

HOW TO:



Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

西交利物浦大学

**WRITE
A LETTER OF
INTRODUCTION**

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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

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WRITE A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

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RIBA 

Royal Institute of British Architects

This guidance note forms part of a series of continually developing collection of resources available to graduating students seeking placement within practice as part of their professional development.

Other sections within the series are:

1. Write The Letter of Introduction
2. Write an Effective Resume
3. Preparing the Portfolio
4. The Interview

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“Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied, is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it.”

Steve Jobs

INTRODUCTION

The transition from University as a student, into the professional environment of the Practice studio, can be daunting and exciting.

The most challenging part of this process is how to 'stand out' from the volume of applications received by practices, often for those few precious available positions. What is important to understand, is that there is no magic formula, however there are generally accepted protocols or approaches, which can increase the chances of catching the notice of employers and open an opportunity of moving forward in the selection process.

This paper seeks to provide some useful guidance and advice, collected from various sources for the Letter of Introduction or Covering Letter, which would normally accompany any application along with the Resume and Portfolio.

1.

INTRODUCTION

The covering letter is your opportunity to make a very positive first impression as it expresses your intentions, attitude and values as a potential candidate. It communicates with the potential employer, the reasons they should hire you, highlights your key attributes and expresses your passion. The letter should also show the employer that you are interested in **them**, by doing your research.

“ALMOST EVERYONE CAN MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION, BUT ONLY A FEW MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION” - SONYA PARKER, AUTHOR

Often it is thought that employers do not read covering letters, however they are normally expected with any application, therefore they should be given much thought and care in their composition. Employers can use these as a means of screening and shortlisting for follow up or interview.

2

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of accepted tips and protocols in composing your letter to ensure it is effective. A cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the factual resume, adding a personal touch to your application for employment.

The letter should explain your reason for applying for a position, or your interest in the Company being approached. You should explain why you feel your skills and talents can match those of the position and what added value you can offer, which makes you stand out.

RESEARCH

It's essential that you do your research in advance on any Company or Practice with who you are seeking a position. This means research beyond the fundamental job description. Understanding the Company's culture, values and attitudes, together with their work, can assist you in composing and appropriate tone. Check their website, their key people and their profile. This will also allow you to think more specifically about your Resume and Portfolio and highlight some of your skills and own work.

KEEP IT BRIEF

Ideally, the letter should be no more than a single page, therefore the importance of the positive message you wish to communicate. Think carefully about the wording and avoid unnecessary information and repetition.

OPENING

Often the letter can open weakly and without personality, your letter should open strongly; “why is the position exciting and what you can offer. Try to avoid common expressions which convey an over confidence or arrogance such as; “I’m the perfect candidate”, “I’ll give 110%”, “I’ll exceed your expectations in every way” Instead highlight your skills, achievements or experience which can make you an ideal candidate.

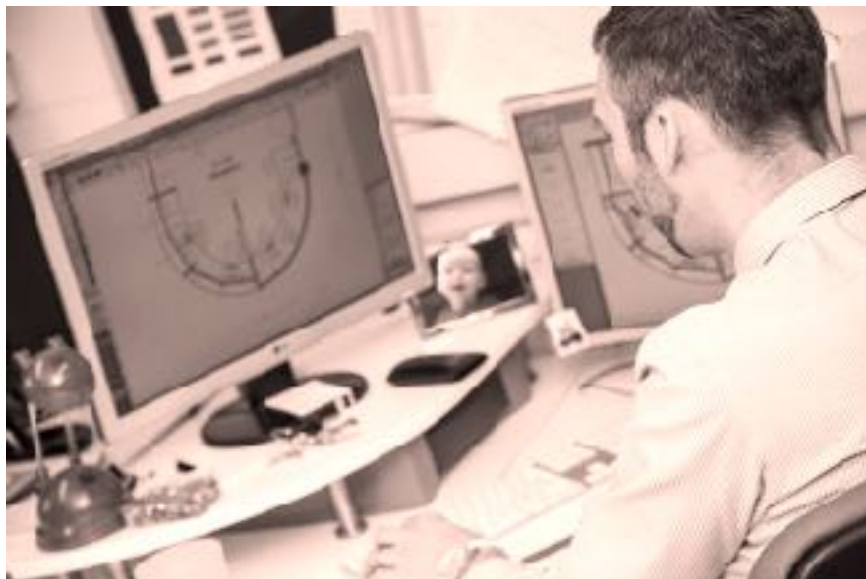
BE SPECIFIC

Your letter should be customised to the particular Company / Practice to which you are applying. Avoid using a generic standard letter, copy and pasted and sent to numerous employers. Use language which appears in the job posting or from the Company profile. Emphasise your personal values

BE PROFESSIONAL

Your letter should use an appropriate tone of language, be properly formatted and spell checked thoroughly. It’s a good idea to allow family, friend or a colleague to proof read the letter. Try to write following the accepted protocol of three essential components:

1. Introduction
2. Body
3. Conclusion.



HELPFUL REFERENCES / EXAMPLES

The following provide some additional detailed guidance along with some useful templates:

Harvard Business Review: How to Write a Cover Letter

<https://hbr.org/2014/02/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>

Archisoup: How to write an effective architecture cover letter.

<https://www.archisoup.com/studio-guide/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>

Glassdoor Recruitment

<https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/guide/how-to-write-a-cover-letter/>