

COVER LETTER GUIDE

What is a Cover Letter?

The cover letter is a marketing tool – often one of the first things a recruiter sees when evaluating your application. The most impactful cover letters are tailored to specific job postings. It is crucial to understand the cover letter's purpose – to showcase your academic, professional, and personal qualifications for the targeted position. It should not merely restate your resume; instead, select key experiences that bring depth and detail, weaving them together to tell a compelling story. A successful cover letter should answer two critical questions: "**Why you?**" and "**Why them?**"

Why you: Direct attention to your most relevant and compelling qualifications. Focus on the value you bring to the organization, emphasizing what you can contribute rather than your personal goals.

Why them: Dedicate a sentence to a paragraph explaining why you want to work for this specific organization. Tailor your tone to match the organization's culture, ensuring professionalism in your voice.

For example, if you're applying for a position as a marketing coordinator, you might emphasize coursework in marketing, grades in relevant classes, projects you've completed, your passion for the field, and your ability to think creatively and work collaboratively. If you are applying for a position as a software developer, you might emphasize your programming skills, examples of coding projects you've completed, your problem-solving abilities, your technical expertise, and your capacity to learn new technologies quickly.

Before Writing Your Cover Letter, You Should:

- Do your research on the industry, field, company/ organization, and the job itself so you fully understand what the employer is seeking.
- Think like an employer—what qualities would you seek in an employee and how do your experiences reflect them? You can find hints: carefully read the job description, research the company/organization, go to company info sessions, and conduct informational interviews with individuals working in the field.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What qualifications does the employer want? Read through a job description of interest and underline the attributes. These qualities are usually clear; in some positions or industries, however, the descriptions are vague. (This is where research and informational interviews come in handy.)
- How does your experience relate to the job? What are at least two specific accomplishments you can cite?
- What are three qualities or experiences you want the employer to know about you?
- Why do you want to work for this organization or person?
- What do you know about them? Look for something deeper than their being an "excellent" company. Is there something specific about their services, product, philosophy you can express?

What Should I Include in My Cover Letter?

1) Add Your Contact Information

- Use the same heading as on your resume with your name and personal information below it. You can copy and paste the contact information portion of your resume into a new Word document and start from there.

2) Add the Date, Employer Contact Information, & Greeting

- Underneath your contact information, add the full date, the employer's contact name and address, and your greeting
- Address your letter to the contact person listed in the position description; if there is none, address it as "Dear Hiring Manager"
 - *Examples:* Dear Lorraine Smith, Dear Dr. Phillips, Dear Hiring Manager, Dear Hiring Committee

3) The Intro Paragraph

Begin your cover letter with an enthusiastic declaration of your interest in the role, highlighting what sparked your interest and why the position stands out to you. If someone referred you, be sure to acknowledge them by name in the first paragraph.

Intro paragraph opening sentence examples:

- *"While exploring the Handshake listings for positions, I felt compelled to leverage my prior experience as a barista by joining Starbucks—an organization I deeply respect."*
- *"I am enthusiastic about applying for the Lab Assistant role within the Microbiology Department, driven by my lifelong fascination with science and the intricate workings of the universe."*
- *"As a senior eager about human-centered design and transportation technology, I was delighted to come across the UX Design internship opportunity on Handshake."*

For a more personal or creative letter, you can add in a very brief (2-3 sentences) anecdote or explanation of why you're interested in this particular employer or job or feel connected to their values. Regardless of how you organize it, your introductory paragraph should include these four things:

1. The specific position title
2. The organization name
3. Why you're interested
4. Why you'd be a good fit

4) Body Paragraph(s)

Cover letters typically include 1-2 body paragraphs that provide employers with specific examples of your previous experience or instances when you have applied relevant skills. These examples should be detailed, outlining the actions you took, what you learned, and the impact of your work whenever possible. While everyone's writing style is unique, each body paragraph generally includes:

- An opening sentence that introduces the experience, skill, or qualification you'll be discussing.
- Clear examples of your accomplishments or actions—be specific! Show, don't tell.
- A sentence that connects your past experience to what you can contribute if hired.

Good: Telling the employer what you've accomplished	Better: Showing the employer what you've accomplished
As a business analyst, I conducted comprehensive data analysis and generated actionable insights that led to operational efficiency.	At XYZ Company, I conducted comprehensive data analysis to identify inefficiencies in our operations. By presenting actionable insights, I helped streamline workflows, resulting in a 15% increase in operational efficiency. This experience showcased my ability to drive significant improvements and contribute to organizational success.

5) Closing Paragraph

Your closing paragraph will be shorter than your body paragraphs. It should be a concise wrap-up to your letter that...

