Cover Letter Writing

A cover letter is a document that is intended to generate interest in you and get the reader excited about reviewing your accompanying resume/application. The cover letter should succinctly articulate your interest, enthusiasm for both the company and specific position, and demonstrate how your unique background, skills and experiences make you an excellent fit for both the position and organization to which you are applying.

General Tips

- Expand on your experience and connect your resume content to the position requirements. Do not just repeat your resume or list positions you have held.
  - Describe specific accomplishments, experiences, and skills that demonstrate how you fit the position. Provide examples to support claims; doing so strengthens your candidacy.
  - Cite examples from the most relevant areas of your background, including internship/employment experience, leadership roles, extra-curricular activities and academic/research experiences.
- Prepare a unique letter for each position.
  - Never submit a generic cover letter. Tailor each cover letter to highlight relevant skill sets and credentials based upon the job duties/responsibilities listed on the posting.
  - Customize the employer’s information on each individual letter; specify why you are interested in this position at their company.
- Address each cover letter to the appropriate person.
  - Use “Dear Mr. or Ms. Last Name,”. Do not use phrases such as “To whom it may concern,” or “Dear Sir or Madam,”.
  - If you cannot identify the appropriate person, address your cover letter to “Dear Hiring Manager,” or “Dear Selection Committee,” or “Dear Human Resources Director,”.
- Keep a copy of every letter you submit.
  - Designate a folder on your computer to save all cover letters you send to employers.
  - If you do not hear from the employer within two weeks, follow up and ask for an update on the status of your application. For examples on how to write this, refer to the Interviewing Guide.
- Make it perfect.
  - Typographical errors, misspellings and poor word choice will put your application to the “no pile”.
  - Make an appointment with a Career Advisor to review the content of your cover letter.
  - Have someone proofread your letter for grammatical errors before sending it out.
- Enthusiasm Sells.
  - Employers want candidates who want to work for them. Show them that you’ve researched their organization and make a convincing case for why you want to work for them.
  - Be professional and courteous, but let your personality come through.

Formatting Tips

- Use 1” margins all around the page.
- Use 10-12 point font and choose the same style you chose for your resume.
- Use a block style format, and align names, dates and paragraphs along the left-hand margin.
- Keep it to one page, single spaced.
- Remember to sign your name at the bottom of each hard copy letter you submit.
- If printing, use 8½” X 11” quality bond paper, the same kind used for resumes.
Cover Letter Outline

Your First and Last Name
Your Street Address
City, ST Zip

Today’s Date

Mr./Ms. First and Last Name of Contact
Title of Employer
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, ST Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name of Contact:

Your opening paragraph tells **why you are writing** and notes where you learned about the position or if someone referred you. When referring to the position, use the title used by the employer. If someone referred you and no specific title is known, be as specific as possible about the kind of position for which you are applying. Do some research on the organization so that you can state your genuine interest in this particular employer and why it is a good fit for you, not how it will help you.

Your middle paragraph(s) should **highlight** examples that demonstrate your relevant experience, background, and/or coursework that will show the reader why she/he should consider you as a candidate. Be sure to connect your experiences and/or education to the position description. By using examples, show the employer that you have the necessary experience they seek.

You could include another paragraph detailing additional **experience** that will demonstrate or connect your background with the position. For a concluding sentence, summarize the skills and personal traits that you would bring to the job for which you are applying. Also, remember that the reader will view your letter as an example of your writing skills.

In your closing paragraph, **reiterate your interest in the position, thank the employer for his/her consideration, provide your contact information, and indicate the follow-up action.** State what you want the recipient of the letter to do next (such as contacting you to further discuss the available position) or what you will do next (such as calling to follow-up on the status of your application). Only say you will follow up if you have the contact information to do so.

Sincerely,

Sign your name (note: if sending electronically no need to include signature)

Your name (typed)
When writing a cover letter, market your experiences, background, and skill set to the specific position to which you’re applying. Depending on the position, you may highlight different areas of your academic, work, extracurricular, and/or athletic experiences that better target the skill sets and credentials most pertinent to the specific job or internship to which you’re applying. Below is a sample internship description for a position at Ticketmaster. Notice how Wesley, the student whose cover letter appears on the following page, draws a clear link between the skills/experiences detailed in the job description and his own academic background, skill set and campus involvement to make a clear case for his candidacy.

