

Notes on Third Essay

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1 Read the Assignment!

I quote from the assignment.

”Your response to this advertisement should be two pages long. The first page should be the actual letter of application The second page should consist of a brief curriculum vitae or resume. . . .”

There was a very definite reason for this format. Letters of application should be short and to the point. They state what job you are applying for and a very brief sketch of why you are qualified. If this can't be fit on one page (including inside address and signature), the letter is too long. The letter should be single spaced.

2 Resume

The resume should contain:

1. contact information
2. educational background
3. work experience
4. special abilities such as languages beyond English
5. **references**

2.1 *References*

The minimal statement to make about references is, ‘References available on request.’

It is better to list references with contact information. These should be previous employers, teachers etc. It should be someone who knows your work record, not a friend. If you did volunteer work, your supervisor would be a good reference.

In some fields you will be expected to have the referees mail their recommendations.

3 tone

There is a delicate line between:

‘I am perfect for this position.’

and

‘I am a reliable, honest, and hard-working person, who is able to both work with a group and independently.’

The first letter goes to the bottom of the pile.

4 career path

I formulated this as an internship position. That means the employer is expecting you to learn while on the job. You can say that this you expect to be able to contribute while gaining valuable background for your true career path (e.g. teaching). You can alternatively say that this is a step towards your eventual goal to use your mathematical knowledge to give quantitative advice.

Especially for the position advertised that involved application of mathematics, the letter should stress background outside of mathematics that would distinguish you from other mathematics students. This might include earlier degrees or experience with finance.

5 Language

‘due to the fact that’

It is even more important than in the rest of the assignments that a job application have **perfect** grammar. As a prospective employer of undergraduates, I have often thought, “If this student can’t even bother to write a job application in correct English, how can I expect competent work.”

There were many instances of poor word choice. Here are some suggested rephrasings:

‘mathematical advice position’ should be ‘mathematical consultant’.

‘familiar in working with large sums of money’ should be ‘I have performed basic data-entry and accounting tasks with Excel.’

‘I am writing because I would like to apply for’ should be ‘I am applying for’.

‘this job will grow me in many ways’ should be ‘this job will teach me many skills useful for my career’.

‘due to the fact that’ should be ‘since’.

Avoid fantastic descriptions of yourself as ‘perfect, astonishing, unique’ etc.

Learn the difference between ‘effect’ and ‘affect’.

The lawyers advises his client; the client consults with his lawyer.