



OFFICE OF CAREER PLANNING

Cover Letter Writing



WOOSTER

Advising, Planning, Experiential Learning



Cover Letter Overview

This guide serves as general advice for cover letter writing. Use this guidebook in conjunction with Career Planning staff who will offer individual guidance.

Purpose

Below are general suggestions for cover letter writing. The cover letter is a:

- **Formal letter** tailored to a specific organization that connects your skills to the requirements of an opportunity.
- Chance to describe how you **developed your skills**, why you are **excited to join** the organization, and why you are the **best candidate**.

Format

Elements that make your cover letter stand out, include:

- 1-page maximum, single spaced, and page margins between .5"-1"
- Use the same, easy to read, not overly stylized, and 10-12-point font size
- Make sure to convert the cover letter to a PDF once finished labeled with your last name
- Include the same contact heading that is on your resume

Audience

Understanding who you are writing to is critical. Every cover letter is going to an organization's representative whether it is someone from human resources, the talent acquisition team or the hiring manager. The first people who review your cover letter will be looking for the following:

- Qualifications – you can perform the key requirements of the opportunity
- Voice – you are enthusiastic, and your individual voice is apparent
- Connections – you connect with the organization's mission, vision, values, and culture.

Content

Introduction Paragraph

- Share enthusiasm in applying for the opportunity, specifically naming the position title
- State any personal connections within the organization, if possible
- Overview 2-4 skills that are most relevant to the opportunity; think of this as the 'thesis'

Body Paragraph(s)

- Expand upon the 2-4 skills stated from the introduction paragraph explaining how those skills were learned or executed
- Demonstrate to the organization how your previous experiences connect to this specific opportunity
- This paragraph(s) should be filled with examples and avoid listing or bulleting skills

Concluding Paragraph

- Share appreciation to the organization reviewing the cover letter
- Restate the thesis of the cover letter overviewing the 2-4 most relevant skills
- Request an interview including contact information

Meet with a Career Planning Staff member to help determine content of your cover letter.

Skills Employers View as Important from Graduates

Below are skills employers view as important from college graduates organized with the College of Wooster Graduate Qualities which are qualities that College of Wooster graduates should demonstrate, in bold:

Independent Thinking

- Critical Thinking
- Work Independently
- Lifelong Learning
- Career and Self Development

Effective Communication

- Presentation Skills
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication

Integrative and Collaborative Inquiry

- Innovation and Creativity
- Analyze and Interpret Data
- Locate, Evaluate, and Use Information in Decision Making
- Integrate Ideas and Information Across Settings and Contexts

Global Engagement

- Communicate and Work with People from Different Cultural Backgrounds
- Global Learning
- Intercultural Knowledge

Dynamic Understanding of the Liberal Arts

- Digital Literacy
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Application of Knowledge in Real World Settings
- Working with Statistics and Numbers

Justice and Civic Responsibility

- Ethical Judgement and Decision Making
- Self-Motivated
- Civic Engagement
- Equity and Inclusion

Employers are More Likely to Hire Graduates with These Experiences

- **Internship/apprenticeship** with a company/organization
- **Project** in community with people from diverse backgrounds
- Multiple courses requiring **significant writing** assignments
- **Research project** done collaboratively with peers
- Advanced, comprehensive **senior project/thesis**
- **Service-learning** project with community organization
- **Study abroad** program

AAC&U. (2022). Values rubric. <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics>

AAC&U & Hart Research Associates. (2018). Fulfilling the American dream: Liberal education and the future of work. <https://dgm81phvh63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/2018EmployerResearchReport.pdf>

AAC&U, Findley, A. (2021). How colleges contribute to workforce success: Employer views on what matters most. <https://dgm81phvh63.cloudfront.net/content/userphotos/Research/PDFs/AACUEmployerReport2021.pdf>

NACE. (2021, March). Career Readiness: Competencies for a career-ready workforce. <https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2021/resources/nace-career-readiness-competencies-revised-apr2021.pdf>

Subject: Internship Inquiry

Dear First & Last Name (if known) or Internship Coordinator:

I am a sophomore Communication Studies major at The College of Wooster and am very interested in the field of public relations, particularly in the nonprofit sector. I am looking to gain experience in this field and a summer internship with Capital Children's Center, an agency that works to enhance the welfare of children, would be directly related to my career goals.

