

SkillsFirst Job Aid

What is SkillsFirst?

SkillsFirst is a self-service career management and development platform. SNHU Career Services offers free access to SNHU students and alumni to be able to utilize this tool as you progress towards your professional goals, whether you're established, changing, or just beginning your career.

Why Use It?

You can take your professional documents and career preparation to the next level through a holistic suite of AI-powered career tools designed to deliver personalized feedback and support, making SkillsFirst a fantastic tool for SNHU learners who might want to access this information at any time in true self-service application.

SkillsFirst Resources:

- Create a resume
- **Create a cover letter**
- Create a pitch
- Create a portfolio
- Take a practice interview
- Watch career advice videos
- Take a career assessment

Cover Letter Builder Resource

The Cover Letter Resource in SkillsFirst allows you to create a cover letter that is tailored to any application, allowing you to expand upon your skills and experience. You can review the User Guides for the [Cover Letter Builder](#) in SkillsFirst Support or see the "How To Use" steps below.

How to Use the Cover Letter Builder

Log In with your SNHU credentials and select **"Create Cover Letter"**. From there can select "Upload Cover Letter", "Edit Sample", or "Start From Scratch"

Upload Cover Letter Option

- If you already have a cover letter:
 - Start on the Dashboard: Log into SkillsFirst, navigate to your dashboard, and click "Create a Cover Letter".
 - Select 'Upload Cover Letter': Choose the 'Upload Cover Letter' option to begin the process.
 - Name Your Cover Letter: Give your document a recognizable name for easy reference and management.
 - Upload Your Document: After naming, upload your cover letter in either Word or PDF format.

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- Optimize with GPT AI Keyword Suggestions: Use the 'GPT AI' button for keyword optimization. Enter the job description you're targeting to receive relevant keywords and integrate them thoughtfully into your cover letter.

Edit Sample Option

- Select 'Edit Sample'
- Choose a Design Template: Pick a design template that suits your style.
- Click the 'Preview' button to preview a sample.
- Click "Use This Sample" to clone the sample for personal editing.
- You will be redirected to the dashboard where the cloned cover letter is saved with "_clone" appended to its default name.
- To rename the cloned cover letter, click the "..." on the dashboard.
- Begin editing by selecting the 'Edit' button.
 - The editing tool is divided into three tabs for a structured customization process:
 - **Your Information Tab:** Here, input your personal details relevant to the cover letter.
 - **Recipient Information Tab:** Fill out the details of the letter's recipient.
 - **Letter Body Tab:** Focus your editing efforts here, where you'll structure the main content of your cover letter. Remember to save your changes at the bottom of this tab.
 - During the editing process, SkillsFirst facilitates customization through practical examples:
 - **Access Examples:** Click the 'Examples' link in any section of the letter, such as the first section, to load relevant examples.
 - **Apply a Type Filter:** For more tailored inspiration, apply a second "type" filter. This allows you to see examples more specific to the kind of letter you're writing.
 - **Incorporate Examples into Your Letter:** Select the checkbox next to a specific example to add it to the editor.
 - **Add Specifics:** Continue to personalize the added content to suit your situation.

Start From Scratch Option

- Select 'Start From Scratch' for creating a new document or adapting an existing letter with our templates.
- Pick a template that matches your professional image and complements your resume.
- Assign a name and provide a short description for your cover letter.
- After naming, go to the dashboard and click 'Edit' to customize your letter.
- SkillsFirst automatically populates the 'Your Information' section with details from your account, such as your name, headline, and email.
- Finish adding your information and save.
- Customizing Your Cover Letter
 - **Recipient Information Input:** Enter details about the letter's recipient.
 - **Letter Body Composition:** Use the 'Letter Body' tab for drafting new content or pasting existing material.
 - Browse through our examples to find inspiration.

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- **Apply Examples Filters:** Use the 'Type' filter to see examples for the specific type and section of the letter you're editing.

Save Your Changes: Be sure to click the 'Save' button below to save your changes.

Enhance with AI: Before concluding, leverage GPT AI features for an in-depth review to ensure your letter is meticulously polished and aligned with your job application. See next section for how each section of Enhance with AI can help.

Download and Share: Finalize your edits, download your cover letter as Word Document, and manage its sharing preferences as desired. You may submit your cover letter if you are satisfied, or you may wish to circle back with your Career Advisor for a final check before submission.

Enhance with AI Details in Cover Letter Builder:

Below you will find definitions to each section and output if choose to use the Enhance with AI feature in the Cover Letter Builder.

Overall, these GPT AI features look for Cover Letter Effectiveness – Enhance clarity, job alignment, and storytelling impact in your cover letter. It provides suggestions for improvement and needed enhancements such as keywords. This feature addresses cover letter strengths and the *Next Actionable Steps* a candidate can take to improve their cover letter before submitting it to potential employers.

Cover Letter Review - Full assessment of cover letter clarity and effectiveness.

