

Sample Application Guide

FINANCE STUDENTS



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
MIKE ILITCH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Career Services

Your Guide to Crafting a Competitive Application

This packet will help you confidently create documents to apply for internships, part-time/full-time jobs, or other professional opportunities. Customize the content to create your own strong, tailored application packet. A strong application packet will include a cover letter, resume, and reference page showcasing your skills, experience, and potential for a specific job posting.

What's Inside

- ▶ **Sample Cover Letter**
A sample letter that introduces you to employers and highlights why you're a great match for the role.
- ▶ **Sample Internship Resume**
For students seeking internships. Highlights academics, coursework, and early experience.
- ▶ **Sample Entry-Level Resume**
Ideal for students or recent grads entering the workforce. Emphasizes transferable skills and accomplishments.
- ▶ **Sample Graduate School Resume**
For students applying to grad school. Balances academic and professional experience for a strong application.
- ▶ **Sample Reference Page**
A clean, professional sample format for listing references. Always ask permission first before listing someone.

Why a Cover Letter Matters

A cover letter gives you the chance to tell your story, something a resume alone can't do. It shows employers why you're interested in their opportunity, how you fit, and what you bring beyond the bullet points on your resume.

Top Cover Letter Tips:

- **Personalize it.** Address the hiring manager by name if possible.
- **Show your fit.** Connect your experience directly to the job and company.
- **Keep it focused.** Stick to one page—three strong paragraphs are enough.
- **Be genuine.** Let your enthusiasm and professionalism come through.
- **Proofread.** Spelling or grammar errors can cost you the interview.

Why Your Resume Matters

Your resume is often your first impression with an employer. It should clearly communicate your qualifications, align with the role, and make you stand out.

Top Resume Tips:

- **Tailor it.** Customize your resume to match the job description.
- **Lead with action.** Use strong action verbs and highlight your results.
- **Quantify achievements.** Numbers make an impact (e.g., "Increased sales by 20%").
- **Keep it clean.** Use clear formatting (margins all the same, between .5" and 1"), consistent fonts (Arial, Aptos, Calibri, and no smaller than 10 pts), and avoid errors. Use the tab key to move dates to the right (already preset).
- **Be concise.** Limit to one page if you're early in your career. No more than two pages.

Why References Matter

References are essential when completing online applications and when employers request them. References provide employers with trusted insights about your skills, work ethic, and character from people who've seen you in action.

Pro Tip

Personalize the following document to reflect your unique strengths, experiences, and goals.

Need help? Contact Ilitch School Career Services—we're here to help you succeed—ilitchcareers@wayne.edu.

COVER LETTER GUIDE



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
MIKE ILITCH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Career Services

FIRST AND LAST NAME

City, State & Zip Code | Email Address | Phone Number | Your LinkedIn URL

Date

Employer's Name
Employer's Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Recruiting Team,

I am writing to express my interest in the entry-level Finance position at Ally Financial. I am currently pursuing a degree in Finance at Wayne State University's Mike Ilitch School of Business, where I've developed a solid foundation in financial analysis, budgeting, and investment principles. I'm eager to apply what I've learned in a real-world environment and grow alongside a company known for innovation and integrity in financial services.

In my coursework, which includes Corporate Finance and Financial Analysis, I've worked on projects involving income statement reviews, breakeven forecasting, and evaluating stock performance. Recently, I collaborated with a team to conduct a discounted cash flow valuation of a retail company, which we presented as part of our final. These experiences strengthened my problem-solving skills and my ability to work with tools like Excel, enabling me to draw meaningful insights from data.

Outside of the classroom, I've gained valuable real-world experience as a server at Olive Garden, where I manage a fast-paced environment, handle transactions with precision, and prioritize customer satisfaction. This role has sharpened my communication, time management, and attention to detail skills that are just as essential in a finance setting.

I admire Ally's commitment to building strong careers and supporting early talent. I would welcome the opportunity to bring my dedication, curiosity, and collaborative spirit to your team.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how I can contribute to Ally's commitment to financial excellence and leadership through the entry-level Finance position. I would appreciate the chance to interview at your convenience and look forward to connecting soon.

