

A cover letter is a written marketing tool attached to a resume that introduces your brand as a professional while highlighting your previous experience, academic background, and skills. The strongest cover letters go beyond what is on the resume and outline the connections between your experience and the position to which you have applied. Most employers will also use a cover letter as a way to get a sense of a candidate's writing style and skill level.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Review the job posting and tailor your cover letter to each position/industry. Be sure to include industry terminology too. The reader should feel like you wrote this cover letter just for this specific position
- Focus on how your background and skills match the position requirements rather than on why you want the position (unless the employer specifically asks why you want the position)
- Utilize positive language and keep the focus on what you can do. Avoid highlighting or making excuses for what you cannot do or where you do not meet the position requirements

FORMATTING:

- Use a business letter format; follow the same format guidelines as your resume (i.e. single spaced, font size between 10-12, margins between .5"-1")
- If you are emailing your cover letter, attach your letter instead of pasting it into the body of the email
- Address the cover letter to a specific person. If you do not know who to address the letter to, either contact the organization or use "Dear Hiring Manager"

SAMPLE COVER LETTER:

Your Street Address
Your City, State Zip Code

Date

Employer Name
Employer Title
Name of Organization/Company
Employer Street Address
Employer City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Hiring Manager:

First Paragraph

The first paragraph should be direct. Introduce your professional identity (i.e. your skills, academic background) and outline why you are writing the cover letter. This paragraph should include the following information:

- The exact position to which you are applying
- How you learned about the position (be specific if you were referred by someone)
- A branding sentence to introduce your skill set and encourage the reader to review your entire cover letter
- (Optional) A single sentence detailing your degree and major

Example – (Applying for a Data Analysis/Management Internship)

I am writing to apply for the [fill in] position with [organization name]. After learning about the opportunity on Seton Hall University's Navigator website, I am extremely interested in the position. With my previous data management experience, academic coursework in statistical analysis, and strong communication and writing skills, I would be able to contribute to [organization name].

Middle Paragraph(s)

Use the middle paragraph(s) to highlight the 2-3 main aspects from your experiences and academic background that connect you with the position and state why you would be successful in the role. This section should answer the question “Why are you the best fit?” While you can include information about the same experience on both your resume and cover letter, avoid using the exact same phrasing and make sure that everything you reference on your cover letter is also included on your resume. For each experience you highlight, be sure to include the following:

- Clearly state the experience (i.e. a part time job/student organization/internship/volunteer)
- Detail your role, responsibilities, and expertise/knowledge (only highlight aspects related to the position)
- Highlight accomplishments in your previous role and explain how these accomplishments have prepared you for the responsibilities of the new position

Example – (Applying for a Data Analysis/Management Internship)

Since becoming a student at Seton Hall University, I have maintained a part-time position at Target and a full academic schedule. In my Sales Associate role at Target, I primarily work in the Toys & Games Department where I track inventory levels, create new merchandise and seasonal displays, and assist customers with finding items and general questions. In this role, I also supervise monthly inventory audits to identify lost and misplaced merchandise where I manage a three-person team and have successfully reduced inventory shrinkage by 10% since I started. Through this experience, I have become adept at managing large data processes, analyzing Excel spreadsheets, and implementing department review and inventory management procedures. In addition, I have become proficient at working with diverse coworkers towards organizational goals both collaboratively and independently. These accomplishments will allow me to make an immediate contribution as a [insert new position title].

Last Paragraph (Conclusion)

Your conclusion should be direct and to the point. It should include the following:

- A short “Thank You”; mention you look forward to discussing your qualifications further with the employer
- A brief reminder of why you are a good fit for the position
- Information about next steps and how you will follow up (i.e. will you wait to hear from them or contact them in 3 days?)
- Your contact information
- “Sign” your name

Example – (Applying for a Data Analysis/Management Internship)

I look forward to hearing from you about how my data analysis and project management experience can contribute to [insert organization name]. If you have any questions, or would like to schedule an interview, please contact me at 955-123-4555 or myname@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Sign here when you print your cover letter or leave blank if you submit electronically]

Your Name

For additional cover letter tips or review, please call The Career Center at 973-761-9355 or stop by 209 Bayley Hall to schedule an appointment with your career advisor.