- **Overall Effectiveness & Readiness** – Check on the strategic quality of the content, does the writing align with professional objectives, are the key achievement, skills, and value clearly communicated, is tone, formatting and structure consistent, is the content tailored to expectations of hiring position
- **Spelling & Grammar Accuracy** – Ensures all words and spelling are correct before submission. This feature checks your cover letter for spelling errors, typos or mistakes, and correct use of spelling throughout your cover letter. Checks for correct usage of grammar and grammatical accuracy throughout your cover letter. This includes proper sentence structure, verb tenses, punctuation and agreement between subjects and verb-tense ensuring grammar correctness- ensuring the use of proper syntax, punctuation, and subject –verb agreement
- **Sentence Clarity, Flow & Language Impact** – Reviews for clear and unambiguous – over complex or confusing sentence structures, if there is redundancy or wordiness that could obscure meaning
- **Section Completeness** - Refers to how thoroughly and fully each section of your cover letter is filled in. This feature assesses whether you've included all the relevant information in each category
- **Action Verbs Strength** – Evaluates a variety of action verbs used in present and past tense determining whether you have used strong, dynamic verbs to describe your responsibilities, accomplishments, and experiences
- **Opening & Closing Strength** - Grab attention quickly – possibly with a statement of confidence, a relevant achievement, or a connection to the organization. State your purpose clearly – why you're

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writing and what role you're applying for. Show enthusiasm – indicate genuine interest in the company/position. Leave a strong impression at the end of your letter.

- **Final Recommendations** - Refers to specific, actionable suggestions provided at the end of the platform's feedback to help you improve your cover letter overall.
- **Final thoughts** - Refers to the overall summary of feedback provided at the end of the platform's evaluation process. It's a high-level assessment that wraps up your cover letter.

Letter-Job Alignment Review - Match your experiences

- **Score** - How well your cover letter aligns with the specific job description you're targeting. A score will be provided based on this assessment.
- **Key Experience Alignment** - How well your cover letter connects your relevant experience, skills, and achievements to the specific job you are applying for. This means you're demonstrating a clear match between what the employer is looking for and how you align with that opportunity.
- **Narrative Impact** - Assesses how well your cover letter presents a clear, engaging, and logically structured story that aligns your experiences and motivations with the position and employer. A strong narrative should capture the reader's attention, convey enthusiasm, and connect your background to the employer's goals in a way that feels both authentic and strategic.
- **Suggestion for Improvement** - Provides constructive feedback on how to strengthen the connection between your cover letter and the job posting. It focuses on identifying gaps, weak areas, or missed opportunities in how your letter aligns your experience, skills, and goals with the specific role.

Storytelling & Impact Analysis Feature

- **Impact of Key Statements** - how effectively the most important sentences in your cover letter (such as those describing your accomplishments, skills, or motivations) demonstrate your value, create a memorable impression, and support your candidacy. Strong key statements are specific, results-driven, and aligned with the employer's needs.
- **Storytelling and Engagement** - How effectively your cover letter uses narrative techniques to present your career journey, personality, and motivation in a way that is engaging, authentic, and aligned with the job. A strong letter keeps the reader interested by telling a story that flows logically, reflects passion, and reinforces your fit for the role.
- **Suggestion for Improvement** - Specific recommendations to enhance the clarity, flow, voice, or impact of your cover letter's narrative. It focuses on improving how well your story communicates your motivations, connects your experiences to the role, and keeps the reader engaged.

Tips for Success

- **Proofread your cover letter and/or work with your Career Advisor for review:** While AI is an excellent tool, it is not always accurate and needs human revision to decipher any inaccuracies. Remember, your cover letter should NOT repeat your resume, it should expand upon it. Your cover letter should always include an introduction to who you are, the body of the letter is your professional and academic experience, and a warm closing with the best way to contact you.

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- **Do not copy and paste AI suggestions into your cover letter verbatim:** Be sure to use your own words to make sure it sounds like you. Remember, your cover letter should NOT repeat your resume, it should expand upon it.
- **Plan ahead:** Provide yourself with adequate time to review the feedback provided and apply necessary changes to your cover letter.

FAQs

Q: How do I download my documents and send them to career services for feedback?

A: You will first want to download your finished product by selecting the down arrow and selecting your preferred format either PDF or Word document; we recommend you keep a word document to use for editing purposes. From there you may email cocecareer@snhu.edu for questions and feedback. We request three business days to provide feedback on all documents received.

Q: How many times can I use this resource?

A: As an SNHU student or alumni in good standing, you have unlimited access and usage to SkillsFirst.

Q: Can I improve my cover letter based on the feedback?

A: Yes, the feedback is actionable, allowing students to refine their cover letters immediately. Suggestions focus on improving clarity, alignment with job descriptions, and overall professionalism. For additional Support please feel free to contact Career Advising.

Q: What other tools are available on SkillsFirst?

A: In addition to the Cover letter Builder, SkillsFirst offers tools like Resume Readiness, Career Portfolio Builder, Elevator Pitch Builder, and Interview Practice tools.

Need Help?

For more information on SkillsFirst please contact Career Advising by phone at 888-672-1458 and or by email at cocecareer@snhu.edu.

Training Materials or Next Steps

Watch Our [SkillsFirst Video Tutorials](#)