**Sample Internship Description**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Marketing/Promotions Intern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Ticketmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment – Other, Retail/Merchandising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Function</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>As a marketing intern for Ticketmaster, you can expect to learn sales and marketing practices of the ticketing industry in the world of entertainment. The internship will allow you to enhance your writing, presentation and research skills as well as learn how to develop and maintain client relationships. By the completion of the internship you should know how to determine via research what marketing techniques to apply to various projects, online placement, discounting, promotions and more. This internship will give you insight and vast general knowledge of marketing in live entertainment ticketing: concerts, sports, arts and family events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Position Responsibilities:**
- Track event data and present findings.
- Develop recap materials at the conclusion of a promotion.
- Support product-related initiatives.
- Contribute to website content and the creation of custom webpages.
- Monitor that the Ticketmaster brand is properly represented in client and promotional partners’ advertisements.
- Assist with customized marketing/promotional presentations.
- Run quality assurance tests.

**Qualifications:**
- Student pursuing a BA/BS degree in related area from an accredited institution.
- Must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
- Excellent organizational, verbal and written communication skills are essential.
- Creativity and strong attention to detail required.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word/Excel/Power Point and the Internet required.
- Must be able to work in a team environment and meet deadlines.

**Additional Information:**
- Scheduling office hours is negotiable per applicant.
- Length of internship: minimum 15 hours per week for 10 weeks.

**Contact**
Rosalyn Leiva – East Regional Recruiter
Alumnus: No
Sample Cover Letter

Wesley Mantooth
807 Union St
Schenectady NY, 12308

Ms. Rosalyn Leiva
East Regional Recruiter
Ticketmaster

Dear Ms. Leiva:

I am writing to apply for the Marketing/Promotions Intern position at Ticketmaster, which I learned about through the Becker Career Center at Union College. I am a dedicated and organized individual who is eager to continue learning more about the marketing field. I am confident that my communication, organization, and creativity skills make me an excellent candidate for this position.

As a sophomore at Union College, my academic experience and extra-curricular engagements have prepared me for this internship. The study of economics has helped develop my research, analytical and creative thinking skills, as it has allowed me to contemplate the relationships between human behavior and a variety of environmental and cultural factors. As part of my sophomore research project, I am currently researching how companies effectively utilize branding strategies and catchy logos to increase their client base and better capture their target markets. This on-going analysis of corporate markets and the knowledge I am gaining regarding effective marketing strategies will directly benefit the Marketing/Promotions department.

I have complemented my academic background with strong extra-curricular involvement. As Publicity and Promotions Co-Chair for U-Program, I developed and implemented a marketing plan for campus concerts, comedic performances and novelty acts. This required strong teamwork, organizational and interpersonal abilities as I interfaced with campus administrators, student organizations and other U-Program members in executing the marketing plan.

I will be a strong asset to the Marketing/Promotions team at Ticketmaster and I am eager to learn more about the position and your department. I welcome the chance to meet with you to discuss how my education, experiences, and skills would be beneficial for your department. I can be reached at 518-333-6565 or MantoothW@union.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Wesley Mantooth

First paragraph: Cite the position you’re applying to and reference where you found the opportunity. Display your enthusiasm by stating why you want to work for this particular organization.

Body Paragraphs: Highlight some of the broader skill sets outlined in the job description, use keywords that are consistent with the job posting and cite examples to support your statements.

Closing Paragraph: Thank the employer for their time and reiterate your interest in the position.

Note: All keywords on this cover letter are bolded and italicized for emphasis. Refrain from doing so on your own cover letter.
Sample Job Description

Job Title  Engineer
Company  Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.
Industry  Energy/Utilities
Job Function  Engineering
Description  Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation is seeking Engineers to join our team and fill positions in our Electric System Design (Substation Design, Electric System Protection, or Transmission Design) and Electric System Planning (Transmission Planning, Distribution Planning and/or Operating Engineer) Departments.

