



## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS SERVICES

15 Roszel Road | PO Box 5910  
Princeton, New Jersey 08543-5910 USA

tel: 609.452.0990  
fax: 609.452.2690

[www.iss.edu](http://www.iss.edu)

### Writing Letters of Interest

Often the first step in seeking a new position is to contact a potential employer by sending a letter of interest and a résumé. Although both documents are important, the letter of interest is usually the first contact the employer has with the candidate, and therefore forms the employer's first impression of the applicant. As a candidate, it is to your advantage to pique the interest of the employer by presenting your candidacy in a distinctive and positive way, and to and to impress him/her with your professionalism and enthusiasm for the position. By following a few basic guidelines, you can improve your chances of having your letter of interest and résumé reviewed with care.

**Length** - A letter of interest from one to two pages in length is usually sufficient. If your letter is only one or two paragraphs, it probably does not contain sufficient information. If it is longer than two pages, it might not be read at all! Be concise. The letter should focus on how well you match the profile of the position, not be an abbreviated autobiography. Vary your sentence structure and minimize your use of "I", especially at the beginning of sentences.

**A Personal Touch** - Address your letter to a specific person, and use his/her correct title and position. If the job posting does not contain the name of a specific person to respond to, send your letter to the head of the school. Visit the school's website for additional information. The names of school directors and website addresses can be found in an abbreviated version of *The ISS Directory of International Schools* online at the ISS website in the Publications section.

**Sell Yourself** - Don't be shy about selling yourself. Express your enthusiasm for working with the school, and highlight early in the letter your unique set of skills, qualifications, and experiences that will elevate your candidacy above others who will also apply. The letter should convince the administrator or Board member to review your résumé for additional information, and to pursue your candidacy.

**Individualize Your Letter** - The letter of interest should be written for a specific position. Although letters of interest for similar positions can contain much of the same information, it is important that each letter be written specifically for an individual position. Each letter should highlight the skills or experience contained in the profile of the desired candidate. Your candidacy can be scuttled quickly by sending a letter of interest for a position in school "A", to school "B". Have each letter reviewed by your spouse or a colleague before you send it.

**Do Not Repeat Your Résumé** - The letter of interest should not be a narrative of your résumé. In addition to highlighting certain parts of your qualifications and experience that match the job description or the profile of the desired candidate, you might also share an accomplishment or project that could be replicated in their school. Be specific rather than general.

***Follow Up*** - End your letter with a promise to follow up rather than asking the school head or principal to contact you. A final sentence thanking the Search Committee or Board for their time and consideration is always appropriate. And don't forget to sign the letter if you send it by regular mail. Letters sent by e-mail do not require a signature.

*Revised 6/05*