

Covering letters for International Development

This is a fictional covering letter for an internship with an advocacy and research civil society organisation.

Please do not simply copy the letter but consider how you might use your own experience to draw up a powerful letter.

- Note how the opening paragraph outlines quickly and clearly who the candidate is and what they are offering.
- The long list of skills and qualities that the employer is looking for has been addressed by 4 clear selling points. Within each selling point a number of specific skills, qualities and relevant experiences are highlighted.
- Like many internships the emphasis is on administrative skills and the candidate has made this their first selling point. However, because the post involves research as well this has also been highlighted. Because it is *fundraising* research the applicant has also clearly signalled that he is willing and able to embrace that kind of research.
- Note how the applicant provides solid evidence for the skills he is claiming. In addition he demonstrates an understanding of what is meant by specific skills. For example, 'communications' explicitly cover 'verbal' and 'written' and also distinguishes between an academic writing style and a journalistic writing style.
- The letter does not start by saying how great it would be for the applicant to have this particular opportunity. The emphasis is on what they can practically offer by way of skills. However, the last paragraph flags up what the applicant would hope to get from the experience and how the internship fits in to longer term plans

Finally....

More material on this aspect of the application process is in the book, 'Getting into International Development' and other material is available on the web site

www.careers.lon.ac.uk/development

Jeff Riley October 2006

Chris Jooks
14 Mayford Square
TW7 4RX

6th October 2006

Dear CUTS International,

I would like to be considered for the Outreach Internship as advertised on your website. I am currently studying on the MSc Violence, Conflict and Development at SOAS but would be able to combine this with offering you 1 day a week for six months. I offer relevant skills including IT skills together with a track record of commitment to the sector. In addition to my CV please consider the following

Administration – My varied academic and work experiences have been founded on solid administrative and organisational skills. As a teacher in Brunei I was responsible for the inevitable paper work associated with contemporary teaching. At university my role as treasurer extended these skills into the financial area. More recently I helped organise an international conference for Book Aid and was a volunteer administrator for War on Want. As my first degree was in IT I would expect to be able to use my database, web and office application skills to made a real contribution to my work.

Research – I have a proven track record of research. My academic research focused on development issues. For War on Want I contributed supporting research that culminated in a widely disseminated analysis on the role of construction companies in the middle east. I am confident that I can apply these skills to the kind of practical fundraising research that will help CUTS to secure the support and funding it needs.

Networking – I am aware that the post will need initiative and creativity to extend its network of support. I am well used to establishing good relationships in different contexts. Most directly relevant is my work with NGOs. The conference I helped organise for Book Aid required me to enrol the support of a range of people from university administrators, hotel staff and NGO professionals and with War On Want I was able to quickly establish myself in a diverse and busy team.

Communications – As a teacher and in other roles I have had to be a good *verbal* communicator. The advertised post will be an opportunity to extend my *written* communication skills. I write well academically and in an administration context but part of the appeal of the internship is a chance to write in a more journalistic way.

My intention is to become a development professional.. Working in the London office of a Southern NGO will be a great place for me to deepen my knowledge of the sector and offers me the chance to use my existing skills and develop some new ones. I look forward to hearing from you in due course

Yours faithfully

Chris Jooks