



COVER LETTER GUIDE



Use a cover letter to express your interest in a specific position and/or company. Inform the reader of your qualifications and explain why you are the *perfect* fit for the position.



Why is a Cover Letter Important?

- A good cover letter gives you a chance to **emphasize the skills, previous successes, and personal qualities** that you will contribute to a potential employer/organization
- It is an opportunity to **expand** on and **highlight** the most important aspects of your resume while adding a personal touch
- A way to tell employers **what you can bring to the table**, not just how much you want to work for them
- A cover letter allows you to explain to an employer **why you are a good fit** for the position and why they should hire you
- Use the cover letter to reflect your **personality**, professional interests, and show your **passion**

Employers can detect generic cover letters: Be sure to tailor each cover letter according to the position

What should a Cover Letter include?

- What you **know about the company**
- What makes you **unique** as a candidate
- Your relevant skills
- Use the same font in your cover letter, as you do in your resume



Breaking Down the Cover Letter

- A cover letter should not be longer than 1 page

CONTACT INFO/HEADER

- Always include **contact information** at the top of the letter
 - Consider making header/contact information identical to that on your resume so both documents look polished and professional
 - If you decide not to do this, you will want to include your contact info on the upper left-hand side of the page
 - **See sample on page 6*
 - Make sure the phone number you include has a professional voicemail message
 - Include a professional email address that you check regularly
- Place **date** of the letter 2 lines below your heading/contact information on the left-hand side of the page
- Place the **employer contact information** two lines below the date on the left-hand side of the page as follows:

Individual's Name
Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

- Skip 2 lines again, and begin your letter with **Dear** (Mr., Ms., or Dr.) _____:
 - DO NOT use a person's first name in the greeting. Always try to obtain a specific contact name, but if you don't have one, NEVER use Sir/Madam, or To Whom it May Concern, but rather:

Hiring Manager or Human Resources Professional or Human Resources Recruiter

**TIP: Be resourceful – find a name. Employers are more likely to hire those who go the extra mile to find a name to address their cover letter to (it shows attention to detail).*

**TIP: Many job descriptions include who the position would report to. Use this title to help you search for a contact.*



FIRST PARAGRAPH

- Briefly state the **purpose of the letter**. Include: the (specific or type of) job you are applying to and how you heard about the position/company
- If unaware of job openings, indicate the type of position you seek and inquire about similar positions at the organization

TIP: Show off your knowledge of the organization. Point out why you are interested in the **particular organization; this will set you apart from other applicants*

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

- **Second (and perhaps third) Paragraph:** This is the main body of the letter. Take your knowledge of the field and the position - match it with your interests, skills, and experience
 - Explain how your qualifications fit the position. Use examples from your resume to support your statements. Refer the reader to your resume but **do not repeat details from your resume**. Briefly state what qualities you bring to the workplace. (Refer to sample cover letters for an example of this)
 - **Be concise!** Quantify your successes when you can. (Example: Increased social media followers by 10%)
 - AVOID beginning each sentence with “I”, but rather linking sentences or using sentence starters such as, “Currently, as a Sacred Heart University junior”, or “Having gained valuable experience in Accounting...”

FINAL PARAGRAPH

- Close your letter by indicating your **desire for an interview**
- Express **gratitude** to the reader for his/her time
- You may want to include one more statement regarding your desire/qualifications for the position/organization



CLOSING

- Typically stick to “Sincerely,” as a professional way to close a letter

Sincerely,

Signed Name

John Smith

****TIP:** Get a second opinion. Have someone proofread your letter for typos, grammatical errors, the wrong company name, etc. Cover letters can end up being deal breakers if they have any mistakes in them.*

We understand that submitting cover letters is a time sensitive process. The Center for Career & Professional Development can provide a virtual cover letter review – be sure to email your document as a word attachment.



HOW TO FORMAT YOUR COVER LETTER

Your Name
Your Address
City, State Zip Code

Date of Letter

Individual's Name
Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Ms. _____:

First Paragraph. In your initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening (career services center, news media, friend, employment service). Refer the reader to your enclosed resume.

Second Paragraph. Mention why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products or its services. Above all, indicate what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have had some practical work experience, point out your specific achievements or unique qualifications. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume. Show you know about the employer and the qualifications required. Focus on meeting the employer's desired qualifications by tailoring to job description.

