

Approaching Employers



How to approach

Your approach can be by phone, email or, in some cases, in person. The choice will depend on factors such as size of the organisation, the culture of the industry, and what you are comfortable with.

It is generally best to aim for a discussion with the employer about possibilities rather than asking a 'yes/no' answer – particularly for an employer who you are really keen on.

- Whether you intend to email or phone, make an initial call to find out whom you should direct your enquiry to.
- If emailing, indicate that you will be contacting later by phone (in a few days perhaps) to talk further. An email approach alone is rarely enough.
- If phoning, give the option of making a more convenient time to talk.

What to say?

It is important to think about what you are going to say and the best way to say it before you make contact.

Phone contact:

Though you can't prepare the whole conversation, here are some ways in which you can be prepared:

- Prepare and practise your introduction (clear, brief and engaging)
- Think about a connection to the employer that you can use in your introduction e.g. you've read about them, heard them speak at a careers function, read an article by / about the organisation, or someone at Melbourne Uni has suggested you contact them.
- In particular, be prepared to talk about why you have contacted the organisation and what you have to offer.
- Think through how you will handle any resistance ('we have nothing available'; 'you need to speak to our HR Department'; 'I don't have time to talk')

Example of a phone introduction:

Hello. My name is.....I have been given your details by/I read about you in/my lecturer suggested I.....

I am a recent graduate of the University of Melbourne and I'm looking for opportunities inI realise you may not be employing at present but I'm really keen to find out more about your business.....

Do you have time to talk at the moment? Or perhaps I could make a time to drop by and talk then?

Email contact:

- Emails need to be focused and also attention-grabbing. Do not include every possible point in your favour - the aim of the letter is to interest the reader to be open to further conversation.
- Indicate that you will be phoning in a few days to discuss further. You should ideally try to make a time to meet in person.
- There are no set ways of writing a direct approach letter, however the format below provides guidelines

Example format for email:**PARAGRAPH 1: Reason for writing**

State clearly and briefly your reason for writing. Don't beat around the bush or start talking about yourself before you say why you're writing. Include a point of connection to the organisation.

'I am writing to inquire about work opportunities with your firm.....I have been given your details by / I read about your firm in.....'

If looking for work, be clear that you are. But give yourself 'somewhere to go' by referring to broader aims (as above)

'I realise you may have nothing at present but I am very keen onI'd really appreciate.....'

PARAGRAPH 2: Introduce yourself

Introduce yourself with an overview of your qualifications and experience – start with the most relevant aspects e.g. if your education is most relevant then open with that..

'I am a recent graduate.....with an Honours degree in.....'

Link your request to your career plans and motivation for the industry, organisation and/or role which you are seeking. Mention the general area of work which you are seeking (not too specific, not too vague).

'I am strongly committed to a career in....and would love the opportunity to work with.....I am particularly wanting to.....'

PARAGRAPH 3: Promote yourself

Focus here on two or three key skills or assets which you believe would appeal to the employer and relate the sort of work you are seeking.

Dot points can be used appropriately here:

'My skills and experience include:

- **Proven ability in writing for a range of media including print, radio and online sites.**
- **Experience in working within a busy media office – I have completed two internships (each of one month) with The Age and with News Limited working for Cairns Post**
- **Well developed skills in using a range of publishing and communications software including QuarkXpress, InDesign, Dreamweaver and Photoshop.'**

PARAGRAPH 4: Next moves

Indicate what you would like to happen next. Do not rely on employer responding to email; it is usual to make a follow-up call. Alert them to your intention to do this in your letter and an inquiry is less likely to be neglected.

Remember: employers may also approach you...

Of the 50% or so of students who find their jobs through the hidden job market, an increasing number are approached by employers. This includes offers of jobs to students in internship programs or to those who have established a relationship as a result of their networking activities.

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