I have served as the public relations chair for our campus organization, Wooster Activities Crew. In this role I have created posters, flyers, table tents, banners, and electronic messages to promote the numerous events the organization sponsors. I have experience with Canva and Adobe Photoshop and have written press releases and newspaper advertisements as part of my class assignments. I am eager to build on this experience to help your agency promote its events and services to the public.

I am available to begin as early as May 15, 2020 and could continue until the middle of August. I will be home in Albany, NY for spring break from March 16 to the 23rd and would enjoy meeting with you to discuss the possibility of a summer internship. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at (XXX) XX-XXXX or by email at email address.

Sincerely,
Name

Name

Email | Phone | Wooster, OH | LinkedIn

Current Date

Rockefeller Archive Center
Sleepy Hollow, NY

Dear First & Last Name (if known or Internship Coordinator or Hiring Manager)

As a history major, I am very interested in researching different aspects of the past and learning how they have converged and created the situations we are in today. By attending a school with a liberal arts curriculum, I have a substantive academic workload that requires me to use multiple research and learning techniques to broaden my topics of study. Allowing me to apply my education and personal skills to an agency that works to educate the community would be a valuable experience that is directly related to my career goals.

You will see from the enclosed resume that I have research and working experience. My research experience includes evaluating museum visitor tendencies and interactions, as well as participating in a research project concerning glacial ice melting. Currently, I work as a student technician with the IT/Media Services department for The College of Wooster. In this role I assist in preparing events, instructing speakers on operating various types of audio/visual equipment for events on campus. As a result I have developed great organizational and communication skills. I am experienced with Microsoft Office applications for both Macintosh and PC, and I am eager to build upon my experiences to help the Center promote its services to the public.

I am available to start as early as May 14, 2021 and could continue until the middle of August. I will be home for spring break from March 10 through 22 and would enjoy meeting with you to discuss the possibility at that time.

I look forward to hearing from you concerning any capacity in which I might be a part of The Rockefeller Archive Center. You can reach me by email at email address or contact me by phone at (XXX)-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,
Name

Name

Phone – Email – LinkedIn

Current Date

The Henderson Crawley Art Museum
Boston, MA 02107

Dear First & Last Name: (or Internship Coordinator or Hiring Manager)

I am a junior Art History major at the College of Wooster, and I am very interested in the summer curatorial internship with the Henderson Crawley Art Museum. I learned of this opportunity through my college's Career Planning office.

As my resume states, last summer I gained curatorial experience by working as a volunteer for the Ingersoll Art Museum in Pittsburgh, PA. In that position I had an opportunity to assist with the installation of a photography show and to observe the decision-making process for the placement of each photograph. I helped to publicize the exhibition through social media, assisted with the opening reception, and responded to inquiries from the public about the exhibit. These experiences confirmed my interest in the museum field, and an internship at your museum would help me to finalize this career decision.

I have a passion for art and have always loved to visit museums. I have strong interpersonal skills, excellent writing skills and the ability to handle multiple tasks. I would love to apply these and other skills to an internship with the Henderson Crawley Art Museum.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the curatorial internship and how I might contribute to the work at your museum. I can be reached by phone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email at email address. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
First & Last Name

Name

Wooster, Ohio

Phone Email

Current Date

The Ohio Light Opera
Wooster, OH 44691

Dear First & Last Name: (or Internship Coordinator or Hiring Manager)

I am writing to express my interest in a technical position at the Ohio Light Opera this season. Specifically, I would like to be considered for a position as properties manager or assistant stage manager. As a sophomore theatre major at the College of Wooster and an employee of the College's scene shop, I feel I am highly qualified for either of these positions.

I have been involved in theatre on some level since middle school. As you can see on my attached resume, I have assisted with not only school productions, but a number of community theatre shows. Most of my technical experience has come since my time here at Wooster, and I feel the strong caliber of the faculty and educational opportunities here have left me with a strong knowledge base and a thorough grounding in many of the skills related to theatre. I have taken two relevant classes at the College, Theatre Technology, and Introduction to Scenic Design, which I feel have imparted critical knowledge about scenic and lighting design and implementation.