Position Responsibilities:
- Perform engineering assignments relating to planning, designing, construction, operation, maintenance and performance. These may include (but are not limited to): electric substations & related facilities; overhead and underground electric transmission and distribution protective relay systems, distribution protection systems and automatic control equipment; distribution automation; telemetering, supervisory, and communications systems
- Work assignments may include (but are not limited to): Prepare basic one line or block diagrams; prepare requests for funding authorization, cost estimates, construction plans, designs, specifications, bills of material, material purchase requisitions and delivery schedules; develop construction and material standards, and standards of estimating practices and test procedures; Inspect material and performance of contractors; conduct cost analysis of work orders; develop capacity ratings for various components of electrical systems; investigate planning methods and procedures of the electric utility industry; develop and recommend statements of engineering practices, service standards, and equipment capability standards to be used as a basis for system reinforcement, design and operation; analyze performance of company’s electric facilities, including malfunction or failure of equipment, and recommend remedial measures; determine effect of new large loads on system development plans recommending the method of supply and/or modification as required; electric reliability analysis; and storm response as required.

Qualifications:
- Bachelor’s Degree in Mechanical or Electrical Engineering (focus on Power is preferable)
- Strong analytical, organizational and quantitative skills
- Ability to work individually or as part of a group on special projects
- Well-developed written/verbal communication skills
- Valid driver’s license

Contact  Elliott Rosen
Alumnus: No
Sample Cover Letter

Jane Smith
Union College
Reamer Campus Center #123
Schenectady, NY 12308

June 23, 2018

Elliott Rosen
Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp
284 South Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Dear Mr. Rosen,

Please accept this letter and the attached resume as my application for the Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation Engineer position. This is in response to a job posting from the Becker Career Center at Union College. As a mechanical engineering senior, I am interested in joining a company where my analytical and design skills will be put to use.

Recently, I took a thermal fluid/systems design course, with a focus on energy, in which I worked on design projects with three team members. We designed a heat recovery system for a firm to use to exhaust gases to pre-heat cold, incoming air and save on electricity costs. In addition to analyzing the design and energy requirements, we performed an economic analysis. Currently, I am working with a team of eight students to design a robot to shoot darts, simulating a human-like motion. These courses transformed my design perspective and strengthened my ability to work effectively in teams.

In the summer of 2015, I received a Davis Peace project grant of $10,000, to use on a project I identified, and implemented. I gained valuable leadership skills while overseeing a team of volunteers, setting goals, planning daily schedules, and collaborating with an NGO. Among many extracurricular activities, I currently tutor other Union students in physics, math, and engineering. This position has enabled me to sharpen my communication skills, as I continuously seek the most effective way to teach concepts to students with varying levels of skills and comprehension.

I am interested in the Engineer position at Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation, and I possess the skills and experience necessary to succeed in this role. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in greater detail. I can be reached at 518-123-4567, or smithj2@union.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign your name (note: if sending electronically no need to include signature)

Jane Smith
Sample Internship Description

Job Title: WFPG General Internship
Company: Women’s Foreign Policy Group (WFPG)
Job Function: Government
Description: It is crucial to ensure that women’s voices are heard and women leaders are fully engaged on key policy decisions. At WFPG, we advance women’s leadership and highlight their contributions through international issues and mentoring programs. A key player in broadening the constituency for international affairs, WFPG brings together participants from across disciplines and links women domestically and internationally. We believe that through highlighting women leaders in foreign policy, we provide important role models for the next generation and create a vital network of women from different sectors, generations, and backgrounds.
WFPG is looking for responsible and motivated interns to focus on planning and outreach for programs featuring international affairs officials and experts.

Responsibilities:
- Assist with our Author and Embassy Series programs
- Contribute to Celebrating Women Leaders Benefit Luncheons
- Research foreign policy topics before events
- Assist in media outreach and the production of our newsletter
- Update the WFPG database and webpage
- Complete other office tasks as assigned

Qualifications:
- Competitive candidates should have a demonstrated interest in foreign affairs
- Computer skills (MS Office Suite & Internet Research)
- Outstanding office and phone manners
- Excellent writing skills
- Well-organized, punctual, dependable, flexible, and attentive to detail
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
Sample Cover Letter in the body of the e-mail

Dear Ms. Freeman,

I am applying for the Women’s Foreign Policy Group (WFPG) General Internship position as a part of the Union College D.C. Spring Term Abroad program. Your nonprofit organization’s mission calls for the participation of women in international affairs, and I know that the combination of my extensive knowledge in political science, Africana studies, and global humanitarian crises will make me an asset to your team.

