



Cover Letter Guide

We are here to help! Check out our calendar on careers.ucsc.edu and attend an upcoming **Resume Workshop** to strengthen your professional writing skills!

Checklist

- Contains *no* spelling or grammatical errors
- Does *not* exceed one page
- Clearly** states what I'm applying for and how I heard about it
- Focuses on my **skills relevant** to the position
- Demonstrates I've **researched** the employer and/or position I'm applying for
- Is **addressed** to the hiring manager (or selection committee)
- Has **minimal** usage of "I" statements
- Is a good reflection of my **writing abilities**

Writing Tips

Do not restate the experience on your resume

While your resume lists your experience and positions, your cover letter is a *personal testament* of how *your skills* make you a good fit for the position. *Tailor your skills* to the *responsibilities* that the job description emphasizes.

Address your letter to the hiring manager

Research the hiring manager's name and position in the organization to personalize your letter. If you can't find information on the hiring manager, address your letter to "Selection Committee."

Focus on the employer

Introduce the organization and/or the position to show that you're *passionate* about working for them and that you've done your research. **Minimize** "I" statements. Your cover letter's *objective* is to convince the hiring manager that hiring you would benefit the organization.

A **cover letter** is the "cover page" of your application. It is a one-page, three- to four-paragraph letter that introduces your application. Its content must be interesting and have conviction to convince the employer to read your resume.

It also serves as a **writing sample** for the employer. The employer uses your cover letter to assess the quality of your writing skills, especially for positions that involve writing-based responsibilities (anything from writing detailed reports to sending emails).

Outline for Writing a Cover Letter

OPENING PARAGRAPH – STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- ▶ **Open with a captivating introductory sentence** that grabs your reader's attention and shows your enthusiasm for the position
- ▶ **State your reason** for contacting this company/organization
- ▶ **Name the position you're applying for** and the department it is housed in
- ▶ **State how you learned** about the position

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S) – EXPLANATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

2 parts, can be split into two paragraphs!

Part 1: Why are you applying to this company/organization?

- ▶ **Write 1-2 sentences** about the organization's purpose and/or goals
- ▶ **Write 1-2 sentences** about the position (and how it relates or contributes to aforementioned purpose/goals)

Part 2: What makes you a good candidate for the position?

- ▶ **To help get you started:** Try making 2 columns first. List your skills in the left column and explain why they're relevant in the right column
- ▶ **Why** are you interested in the position/type of work
- ▶ List your **relevant skills** (not formal experience/positions) and how they will allow you to effectively carry out the responsibilities listed in the job description

CLOSING PARAGRAPH – CONCLUSION

- ▶ **Begin paragraph** with one or two strong lines that summarize why you are an excellent candidate for the position
- ▶ **Only if the application explicitly requires** you to provide **times** you are available to interview, your class schedule, or any other availability/scheduling information, include it here
- ▶ **Thank the reader** for their time and consideration and express your enthusiasm to meet with them in the near future to discuss the opportunity and why you are a good candidate
- ▶ **Careful with wording:** you don't want to be overconfident by conveying that you expect an interview, but instead you want to be **assertive** by letting the hiring manager know you want to meet with them to discuss **why** you are a good candidate

Cover Letter Samples

Samples of these and other cover letters can be found at careers.ucsc.edu

Andrew Nguyen
127 Blackburn Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(626) 969-6059

May 31, 2013

Lauren Brown
Advocacy Division Coordinator
Center for American Progress
1333 H Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am very excited about the opportunity to apply for the Advocacy Campaign Assistant position! I became aware of the opening through my university's Career Center database. My passion for advocating progressive politics, refined communication and interpersonal skills, and keen ability to collaborate in a team environment render me a strong candidate for this position.

I am a firm believer in the United States government as a transparent entity that champions the common good, promotes a diverse and accepting society, and upholds the rights and safety of the American people. This philosophy aligns with the Center's mission to advocate for progressive ideas and public policies by enacting positive and practical change at the national level. The Campus Progress Advocacy Division makes the youth voice heard and influential in national political discourse and empowers the progressive leaders of tomorrow.

As a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz, I am a team player who thrives in collaborative environments while also excelling in my individual work. During my tenure as a campus tour guide, I have become a professional and tactful communicator with experience interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. Through my internship working with constituents in Congressman Farr's district office, I have learned to approach every endeavor fairly and consider a broad spectrum of perspectives in every decision I make. In the Congressional office, I utilized my work ethic and great attention to detail to ensure that every project I took on was completed thoroughly and will meet deadlines.

As a driven, team-oriented leader, I act as an advocate for social change with a thorough understanding of the purpose and intentions behind my work. I am confident that my abilities passionately represent the ideals and objectives of the Center for American Progress. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to being in contact with you regarding this great opportunity in the near future!

Best Regards,

Andrew Nguyen

June 21, 2013

John Martinez
Human Resources Director
Springfield Publishing Company
345 Pioneer Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Martinez:

My interest in your internship program at Springfield Publishing Company has prompted me to forward my resume for your review. I am specifically interested in the Publishing Internship posted on the UC Santa Cruz Career Center's internship database.

As a second-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Literature with a concentration in Creative Writing, I am a superb writer and avid reader looking for an opportunity to develop my skills in writing, publishing, and editing. I strive to build upon my editing experience gained while working for a literary journal at my university's Literature Department. Through working in the Literature Department over the last two years, I have also gained valuable knowledge and experience in many aspects of personnel assistance, office procedures, and administrative operations. My proven track record of writing engaging articles and demonstrated ability to meet all deadlines would make me an asset to your publishing team.

With my considerable energy, passion, and dedication, I will make a positive and impactful contribution to your company. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my education and experience would be consistent with your publishing needs.

Sincerely,

Christopher Avedikian

Open your cover letter with an **interesting introductory sentence** that hooks the hiring manager's attention and **displays your enthusiasm** for applying.

In the middle paragraph(s), **discuss the organization's purpose** and/or mission and **how the position you are applying for fits in with it**. In doing so, show the hiring manager that you have done more than just surface research on the organization—talk about them with insight and in a way that brings meaning to what they do.

Begin your **concluding paragraph** with one or two sentences that strongly summarize your qualifications for the position. The most effective wrap-up sentences **integrate your skills, experience, and vision for the position**.

Be sure to **clearly state the position you are applying for** and **how you heard about it** in your first paragraph.

The cover letter is a personal appeal of how your **skills match the needs of the organization** and the responsibilities of the organization. You may draw on both your functional skills (e.g., detail-oriented, interpersonal communication) and the skills gained from your experiences.

Conclude your final paragraph by thanking the hiring manager for reading your letter and with an assertive (yet not overconfident) statement expressing your interest in speaking with them about the opportunity directly in person.