely matches my current career goals and interests. Therefore, although it was a difficult decision, as I explained when we spoke by phone this morning, I must decline your offer. I do appreciate all the courtesy and hospitality extended to me by your office, and I wish you well in your endeavors.

In the position I have accepted with Public Policy Watch, I will occasionally be on Capitol Hill to attend hearings and monitor legislation, so I hope we can get together again and talk about common interests.

Best regards,

(your signature)  
Chris Hancock

January 1, 2007

Suzanne C. Steere  
Chairperson and Chief Executive  
XYZ Corporation  
000 Broad Street  
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Ms. Steere:

I regret to inform you that I will not be able to accept your offer of employment as Project Manager in the Developmental Research IM Department at XYZ Corporation.

At this time, I have accepted a position with another organization. After careful consideration, I feel I have made the most appropriate decision for my professional development. I was very impressed with the personnel and plant facilities in Washington, DC, and look forward to keeping in touch.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James Fu

Letter A, as you can see, starts with thanking and acknowledging the job offer, goes on to say something positive about the job offer (which he is going to decline). Letter B starts with the actual purpose straightaway: "I regret to inform you..." In both letters, we find that the offer the writers are declining are clearly mentioned

*letter offering me the position of Assistant Project Coordinator with the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs.*

*I will not be able to accept your offer of employment as Project Manager in the Developmental Research IM Department at XYZ Corporation.*

The writer of Letter A and B both give reasons for accepting another job offer without saying why the present offer is unsuitable, without giving any details, the fact that "I have had another offer which I believe more closely matches my current career goals and interests". You usually decide to decline an offer because you think another offer better suits your interests and goals (or is better paid!). It is fine to state first two but definitely not the last one. It is also not necessary to state whose offer you have accepted (but you may do so if you wish).

The writer of Letter A, we see clearly **states** that "*I must decline your offer*". Even though, a letter may suggest that the job seeker is not accepting the offer, it is important to state it explicitly.

Note that both letters say a word or two about something that had pleased or impressed them about the people or the organization. Why do the writers say this? Such statements give letters a professional and courteous tone, and leave room for future relations. Remember that the employer you are writing to may want to contact you in the future for a different assignment. If you wish to get back to the organization at a later date, or you see some future prospects there, it is always

### ✓ Check Your Progress 3

Given below is a job offer letter you have received. Write two letters, one accepting the offer and the other declining the offer.

ACME Industries  
100 A Pocket C,  
Mayur Vihar Phase II,  
New Delhi 110092,

To \_\_\_\_\_

March 1, 2007

#### JOB OFFER

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We, at Acme Industries, are pleased to offer you a job as a Senior Engineer. We trust that your knowledge, skills and experience will be among our most valuable assets.

Should you accept this job offer, per company policy you'll be eligible to receive the following beginning on your hire date.

**Salary:** Annual gross starting salary of Rs 4,35,500.

**Performance Bonuses:** Fifteen percent of annual gross salary on the basis of quarterly performance appraisal

**Stock Options:** 500 Acme stock options in your first year

**Benefits:** Standard, Acme-provides all salaried employees the following benefits:

- \* Education assistance
- \* Health, dental, life and disability insurance
- \* 10 days of Sick leave every year
- \* 20 days of privilege leave every year

We hope that you'll accept this job offer and look forward to welcoming you aboard. Your immediate supervisor will be Mr Shashibhusan Srivastava, Department Manager, Engineering. Feel free to call Shashi or me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Sheshuraj Karunakar  
Hiring  
Human Resources Department

## 20.5 WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

As we discussed in Unit 16, most résumés have to include a list of referees. We need to list two or three referees, preferably one academic and one or two employment-related. This section should include the names of referees, their designation, their addresses, phone numbers and if possible email addresses.



However, it is necessary to seek permission from the persons whose names you intend to include as referees before you enter their names in your CV. In this section we will tell you how we request referees for recommendation and also how these letters are usually written.

### 20.5.1 Requesting Someone to Write a Recommendation Letter

If you are applying for a job or a scholarship, you will need to get a letter of recommendation from the referees. Read this letter:

I have applied for the Chevening Scholarship for Open Masters to do an MA course in International Journalism from University of Cardiff. I have been asked for a recommendation from my professor in Broadcasting. I would like to have a letter of recommendation from you.

As you may recall, I was a student in your Television and Broadcasting class in January-April 2006. I had received Grade A for your course. My grade point average for all Broadcasting courses in ACJ was 3.8, as shown on the enclosed résumé. As the résumé shows, I have been working as a Chief Correspondent in Bihar for Times Now, since I graduated in 2006. Although this job has given me good experience, the opportunity to study at Cardiff means a great deal to me. It would be an important step forward in my career.