In one of my courses, we focused on famous Supreme Court cases, where I analyzed and reviewed case documents. I wrote a twelve paged memoranda for two hypothetical cases focused on equity laws. In my Model United Nations course, I was in a committee of eighteen students representing Haiti. These courses transformed my international perspective and strengthened my ability to work effectively in stressful situations. I am a motivated individual who is interested in furthering my knowledge in foreign affairs and policies.

During my time at as a Visitor Experience Associate in a Children’s Library, I gained valuable interpersonal communication skills due to interacting with hundreds of visitors regularly. Additionally through my executive board position in the Women’s Union, I have strengthened my ability to work independently and as a team member on tasks for our bi-monthly, campus-wide educational events. These skills combined with my ability to be flexible, will allow me to succeed when assisting with multiple event series, and administrative tasks.

I am confident that I would thrive in the culture at WFPG because of the mutual values in bringing people together from diverse backgrounds and advancing women’s leadership opportunities/skills. I am interested in learning more about the position, professional growth, and development provided through this internship. The internship program starts on Monday, April 2nd and ends on Friday, June 1st. My performance over the duration of the internship will be graded. As requested, my availability is Monday to Thursday and I am expected to work 30 hours a week. I can be reached at 123.456.7891, or greyf@union.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Francis Grey
Cover Letter Sentence Starters

As stated earlier, the purpose of the cover letter is to get the reader excited about your candidacy and make them want to read your resume. You should communicate your relevant qualifications as they fit the needs of the position, while also expressing your enthusiasm for the particular company and/or career field. Because knowing what to say in a cover letter can be difficult, we’ve listed a number of “sentence starters” to aid you in matching your unique background, skill set and qualifications to the needs of the position and employer. Use these sentence starters as examples when drafting the three parts of your cover letter: the introduction, the body and the closing paragraph.

INTRODUCTION

• It is with great interest that I am applying for the position of ____________.

• (Name of contact) provided me with your name and suggested I contact you in reference to the_________ position.

• As a recent graduate of Union College with a degree in__________ and an avid (reader, writer, sports enthusiast, etc.), I am a strong applicant for the position of___________.

• As a (marketing, research, congressional, etc.) intern with (name of organization) I gained valuable experience in__________ that makes me an ideal candidate for the position of___________.

• I am eager to apply for the position of__________ because I have the ____________ skills that will allow me to be successful in this role.

• Thank you for speaking with me on (date) and discussing the__________ position. I am interested in ____________.

BODY

• My experience as a__________ will help me to contribute ____________.

• Throughout my four years of undergraduate studies I have demonstrated skills and abilities that are exactly what the position of__________ demands.

• I can contribute to your organization’s effectiveness by ____________.

• My previous success in__________ has proven my ability to ____________.

• To highlight some of my accomplishments I have ____________.
• Working with __________ has strengthened and improved my (analytical, research, interpersonal, organizational, etc.) and (analytical, research, interpersonal, organizational, etc.) skills.

• I am confident that I can be a valuable asset to your organization because __________.

CLOSING
• I am eager to learn more about __________ and would like to discuss my qualifications and interests with you.

• I am interested in the position and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my background and your requirements in greater detail.

• Beyond my enthusiasm for this opening, I offer all the essential elements it requires.

• My __________ and __________ make me a strong candidate for this position, and therefore look forward to the possibility of employment with (name of organization).

• I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you. I can be reached at (phone number) or by (email).

• I will contact you within (10 days, 1 week, etc.) to (verify my application materials are in order, introduce myself, inquire as to the next steps, etc.).

SENTENCES THAT CAN BE USED IN MULTIPLE PARAGRAPHS
• I would like the opportunity to put my skills, drive and enthusiasm to work as a __________ for __________.

• This role combines my skills in __________ with my passion for __________ and I am thankful to be considered for this position.

• Being (a team player, results driven, a quick learner, etc.) who loves challenges, I will __________.

• My career goal is to __________. Therefore I welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to (organization name here).

• The __________ position described in __________ sounds exactly like the opportunity I’m looking for.