

Cover Letter & Professional Correspondence Guide

Cover Letter Guidelines

A cover letter is a formal business letter that accompanies a resume and serves as an introduction of you to potential employers. It will inform the employer of your skills, abilities, and experiences that relate to the job. Since your letter needs to be tailored for each employer, you should do your homework to discover what is unique and special about the organization. Remember that your letter communicates your “voice.” It needs to be well-written and express your enthusiasm for the organization and the job. When emailing a cover letter, it should be included as an attachment.

Appearance

- It should be one page, written in a professional, business letter format.
- Use a professional looking font such as Times Roman, Arial, Calibri, or Garamond. The generally accepted font size is 12. It should match the font and type size used on your resume.
- Please save your cover letter in a PDF format for ease of reading.
- Everything a potential employer receives from you—resume, cover letter, networking and thank you letters and emails need to project professionalism.

Content

- Your cover needs to be tailored to each employer. Do your homework and focus on how your skills meet their particular needs.
- Whenever possible, address your cover letter to the person who is responsible for the hiring process or for making the hiring decision. Try to avoid addressing letters “To Whom it May Concern,” “Dear Sir or Madam,” or “Dear Personnel Director.” If you have to address the cover letter to someone, address it to “Dear Recruiting Manager.”
- Your letter needs to be 100% free of spelling, grammatical, and typing errors. When at all possible have someone else proofread your cover letter.

Cover Letter Rubric

	Cover letter should get you the interview.	Cover letter could get you an interview. This is an average letter.	Cover letter needs significant improvement.
Business format and overall quality of writing ability	This letter uses correct business format with date and addresses at the top, and a signature at the bottom. This letter is clear and concise, and grammatically correct. There are no spelling errors.	This letter uses correct business formatting. There are minimal grammar and spelling errors. While its content is decent, this letter does not convince an employer to call.	Business formatting is not used. There is no contact information or date used. This letter is not signed. There are multiple grammar and spelling errors. The content of this letter does not make sense.
Section 1: Introduction	This section identifies the position for which you are applying and explains why you are interested in the job. You have described how you heard about the opening. The wording is creative and catches an employer's attention quickly.	This section identifies the position you are seeking. This letter does not describe how you heard about the opening. The letter vaguely describes why you are interested in this job. This section is general and might not catch someone's attention.	his section does not clearly identify what position you are seeking. There is no description of how you heard about the position or why you are interested. This letter will not catch an employer's attention.
Section 2: Identification of skills and experiences as related to position	This letter identifies one or two of your strongest qualifications and clearly relates how these skills apply to the job at hand. This letter explains specifically why you are interested in the position and this type of job, company, and/or location.	This letter identifies one of your qualifications, but it is not related to the position at hand. This letter restates what is on your resume with minimal additional information. You explain why you are interested in the position but are too vague.	This letter does not discuss any relevant qualifications. You have not related your skills to the position for which you are applying. This letter does not state why you are interested in the position, company, and/or location.
Section 3: Closing	This letter refers the reader to your resume or any other enclosed documents. This letter thanks the reader for taking time to read this letter. You are assertive as you describe how you will follow up with the employer in a stated time period.	The reader is thanked for taking time to read the letter. The reader is not referred to your resume or application materials. This letter assumes that the employer will contact you to follow up.	This letter does not thank the reader for taking time to review this letter. There is no reference to a resume or other materials. This letter does not mention any plan for follow up.

Cover Letter Example

(campus or home address—should be same as resume)

1050 North Mills Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711

Date **(September 1, XXXX)**

Jane Sagehen
Director of Marketing
Coca Cola
1000 Drink Lane
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Dear Mr./Ms.(_____): **(or Dear First Name Last Name)**

I am applying for the **(name of internship)** internship position at **(name of company) (location)**. I became aware of this position through the (state how). I am expressing interest in this position because I am fascinated in seeing how a successful organization like yours flourishes. **(Company)** is world-renowned and I would love to work for a company that strives to become a better institution every day.

