

The Cover Letter. An Overview

The purpose of a Cover Letter: When applying for a job or internship, you will typically need to send a copy of your resume and your portfolio, but you will also need a cover letter to accompany them, so as to introduce yourself and tell them why they should grant you an interview above all other applicants. Whether that letter is tangible or virtual, you should compose as much of it as possible in advance—a particularly important step if you are not comfortable with any writing beyond instant messaging.

What your Cover Letter should address: In general, a cover letter should be printed on your letterhead, include today's date, a proper salutation to proper recipient as indicated, a short reference to who you are and why you are sending your material, what makes you a good match for their position, a thank you (in advance) for their interest in your work, and a suggested next step. *If you are emailing the content of your cover letter as the body of your message for a more informal application process (like an unadvertised internship) then you can by-pass putting it on your letterhead and paste it as the body of your message).*

Tips to Make Your Letter Professional

- Your cover letter is not the place to ask what the company can do for you, but to state what you can do for the company. So include some knowledge about the company, to show that you've done your homework and find specifics about the position so you can tailor your letter to the needs of the organization.
- Avoid using too many sentences that start with "I" or writing in the passive voice.
- Do not use contractions (I'd, didn't, it's).
- Spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes are out of the question! Cover letters are a reflection of your writing skills, so make each cover letter an example of your best work. Have as many people as you can proofread! Maybe even have a Career Specialist review your cover letter if you have access to one.
- Be sure to sign your letters. (Black ink is suggested—assuming it's not a digital email).
- Keep your letter short and simple. This is not the time to tell your whole life's story.
- Use good quality paper that matches your resume paper and envelopes (if hard copy is mailed).

WORK AND SEND ME YOUR COVER LETTER CONTENT IN MICROSOFT WORD FORMAT until I have reviewed, edited and approved your content for designing.

Sample Cover Letter Content Template

Today's Full Date

Re: Job Title or Job Reference Number

Attn: Recipient's name (If you don't have one research and get one!)

Company name

Full Street Address, #

City, ST Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Ms. Recipient Name **-or-** Dear Members of the Hiring Committee **-or-** To Whom It May Concern:

FIRST PARAGRAPH - Why I'm writing you (2-3 sentences):

Why you are writing. Which position you are applying for. How you heard about the position. Show from your research why you are interested in this position or organization. The goal is to let make a connection - do this Briefly and Specifically or leave it out; sweeping statements will not work.

SECOND (and Third) PARAGRAPH - Why I'm Qualified (4-8 sentences):

This paragraph will change according to the job/employer for which you are applying. The goal is to highlight skills and qualifications that make you the right person for the position you are applying for. Read the announcement carefully, and identify the requirements and see how your skills match those required. Do not simply state you have them, prove it by what you say. Ideally, you should start from your experience and show, through examples, how you have developed those qualifications by what you have been doing/learning.

Try to start with a strong opening that is accomplishment-oriented and directed at the skills and qualifications needed for the job/industry. The body of the paragraph should provide evidence to back up what you've just claimed by providing 2-3 specific jobs, internships, activities, project, and accomplishments associated with those experiences. Use your resume to come up with some specifics, but NEVER reiterate passages from your resume word for word. You can list your design abilities software skills as well as your design abilities in this paragraph as well. You may also want to site personality qualities or values that you posses and how those are valuable to their needs or profile.

The result should portray you as an independent, creative person that can take initiative and deal with responsibilities, apart from the specific skills needed for the job. In short, the second paragraph should show why you are good for the job.

FINAL PARAGRAPH - Thanks you and next step (2-4 sentences): Summation and closing of your letter. The first sentence is a summary of what you've discussed above. It's a good idea to mention the position title and company name to bring the reader back to the specific job in question. You should refer to the enclosed documentation such as resume and state that you can provide additional information. Suggest an interview and let the reader know what will happen next (Contact them within specific period of time or leave it open for contact). It is vital that you thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature in Pen

Your Full Name

Enclosure(s): [2]

Resume

Sample Works

Sample Body of Cover Letter (1)

I would like to be considered for the Legal Assistant position offered at White, Case & Bothalemule. I learned of this opportunity through the New York Recruiting Consortium at Trinity College.