This semester I have been working in the scene shop assisting with the construction and painting of sets as well as hanging and focusing lighting instruments for the College's production of *Cabaret*. During this time, I have begun to master a number of crucial skills necessary for scenic construction and painting. I have also served as assistant stage manager for two productions, and this spring I will be serving as assistant prop master for the production of *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, in addition to appearing in the show.

I have been a fan of Gilbert and Sullivan since my father took me to an OLO production of *The Gondoliers* when I was in high school and two additional shows in subsequent summers. I have always admired the professional quality of OLO's performances. In fact, the presence of OLO was a strong factor in my decision to attend the College of Wooster over other schools. I am sure that being involved with these productions, on any level, would be an excellent learning experience.

I look forward to hearing from you concerning how I might be a part of the great tradition of the OhioLight Opera this season. You can reach me by email at email address or by phone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Name

Name
Phone Email

Current Date

SURE Ohio 5
Columbus, OH 46671

Dear First & Last Name: (or Internship Coordinator or Hiring Manager)

I am writing to express my interest for the Ohio 5-OSU Summer Undergraduate Research Experience program, which I learned about from my college's Career Planning office. As a junior majoring in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, I believe my critical thinking and research skills makes me a strong candidate for the SURE program.

I aspire to study challenging diseases from a molecular biology and microbiology perspective. That's why I selected Dr. Karin Musier-Forsyth's projects focusing on HIV protein-RNA interaction; Dr. Dehua Pei's project on developing cell penetrating molecules; Dr. Thomas Magliery's research on applied protein engineering; Dr. Jane Jackman's research on tRNA enzyme; and Dr. Daniel Wozniak's research on genetic- function relationship of virulence factors. I see the selected projects as a forward step towards my senior research thesis, PhD program exploration, and future career as a biomedical scientist. I also appreciate SURE program's goal of developing scientific communication, believing it is critical to build connections between scientific and non-scientific communities.

As my CV states, I have been involved in several research experiences. These experiences taught me that it is normal to meet obstacles in scientific research and that it is beneficial to often reevaluate my approach to solving problems by talking to colleagues and professors. From these experiences, my writing skills were enhanced, especially writing research proposals and comprehensive lab reports. I also strengthened my skills in performing laboratory techniques such as PCR, DNA recombinant in prokaryotic model organism, protein overexpression and purification. I believe my research background makes me a good candidate for the selected projects.

By the end of 2019-2020 academic year, I will complete Techniques in Biochemistry, Principles in Biochemistry, Immunology, Chemical Biology, Computational Biology, Data Visualization, Data Reproducibility, and Imperative Problem Solving (C programming). Equipped with the knowledge from these courses and techniques from previous research experiences, I feel qualified for any of these prospective research opportunities.

I look forward to hearing from you. You can reach me by phone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email at email address. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Name

Name

Phone

Email

Wooster, OH

Current Date

The College of Wooster
Wooster, OH 44691

Dear First & Last Name: (or Internship Coordinator or Hiring Manager)

I am writing to apply for the Peer Advisor position in APEX for the 2021-2022 school year. I am currently a junior Communication Studies and Philosophy double major. I believe I exhibit important traits necessary for this position such as organization and openness, as well as communication and editing skills.

As I have displayed in my résumé, I have implemented the aforementioned traits in many activities, both past and present. For example, within my work with Admissions over the past three years I have learned how to be open and approachable to the prospective students and their families who are in unfamiliar territory. With these students and their families, I have to be friendly and relatable while also making sure I get my message about Wooster across. For many college students, writing a cover letter and résumé can be just as unfamiliar of territory. Having a Peer Advisor who is accessible rather than intimidating is very important in completing what may seem to students as a daunting task.

Additionally, as a Communication Studies major I am familiar with persuasive writing in many capacities. In one of my classes, Public Policy, we took the time to learn how to best sell oneself to an employer and had to create a polished résumé and cover letter. The communication and editing skills I have gained from my major will allow me to help other students with their own writing. Furthermore, being a double major means that I must organize my time well so that I am able to be successful in the classroom. I take the time to list all of the course requirements and lay out a clear schedule I must follow in order to graduate. This attention to detail will also help me to be prepared as a Peer Advisor so I can best help the students as well as other APEX staff.

I can be reached by email at email address or cell at (XXX) XXX-XXXX anytime between 12 pm and 5 pm EST on weekdays. I am more than willing to partake in an interview either in-person or over the phone. I appreciate the time you have taken to read and consider my resume and hope to hear from you promptly.