(note: an advanced writer could insert a short “hook” at the beginning of the cover letter to grab the reader’s attention).

I am currently a **(class year)** at Pitzer College majoring in **(insert major)** and with a **(insert GPA if above 3.5)**. I believe that my current coursework in **(insert relevant coursework)** would make me the perfect candidate for this position. I am diligent, trustworthy, motivated, and I never stray from a challenge **(or any other skills)**. For example, at my previous internship, **(discuss a situation that happened)**. I believe that I would contribute positively to your organization from day one **(how and why)**. I am passionate about working for a large firm like **(company name)** and getting real world experience in a field that I am very interested in because I would like an outlet to apply the theory I have learned in the classroom. By interning with you, I hope to learn more about the field of public relations and fully develop my professional skills.

I would be eager and honored to be a part of the **(insert company name and internship position)**. Thank you for taking the time to read my resume. If you have any further questions, you can contact me on my cell phone **(insert phone number)** or by email **(insert email)**.

Sincerely,

Electronic Signature

Jane Smith

Internship Inquiry Email

An Internship Inquiry Email is sent to any organization or person you wish to gain employment with. Some employers do not post internships online and the only way to find out about internships is by directly contacting them.

EXAMPLE:

Subject: Insert the type of internship that you are inquiring about

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I am writing to you because I am very interested in interning with **(company name)**. I am currently a **(class year)** at Pitzer College majoring in **(major)** with a **(GPA)**. I believe that my current coursework in **(series of relevant course work)** would make me the perfect candidate for this position. I am diligent, trustworthy, motivated, and I never stray from a challenge **(or any other skills)**. For example, **(discuss an experience that demonstrates these skills)**. I believe that I would contribute positively to your organization from day one **(describe how and what experiences confirm that)**. I am passionate about working for a large firm like yours and especially getting the opportunity to master theories learned in the classroom through real world application in a field that I am intrigued by.

By interning with you, I hope to learn more about the field of **(insert field name)** and fully develop my professional skills. I am aware that there is no formal position available at the moment, but I hope that you please consider my resume.

Thank you,
Jane Smith
Class Year
Bachelor of Arts, Major Name
Pitzer College
Email
Phone number

Networking Email

A Networking Email is sent to someone whom you wish to connect up with to get a little bit of information about the field in which they work. The sample below is a Networking Email for an alumnus.

EXAMPLE:

Subject: Hello from a Pitzer College Student!

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I came across your contact information through **(insert source)**. I am currently a **(class year)** at Pitzer College, and I thought that I would reach out to a fellow Sagehen to discuss your career path. I am majoring in **(insert major)**, and I have a strong interest in **(insert interest)**. I would love to schedule a phone chat with you to discuss your career path and learn more about your transition from Pitzer College to your current position at Company X.

I am attaching my resume for your reference. Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Sincerely,
Jane Smith
Class Year
Bachelor of Arts, Major Name
Pitzer College
Email
Phone number

Thank You Email

After an interview, within 24 hours, you should send a thank you note to each interviewer with whom you met. You may send the note as an email or as a brief typed and signed letter. You may also send a small handwritten notecard. Your note should be brief, reiterate your interest in the position, and reference specific qualifications (or topics of conversation during the interview) that you want the interviewer to remember.

EXAMPLE:

Subject: Thank You!

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

It was such a pleasure meeting you yesterday for my interview! I really enjoyed our conversation, especially talking about **(insert most memorable part of the conversation)**. Company X is truly an exceptional place to start my career because **(insert a few notes on why Company X)**. I would be more than ecstatic to have the opportunity to work for Company X post-graduation, and I hope to hear back from you soon regarding my next steps. Have a great day, and once again, thank you very much for taking the time to interview yesterday!

Sincerely,

Jane Smith
Class Year
Pitzer College
Bachelor of Arts, Major Name
Email
Phone number