My high level of concentration and excellent organizational skills have helped me achieve a strong academic record at Trinity College which reflects my diligence and commitment to success. Rigorous liberal arts courses and a concentration in psychology have provided me with a first rate writing ability as well as sharp analytical, problem-solving and research skills. In my International Politics and Clinical Psychology courses, I have written papers involving in-depth research and analysis in order to prove a specific thesis. I have also developed research skills in a different capacity by compiling and analyzing data in a Research Design and Analysis class. In addition, my studying in England and France as well as taking French and Spanish classes, has greatly expanded my knowledge of different cultures and languages. My language proficiency will be an asset to a law firm with global interests.

Through challenging leadership positions, I have developed a strong sense of responsibility, effective interpersonal skills and the ability to contribute to teamwork, even in high-pressure environments. As a Resident Assistant, I successfully resolved conflicts among residents, planned social and educational programs while serving as a positive role model for my peers. With my background in liberal arts, business and leadership, I am confident that I can make a profound contribution to White, Case and Bothalemule.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I am enthusiastic about the position and look forward to meeting with you at the Consortium in January. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sample Body of Cover Letter (2)

Laura Flannigan suggested I contact you concerning the Marketing position available at Eastern Arbor. I am inspired to pursue my marketing interests at Eastern Arbor due to its reputation as a prestigious, innovative and growing company in liability policies.

My diverse and intense academic, professional, and leadership experiences would make me a valuable asset to Eastern PG Arbor. Currently, as a professional Student Admissions Associate, I assist in promoting Trinity College to prospective students and parents. I am responsible for interviewing and evaluating students as well as leading group information sessions. Since I work with people every day in a business setting, I have developed strong interpersonal and communication skills.

My leadership experience, particularly with the President's Special Council on Women, is another example of my strong sense of responsibility and motivation. As a council member concerned with the rights of women, I have brought fierce new ideas onto the agenda, such as bringing student leaders together to discuss how to create a more active community at Trinity. As a result of this idea, the council along with other student leaders has begun planning a leadership forum for next semester. In all of my business experiences, my motivation and energy has ignited me to work hard and accomplish goals.

My resume and transcript are enclosed for your evaluation. I will contact you on the week of August 30th to schedule a time in which I may further discuss my qualifications for the Marketing position. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sample Cover Letter (3)

4611 36th Street, Suite #6
San Diego, California 92116
TL 619.521.1109 | CL 619.788.2669
EMAIL ailedgarcia@gmail.com

July 29, 2005

Re: Lecturer Pool
Attn: Kauka DeSilva, Department Chair
Department of Humanities
Kapiolani Community College
4303 Diamond Head Road
Honolulu, HI 96816

Dear Kauka DeSilva:

I am applying for placement in the lecturer pool in the Department of Humanities at your institution for the 2005-2006 academic year. In August of 2005, upon receiving my Master of Fine Arts degree in Multi-media from San Diego State University, I will be relocating to Hawaii to accompany my husband on his next military tour of duty. I obtained my Bachelor of Science degree in Graphic Design from California State University, Sacramento, a program, which places a strong emphasis on theory in the areas of color and design. My teaching experience includes a semester of teaching 2-Dimensional Design and Color, and a semester of teaching Digital Media as a Graduate Teaching Associate (Instructor of Record) at San Diego State University. In addition, I have exercised my career in graphic design as a freelance graphic designer in which my experience, technical knowledge and interaction with clientele has expanded my experience outside academia.

Through my experience in teaching 2-D Design and Digital Media, I have had the great pleasure of interacting with students and sharing their sense of accomplishment through the process of conceptualization and implementation. This experience, without question, has made me want to pursue a career in teaching.

My technical knowledge within the field of Multi-media includes expansive experience in print and web design, along with interactive media presentations. Software mastered includes the latest versions of Photoshop, ImageReady, Illustrator, Quark, Dreamweaver and many of the other industry standard software to help better prepare my students for the "real world" of design and multi-media. My work exhibits high conceptual and aesthetic principles, which helps me serve as an example to my students, but most importantly, my enthusiasm creates an atmosphere that is engaging for my students.

I would like to express my interest in teaching graphic design courses, as that is my area of expertise, and my interest in teaching foundation courses as I also have relevant experience. I feel that my qualifications, experience and teaching methods fit well with the needs of your program. As a faculty member I would dedicate myself to maintaining the program's strong reputation in the art/design community. I appreciate your consideration of my application and the review of my materials.

Sincerely,

Ailed E. García-Saavedra