- Reiterates your most relevant qualifications and your interest in the position in 1-2 sentences.
 - Optionally includes one additional fact or expression of unique connection to the role or employer that you haven't mentioned in the body paragraphs.
- Thank them for their time and consideration of your application.

That's all it takes! While the process might feel daunting initially, focusing on the specifics of the job description and providing detailed explanations of your skills and experience will set you on the right path.

Utilize Cover Letter Examples & Templates

- View Cover Letter Examples on Page 4 and 5
- [Cover Letters Are Hard to Write—But These Templates Make It a Breeze](#)
- [5 Steps to Writing a Cover Letter as a Career Changer](#)

Additional Cover Letter Resources with Expert Advice

- [7 cringeworthy phrases that are ruining your cover letter](#)
- [30 Genius Cover Letter Openers Recruiters Will LOVE](#)
- [How to End Your Cover Letter With a Bang](#)

Ready to get feedback on your cover letter?

- Review the **Cover Letter Checklist** to see how your draft compares
- Submit your cover letter (Word document or PDF format) via email at careerservices@bellevue.edu for a comprehensive review. Our reviews are conducted electronically, and you can expect feedback within 5 business days from submission, unless otherwise specified.
- [Speed Cover Letter appointments](#) are also available on Handshake.



Career Services

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE #1

REBECCA JO SANDKING

Omaha, NE, 68108 • (999) 999-999 • rjsandking@gmail.com

Kirk Captain, Human Resources Director
SNA International
162 S. Melody Road
Greenfield, Oregon 12345

May 15, 20XX

Dear Kirk Captain:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic interest in the Bioinformatics Scientist position at SNA International. I have a deep-rooted passion for harnessing the power of technology and computer science to advance the fields of forensics and biology; data science (DS) and biostatistics are imperative for investigation and impact. At SNA International, I envision myself being a part of a team that cares about its impact and that focuses on strong data-based outcomes in Greenfield, Oregon. I am excited to apply this expertise to support your organization's mission.

My expertise in visualization and integration of data aligns strongly with the requirements of this role. I have consistently demonstrated my ability to develop novel statistical methods and visual analysis – one such example being COVID-19 disease spread and vaccination tracking. I am detail-oriented and capable of performing evidence movement duties with the utmost care and precision. My skills in data cleaning, processing, and organization will allow me to efficiently streamline data processes for the upcoming analytics project.

I have five years of formal experience conducting scientific research. During my time at CHI Health, I worked with patient data and large patient population datasets, focusing on MCI, Parkinson's, Glaucoma, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and Diabetes. My research particularly examined the neurocognitive impacts of these diseases on driving and motor abilities. This experience taught me the importance of handling sensitive and confidential data, utilizing bioinformatics to achieve outcomes, and effectively communicating important findings—all skills that are highly relevant to this role.

I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the bioinformatic science endeavors at SNA International. I truly believe that my skills and passion for this field make me an excellent fit. With a strong background in research, project and data management, leadership, computer programming, and data analysis, I am confident in my ability to contribute to this role, the team, and the success of ongoing projects. Thank you for considering my candidacy, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sandking

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE #2



Career Services

PETER WARRENFRING

Omaha, NE, 68108 • (999) 999-999 • warrenfringpeter@gmail.com

Human Resources Director
Gobbler University
162 S. Melody Road
Victoriaville, Vermont 12345

September 24, 20XX

Dear Hiring Manager,

Thank you for taking the time to review my application, as I am very interested in the Development Coordinator position. I have a strong passion for working in education and with students, faculty, and staff. I would welcome the opportunity to become part of your well-respected Center for Excellence staff.

For the past three years, my work as the Development Coordinator at Nada University has allowed for the opportunity to develop strong relationships with faculty. In addition, it has provided an excellent understanding of the faculty development process and allowed me to experience firsthand the growth in faculty due to such training and collaboration opportunities. These opportunities have allowed me to gain further insight of the challenges and demands faculty face each day.

I am familiar with the job duties as they are similar to my current position, in addition, to my own educational training and professional goals. I promise to bring expertise, empathy, quality skills, and effective education methodology to your faculty clientele. Imagine what your department would look like a year from now with the utilization of innate strengths, sheer passion for teaching, creativity, and my abilities to interact and develop rapport with faculty and other members of the university community.

I am confident that my demonstrated dedication to supporting faculty and my unwavering commitment to educational excellence align well with the requirements of the Development Coordinator position. I am eager to discuss how my skills and experiences can contribute to the advancement of Gobbler University's development initiatives. Please don't hesitate to reach out via phone or email to schedule a conversation. Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Peter Warrenfring