Sincerely,

Your First and Last Name

INTERNSHIP RESUME GUIDE



FIRST AND LAST NAME

City, State & Zip Code | Email Address | Phone Number | Your LinkedIn URL

EDUCATION

Wayne State University, Mike Ilitch School of Business - Detroit, MI

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Major: Finance

Relevant Coursework: Business Finance, Business Law, Economics, Quantitative Methods, Statistics

Awards: Recipient, Mike Ilitch School of Business 25 Under 25, 20XX | 1st Place, Elevator Pitch Competition, 20XX

May 20XX

GPA: 3.5/4.0

SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Skills - Proficient in Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, & PowerPoint), Power BI, and Python

Communication - Effectively exchange information and perspectives while actively listening, and promoting positive interactions

Teamwork - Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers to accomplish department goals

Critical Thinking - Innovative thinker who analyzes issues, makes sound decisions, and troubleshoots problems effectively.

EXPERIENCE

Intern Role

May 20XX – August 20XX

Name of Company or Organization – City, State

- Discuss your responsibilities and accomplishments achieved as they relate to the job duties and role for which you are applying
- Action-oriented + paraphrased statements (use your current job posting/experience to guide you)
- What you did (action verb) + how (relevant to job duties and quantify where applicable)
- List experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent job listed first)
- Write each bullet point in third person (no personal pronouns or possessives – all current jobs should be written in present tense, and all past jobs should be written in past tense)

Finance Intern

January 20XX – Present

TechTown Detroit – Detroit, MI

- Assisted in the preparation of financial statements and budgets for corporate clients
- Performed financial analysis and identified cost-saving opportunities, resulting in a 10% reduction in operational expenses for a key client
- Supported senior analysts in creating financial models to forecast revenue and expenses
- Conducted market research and helped develop investment recommendations for portfolio management
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to improve internal reporting processes

ACTIVITIES

Treasurer

September 20XX – Present

MISB Financial Management Association, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

- Managed a budget of \$10,000 for club events, fundraisers, and professional development activities
- Coordinated with club leadership to create financial reports for annual meetings and audits
- Implemented new budgeting strategies, resulting in a 15% increase in event funding
- Organized networking events with professionals in finance and investment banking

ENTRY-LEVEL RESUME GUIDE



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
MIKE ILITCH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Career Services

FIRST AND LAST NAME

City, State & Zip Code | Email Address | Phone Number | Your LinkedIn URL

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Motivated and goal-oriented recent graduate with a strong foundation in financial planning, business development, and client relationship building. Eager to leverage skills and passion for helping people in a dynamic and rewarding role as a Financial Advisor at Northwestern Mutual. Looking to contribute to clients' financial success while achieving personal and professional growth.

EDUCATION

Wayne State University, Mike Ilitch School of Business - Detroit, MI

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

May 20XX

Major: Finance

Dean's List: 20XX, 20XX

Relevant Courses: Personal Finance, Business Finance, Marketing and Sales, Investment Analysis

SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Client Relationship Management: Building trust, understanding client needs, and offering personalized solutions

Sales and Negotiation: Ability to close sales, influence decisions, and achieve goals

Financial Planning: Budgeting, goal setting, financial strategies

Communication: Excellent verbal and written communication skills; able to present complex financial information in a clear, understandable manner

Time Management: Managing multiple tasks while maintaining attention to detail and deadlines

Technical Skills: Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, PowerPoint, Word), CRM software (Salesforce), LinkedIn, Google Workspace

EXPERIENCE

Finance Intern

May 20XX – Aug 20XX

Ally – Detroit, MI

- Assisted team with developing and implementing mathematical models that improved asset pricing accuracy by 15%, enhancing portfolio performance.
- Analyzed datasets exceeding 10 million rows to assist with identifying patterns that lead to strategy efficiency.
- Researched historical data to aid in back-testing trading strategies to help optimize returns by 8% on average.
- Monitored real-time market data and helped with adjusting models weekly, contributing to a 10% improvement in forecast accuracy.

