

This letter is based on a real one recently submitted for comments to the careers office. I have changed some details but hope you find the comments helpful.

Apollo Risk Services
30 Madely Square
London
WC2B 8FG

Nicely laid out, flawless grammar throughout. This is a minimum requirement. But oops...

Might not be possible but any chance of getting a name?

Re: London Office Internship

Dear Sir/Madam

Your practical experience is important but you undermine yourself by being too explicit on the one hand - 'for a month' - and too vague on the other. How long were you traveling because it sounds extensive?

I am writing this letter to express an interest in the above vacancy. I am a third year undergraduate in the department of War Studies, King's College London. My particular area of interest is South and Central America. During my first years at King's I attended evening classes studying Spanish, which I then continued for a month in Ecuador. I then used Quito as a base to travel to Peru, Columbia and Mexico, before finishing my travels in Chile and Honduras.

I am a mature student who returned to academia after a number of years of full-time employment with the London Fire Brigade (LFB). I have developed a keen interest in politics and foreign affairs. I have a proven ability to perform well under pressure in the emergency operations centre of the LFB. I have excellent oral and written communication skills, teamwork and prioritizing my workload, as this is an integral part of my role in the service.

There's no advantage in talking about your mature status and generic skills developed outside of the sector or academia don't count for much with them I'm afraid.

Upon graduating next year I intend to use and apply my studies and skills to work in the field of politics, conflict and security. I am looking for a position where I can excel in areas I am interested in, and develop the theoretical knowledge I have gained at university into practical skills that I can apply in a challenging environment. Therefore my motivation behind this application is that, as well as my academic achievements and current employment I am looking to obtain work placed in an environment of political and security risk analysis to further my development. Furthermore, an internship in your London office I hope would increase my chances of being recruited of a full-time basis in the future.

This final paragraph needs to much more succinct & simply state why 'Apollo' and how an internship fits into your long term plans. Lobbying for a permanent position at this stage isn't advised.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

David Welsh

I'd suggest a different structure. A short opening paragraph on why you're writing and that briefly flags up your combination of relevant academic background (mention King's as it counts!) *plus* practical regional knowledge. Then move on to 3 key selling points before your final paragraph. In your case they might be

- Regional experience - ie local knowledge of politics, issues, sources of information, language skills (any indigenous ones) etc.
- Academic background- including subjects, relevant dissertations. Hitting high academic standards because of your knowledge and also skills such as research, analysis and writing.
- Other skills - do they explicitly ask for any? If so mention them here. Most likely initiative, team working and adaptability as well as those already mentioned above.