Final Paragraph. In the closing paragraph, reemphasize your strong interest in the position and gratitude for consideration

Sincerely,

Sign Your Name

Your Name

Your Email Address

Your Phone Number



SAMPLE 1

Jane Pioneer
126 Ridgewood Ave
Fairfield, CT 06604

February 25, 2017

Mr. Ross Gellar
Manager
ABC Company
123 Main Street
Fairfield, CT 050505

Dear Mr. Gellar,

Your advertisement on Handshake for a Marketing Assistant is of great interest to me, prompting me to submit my application. Over the past several years, I have been developing my skills in marketing, specifically inbound marketing. ABC Company is at the forefront of the marketing field and offers its clients exceptional services. Additionally, your company exemplifies creativity and innovativeness. After reading your posting, I am confident that I can offer a lot to ABC Company. I believe I can uphold ABC Company's core value of integrity and rise to the challenges of the Marketing Assistant position.

I am a recent recipient of a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, with an interest in digital and inbound marketing initiatives. During my senior year of college I interned for XYZ Toy Company. During this internship I created digital marketing campaigns for the company's newest doll line. I also developed graphics and advertisements from my original sketch work. I performed in-depth online market research pertaining to the toy industry and current trends. In addition, I assisted my supervisors in conceptualization and design meetings, occasionally performing administrative tasks when required. Through my past experiences, I have developed strong team building and leadership skills that I seek to apply to my future profession. I know ABC Company is looking for an ambitious team-player and someone who will take initiative in new projects. The foundation of your company is comprised of hard work, creativity, and goal-oriented group membership. I believe I would be an excellent candidate who will build upon this foundation.

I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss with you how I can contribute to ABC Company. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Pioneer (Signed)

Jane Pioneer
pioneerj@mail.sacredheart.edu
203-555-5555



SAMPLE 2

Jack Pioneer

Fairfield, CT | pioneerj@mail.sacredheart.edu | 203-555-5555

February 25, 2019

Mr. Ross Gellar
Manager
ABC Company
123 Main Street
Fairfield, CT 050505

Dear Mr. Gellar,

I am writing to you regarding the Marketing Internship at ABC Company that I discovered on Sacred Heart University's Handshake account and was delighted to find that my academic accomplishments meet all of the necessary requirements. I am seeking a challenging but rewarding internship, which is why I was drawn to this exciting opportunity.

As a junior marketing student at Sacred Heart University, I have acquired skills in advertising, PR, product development, and market research. Currently I hold a 3.8 GPA and have been on the Dean's List every semester. While in the College of Business, I have strategically focused my coursework in the following areas:

- Marketing Analytics
- Marketing Management
- Survey Research
- Strategic Internet Marketing
- Integrated Marketing Communications

Using my knowledge of the above, I designed a marketing campaign for a local pet grooming business that yielded the highest return on investment based on our given budget. The campaign was so well received that I was awarded third place in the Jack Welch Business Competition.

I would be delighted to have an opportunity to personally interview with you. Please accept my enclosed resume to further outline my qualifications. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jack Pioneer



Emailing a Cover Letter

SAMPLE 1

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Attached please find my resume and cover letter for the position of (POSITION TITLE) with (COMPANY NAME). As mentioned in my cover letter, I am particularly interested in this position because of the opportunity to contribute to the inbound marketing initiatives. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Pioneer

***TIP: If you've been referred to the position by a company employee, you can mention that in this email (Ex: "I received your contact information from.....")**

SAMPLE 2

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I recently met with my career coach, (COACH'S NAME), at Sacred Heart University and we talked at length about your Social Work Internship opportunity that you currently have open. I believe I am an ideal candidate for this position and would love the opportunity to discuss my background and qualifications with you.

Attached, please find my resume and cover letter for your review. Thank you so much for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Pioneer



Cover Letter Checklist

- _____ Is your Cover Letter original and specific to the company, rather than a generic, mass-produced document?
- _____ Is the Cover Letter formatted well, with a business letter style? Is the font style and size consistent throughout the document?
- _____ Is the document clear and to the point, while not exceeding one page in length?
- _____ Is every word spelled correctly? Have you reviewed all grammar, syntax, punctuation, etc?
- _____ Do you find the Cover Letter interesting and confident, without being arrogant? Does your personality come across in your cover letter?
- _____ Does the document portray the image of a strong candidate and someone that the employer would like to hire?