Part-time Retail Associate

Jan 20XX – Dec 20XX

ABC Retailers – Detroit, MI

- Delivered exceptional customer service and built rapport with clients, helping meet their needs and offering relevant solutions.
- Assisted with inventory management and pricing strategy, contributing to an increase in store sales by 10%.
- Developed strong communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills in a high-paced environment.

CERTIFICATIONS

- **Bloomberg Market Concepts (BMC)**, Coursera Aug 20XX
- **Financial Planning Fundamentals**, LinkedIn Learning May 20XX

GRAD SCHOOL RESUME GUIDE



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
MIKE ILITCH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Career Services

FIRST AND LAST NAME

City, State & Zip Code | Email Address | Phone Number | Your LinkedIn URL

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Ambitious and results-driven finance professional with a strong background in financial analysis, strategic planning, and business operations. Bringing over 3 years of experience in management consulting and financial modeling, aiming to leverage my analytical skills and problem-solving abilities to contribute to DTE Energy's Corporate Strategy team. Passionate about driving operational improvements, managing major capital investments, and helping the company navigate the evolving energy landscape.

CERTIFICATION

Excel for Financial Modeling Certification, LinkedIn Learning

December 20XX

SKILLS & CORE COMPETENCIES

Financial Analysis & Modeling: Advanced proficiency in Excel, financial forecasting, capital investment analysis

Strategic Planning & Business Development: Market analysis, competitive benchmarking, strategic M&A support

Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking: Strong analytical skills, ability to assess complex business challenges and provide actionable solutions

Communication: Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to present complex ideas

Project Management & Leadership: Ability to lead projects, meet deadlines, and drive cross-functional collaboration

Tools & Technologies: Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, SQL, Tableau, Power BI, SAP

Industry Knowledge: Exposure to the energy sector, market trends, and regulatory environment

EXPERIENCE

Corporate Strategy Analyst

June 20XX – Present

Merrill Lynch, Dearborn, MI

- Analyze and model the financial implications of new technologies, such as distributed energy resources, and their potential impact on clients' operations and market positioning
- Conduct cost benchmarking and productivity analysis to recommend improvements in clients' operational processes and financial performance
- Collaborate with senior leadership to prepare annual strategic plans, highlighting industry trends, risks, and growth opportunities, providing insights and strategic recommendations based on data and market research

Investment Banking

June 20XX – August 20XX

Ally, Detroit, MI

- Conducted financial analysis, valuation modeling, and market research for potential mergers and acquisitions in the energy sector
- Developed and presented financial models to support the client's decision-making process during capital investment discussions
- Worked alongside senior bankers to prepare materials for board meetings and client presentations, ensuring alignment with business goals

AFFILIATIONS

Financial Planning Association of Michigan (FPA of Michigan)

20XX – Present

Financial Executives International (FEI) Detroit chapter

20XX – 20XX

EDUCATION

Wayne State University, Mike Ilitch School of Business, Detroit, MI

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

May 20XX

Bachelor of Business Administration | Finance

May 20XX

REFERENCES GUIDE



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
MIKE ILITCH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Career Services

FIRST AND LAST NAME

City, State & Zip Code | Email Address | Phone Number | Your LinkedIn URL

REFERENCES

First and Last Name

Job Title

Name of Company or Organization

City, St

Phone Number

Email Address

Relationship:

Mark Johnson

Department Manager

XYZ Company

mark.johnson@xyzlogistics.com

(248) 555-4567

Relationship: Internship Supervisor, Summer 20XX

Dr. Janet Smith

Finance Professor

Wayne State University

janet.smith@wayne.edu

(313) 555-1234

Relationship: Academic Advisor and Course Instructor

Tina Patel

Financial Analyst

General Motors

tina.patel@wayne.edu

(313) 555-7890

Relationship: Mentor through ACE Program