Professor Monteiro, I would be grateful if you could send a letter of recommendation to:

Chevening Scholarships for Open Masters  
The British Council  
Kasturba Gandhi Marg  
New Delhi

Would you please send the letter so that it reaches the authorities by May 3? The trust plans to make a decision on this scholarship at a meeting on May 7.

Sincerely,

Jagori Dhar

When requesting for a letter of recommendation, we should include a copy of our résumé to give the reader an idea of our academic and work experience, and also to give them an idea of the direction our life has taken. This also helps the reader know the favourable qualities to emphasize in the letter of recommendation.


When closing the letter, we should close with an expression of appreciation and the full name and address of the person to whom the letter should be sent. When asking for an immediate recommendation, we should mention the deadline clearly.

Also, to speed up processes, it is always better to enclose a stamped, preaddressed envelope.

#### ✓ Check Your Progress 4

Write a letter to Prof. J K Singh, Department of Psychology, University of Allahabad, asking him whether he would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf to the employer. Describe the job and bring Prof. Singh up-to-date on your accomplishments since you worked for him as a research assistant.

.....



## 20.5.2 Writing a Recommendation Letter

Till now, we have been looking at employment related letters from the perspective of the applicant. In this section we look at letters of recommendation from the perspective of the writer. We have included this section, because it will give you a sense of what employers expect from letters of recommendation.

Professors, supervisors and managers are often asked to write letters of recommending students or employees for jobs. Letters of recommendation have an important goal: to convince readers that the person being recommended has the qualities required for a job. It is important, therefore, that they contain all the relevant details:

- The full name of the candidate
- The job the candidate is seeking
- The nature of relationship between the writer and the candidate
- Facts relevant to the position
- The writer's overall evaluation of the candidate's suitability for the job

Recommendation letters are usually confidential; that is they are mailed directly to the person or committee who requested for them, and are not shown to the candidate. These letters are very difficult to write because uninterrupted praise for someone's accomplishments and talents will be difficult to believe. Also, shortcomings of candidates cannot be suppressed if they are relevant to the job concerned.

## 20.6 LET US SUM UP

Job interviews have a dual purpose. An organization that invites you to an interview wants to find out whether you are the best person to fill a position. What helps them make these decisions are our résumé, our application letters and other messages that you write to them.

Before writing an application letter, it is useful to analyze what we have to offer an employer and what we want from a job or career. Once we have decided on these issues, we prepare a résumé and write an application letter in a clear style.

Follow-up messages to the organization, such as thank you messages and enquiries may increase your chances of getting a job offer. Well-planned employment letters – whether accepting an offer, declining an offer – demonstrate that you are a professional and are courteous.

## 20.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### Check Your Progress 1

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to apply for the job of a reception clerk which was advertised in the Deccan Chronicle, April 8, 2007.

For the past four years, I have worked as a reception clerk with Magma Design Automation. The company is shifting base to Bangalore in a month's time, therefore, I need to look for a new job.

My present job involves general reception duties in person and by phone. I also

- Operate the switchboard
- Deal with telephone inquiries
- Send and receive fax messages
- Deal with the post

I have a B A degree from Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University, and PGDCA from Osmania University. I enjoy working with people, and my experience will enable me to work as a part of your team and to be an effective representative of your company.

### Check Your Progress 2

Answers will vary.

### Check Your Progress 3

#### Accepting the Job Offer

##### Accepting the Job offer of a Senior Engineer

Dear Mr. Karunakar:

Thank you for your offer of employment as a Senior Engineer at ACME Industries, New Delhi. As we discussed on the phone this morning, I am delighted to accept your offer and look forward to beginning work with ACME Industries.

You indicated that I will be receiving a salary of Rs 4,35,500 per year, and will have initial duties reporting to Mr Shashibhusan Srivastava, Department Manager, Engineering. I will begin work on May 1st. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide you with any information.

Again, thank you for offering me this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

### Declining the Job Offer

Declining the Job offer of a Senior Engineer

Dear Mr. Karunakar:

Thank you for your offer of employment as a Senior Engineer at ACME Industries, New Delhi. I have enjoyed meeting with the members of your staff and think you have an outstanding operation.

However, as I explained when we spoke this morning, I respectfully withdraw from consideration for your position. I have decided to accept another employment offer which I believe very closely matches my current skills and career goals.

I wish you and the staff of ACME industries the best of success. Thank you again for the opportunity to explore career possibilities with your office.

Sincerely,

### Check Your Progress 4

Answers will vary.