Sincerely,
Name

Name
Phone | Email | LinkedIn

April 16, 2021

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am very interested and applying for the position of Community Outreach Organizer. To me, the Humane Society has always stood as an organization of compassion and comradery. It is thanks to the Cleveland Humane Society that I was able to adopt my best friend, a boxer I've named Rufus. He has provided me unconditional love and support and inspired me to both help others experience one of life's greatest joys and to assist in the journey of finding forever homes for the animals of my community.

My experience as a Communication Studies major at a liberal arts college has prepared me greatly for a position such as this, and I believe I would be a strong asset to your team. As a soon-to-be graduate of the College of Wooster, I have completed my Independent Study—a three semester research project in which I conducted and analyzed interviews for my 100+ page thesis, followed by my oral defense and a symposium presentation of my findings. My study focused on the perceptual differences regarding cultural appropriation in Hiphop music along lines of gender and race, as a lot of my scholastic career has concentrated on analyzing social inequality. This expertise is invaluable in the realm of community outreach due to the relevance social inequality has in the ability for community members to adopt and maintain happy and healthy pets. Issues of social justice have always been important to me and would be at the forefront of the work I would be doing for the Humane Society. The interviews I conducted for both my Independent Study and my summer position for the Applied Mathematics and Research Experience program have strengthened my skills in outreach to recruit interviewees, as well as my skills in general communication to volley significant conversation, questions, and feedback.

I believe I am a strong candidate for this position, not only for my effective communication skills and knowledge of systematic inequality, but for my general leadership and networking abilities. As a camp counselor and a Summer Food Service Program Director, I have had to organize and direct both children as young as age 5 and employees of the program, log important program documents, communicate with contracted food providers, and plan for meal service sites as well as summer camp events and activities. I have been told I have a democratic leadership style that is fair while still being efficient and effective. I have also created and run a social media page for my costuming creations that has over 30,000 followers and counting. This has taught me skills in advertisement, familiarized me with algorithms of social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, and Tumblr, as well as how to maximize the reach of posts while engaging audiences.

I look forward to hearing from you and would like to discuss the possibility of joining your team in the near future. Please feel free to reach me at any time through my contact information above. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Name

Name

Email / Phone / LinkedIn

June 21, 2021

Austin Monthly
Austin, TX 78738

Dear First & Last Name: (or Hiring Manager)

I am writing to apply for the Editorial Assistant position posted on your website. As a recent graduate of the College of Wooster with a B.A. in International Relations, I feel I have developed the strong writing, research, and communication skills you require. I have always dreamed of working for a magazine, and *Austin Monthly* would be a perfect fit.

As my resume illustrates, I have a wide-ranging, creative mind and am continually seeking new opportunities and experiences. I have traveled to South Africa and Mali for study and research, and flew to Baku, Azerbaijan with the World Network of Election Monitors as an international observer for the 2018 presidential elections there. As a sophomore, I presented psychological research with Dr. Virginia Wickline on cultural adjustment in international students at a conference in Las Vegas. I was also one of four Wooster students awarded a fellowship to attend the Chicago Humanities Festival in November 2018, where I enjoyed lectures and forums on globalization, urban planning, ethics, and literature.

My independent research skills are top-notch; I recently completed a 101-page senior thesis that investigated how right-wing movements have created and reacted to various forms of media, from the nativist press of the nineteenth century to online media today. For this project I attended rallies and conducted field research in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Orlando, Florida. As a junior I completed a semester-long thesis project that contrasted the Western reading of Robert Mugabe's land redistribution program with Mugabe's own interpretation. I completed these research projects while juggling a full class load, writing assignments, volunteering, work, leadership activities, and other responsibilities, and never once missed a deadline.

I also spent a semester abroad in Bamako, Mali, where I became fascinated with the urban gardeners who grew fruits and vegetables along the banks of the Niger River and by the smaller streams and water holes that crisscrossed the city. I translated this interest into another research project, which I have attached as one of my writing samples.

I would love the opportunity to become involved in *Austin Monthly's* community of writers. I believe my commitment to excellence in research and writing make me well-suited for the Editorial Assistant position. I look forward to hearing from you at email address or (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,
Name

Name
Phone Email

February 7, 2021

Center for American Progress
Washington, D.C. 20005

To the Director, Middle-Out Project:

I am applying for the Middle-Out Research Assistant position. The Middle-Out Project is of interest to me because I agree that supply-side, trickle-down economics only serves to increase inequality and weaken the middle class. As an economics major, I have examined and critically assessed the supply-side models and theories that dominate economic policy in the United States. This analysis has convinced me that supply-side policies are fundamentally flawed and must be replaced with more effective alternatives if America is to rebuild its critically important middle class. It would be an honor to join the ranks of such a well-respected organization as the Center for American Progress to help bring about this change as a member of the Middle-Out Project.

My academic background in economics, together with my research and writing experience, makes me a strong candidate for the Research Assistant position. Currently, I am completing my Senior Independent Study Thesis examining the finance system for K12 public education in Ohio. Through this study, I have expanded my research skills as well as the ability to see a project through from start to finish over an extended period of time. My thesis includes a literature review, synthesis of relevant economic theory, and statistical analysis using STATA software – all culminating in a 90-page report. I also strengthened my research skills as a consultant with the Applied Mathematics Research Experience (AMRE) at Wooster in the summer following my sophomore year. Consulting for AMRE taught me how to collaborate effectively in a small team to produce tangible results. My three-student team researched and monitored best practices at other institutions, interviewed practitioners in the field, and presented weekly updates to our clients – the Dean for Curriculum & Academic Engagement and the Dean for Experiential Learning – in order to create the framework for Wooster's new Experiential Learning office.

I also have developed skills through my work experience and extracurricular activities that I will use as a Research Assistant. As a Lead Tour Guide in the Office of Admissions the past two years, I have strengthened my skills as an organizer and coordinator. In addition to giving campus tours, I also have the responsibility of planning events like tour guide meetings, overnight visits for prospective students and their families, and Admissions Open Houses. While working ten to fifteen hours per week as a Lead Guide, I have excelled academically – including being inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Epsilon during my junior year – and have continued to participate in meaningful extracurricular activities. As captain of Wooster's moot court team this academic year, I served as a mentor for my teammates and also planned trips to regional and national competitions. As Vice President of the College Democrats, I worked extensively during the 2018 election cycle to register voters and organize canvassing and phone banking events. Last summer, I further developed these campaign and outreach skills as an intern with the National Lawyers Guild in San Francisco. My time with the Lawyers Guild gave me valuable experience thinking on my feet in a fast-changing environment to develop coalitions and generate support for advocacy campaigns within the community.

I would be glad to provide a list of references, a writing sample, or any additional information you may require. I look forward to discussing the Research Assistant position with you in greater detail. I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email address. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Name

Subject: Informational Interview Request

Dear First & Last Name:

Dr. Allen Horst, my English professor at The College of Wooster, suggested I contact you regarding gathering additional insight into the field of publishing. I understand that you and he worked together on various projects in graduate school. I have been conducting research for Dr. Horst this year, which has allowed me to develop my writing and editing skills.

Last summer I completed an internship at High Flight Press, a regional publisher which produces books on antiques, country living and sustainable farming. Under the direction of a senior editor, I was involved with copyreading, book design, working with printers, and editorial work.

I would very much like to meet with you to discuss publishing in greater detail, as well as learn more about what you do. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Name

Subject: Account Executive Position Application

Attachments: Name Cover Letter; Name Resume

Dear First & Last Name:

Please consider this e-mail an application for the position of Account Executive with FoxFinancial, Inc.

Last summer as a brokerage intern with Capital Securities, I researched companies to assist the retail brokers with their investment decisions. Through cold-calling I built a strong client list for the brokers and helped the firm reach its annual goal. These experiences have provided me with an understanding of the investment industry and enhanced my desire to obtain a position with Fox Financial, Inc. as an Account Executive upon my graduation from The College of Wooster in May, 2021.

I believe that my education, experience, and skills make me a suitable candidate for your organization. I have attached my resume and cover letter for your review, and hope to hear from you regarding the Account Executive position. I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email address. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Name

MISSION STATEMENT

Career Planning provides guidance and resources for students to integrate their values and strengths, liberal arts education, and experiences into purposeful career paths.



WOOSTER

Advising, Planning, Experiential Learning

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wooster.edu/offices/career