

GRADUATE STUDENT COVER LETTER RESOURCE GUIDE

What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a supplemental document you include along with your resume that provides more detailed information about skills and experiences related to the job for which you are applying. It typically includes three to four paragraphs in total – including an opening and closing paragraph – that highlight your experience, skills, and achievements in relation to the specific position of interest.

Why is a Cover Letter important?

A cover letter is essential because it allows you to explain details on your resume in more depth than a simple set of bullet points; it provides employers with a clearer understanding of your previous experience and communication abilities. While some jobs require a cover letter, others make it optional to see which applicants will put in the extra effort with their application.

Who reads Cover Letters?

Typically, one or more Hiring Managers are most involved in reviewing cover letters. Additionally, members of the Human Resources department at an organization may be involved to ensure that all applicants are meeting application requirements.

What should I include in my Cover Letter?

This will be explored further in the resource guide however, all cover letters should, at minimum, include the following information:

- Your interest in the company
- How your experience meets the job requirements
- A call to action

I'm stuck writing my Cover Letter, how can I get help?

The Graduate School Professional and Career Development office can assist you in writing your cover letter. To make an appointment with us, head over to Handshake at <https://syr.joinhandshake.com/edu/appointments/new> and select the time that works best for you to discuss your cover letter.

Cover Letter Outline

Your Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Your Email

Month Day, Year

Contact Name Title (if known)
Organization Name
Organization Street Address
Organization City, State Zip Code

Dear (Name/Title):

Opening Paragraph: The goal of this short paragraph is to clearly state why you are writing your cover letter. If applying for a specific job, indicate the position title. If you were referred to the position from someone within the organization, mention that as well. You should end this paragraph by adding a strong sentence on why you feel you are a good fit for the position, specifically emphasizing your skills that relate to the requirements of the position.

Example: I am writing to apply for the position of [Title] at [Company]. I am currently [include graduation and field of study information]. I believe that I am a fit for this position based on [include skills].

Middle Paragraph(s): You should have one or two paragraphs that elaborate on how you have developed the relevant skills required for the job, and any related experiences or education you have acquired. Reviewing the job description thoroughly will enable you to identify the skills that the organization is looking for applicants to have. Providing examples and anecdotes of how your previous experience correlates with such skills can help you strengthen your argument. Additionally, you should include information on how your interest in both the job and the organization developed. Your goal of this section is to make an argument as to why the organization should hire you (without saying so exactly).

Closing Paragraph: Express interest in speaking with the addressee in the future by providing your contact information. Thank them for their time and consideration of your application.

Example: I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at [Phone Number] or [Email]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Cover Letter Checklist

My Cover Letter...	Yes	No
Is unique to this position.		
Is addressed to 1) a specific person or 2) a Hiring Manager.		
Is no more than one (1) page in length.		
Uses the same font as my resume.		
My Introductory Paragraph...		
Names the exact position for which I am applying.		
Tells how I heard about the position.		
Explains why I am specifically interested in the position.		
My Middle Paragraph(s)...		
Provides detail on specific examples that “sell” my skills.		
Emphasizes what I can contribute to the organization.		
Utilizes professional, active language that incorporates terminology in my field.		
My Closing Paragraph...		
Briefly reiterates my interest in the position.		
Thanks the employer for considering my application.		
Contains my professional email address and phone number.		

“Do’s” “Don’ts” of a Cover Letter

DO create multiple cover letter templates applicable to different types of jobs (ex: data analysis, software development, cloud computing)

DO consider writing in the company’s “voice” to demonstrate your understanding of the company culture

DO proofread your cover letter multiple times

DON’T simply repeat what is already on your resume

DON’T send out the same cover letter to multiple organizations; ensure that your cover letter is specific to each position

DON’T apologize for missing experience; focus on emphasizing your strengths instead

DON’T go overboard on the excitement – saying that you are “absolutely ecstatic” about applying for the opportunity comes on a bit too strong

Cover Letter Example #1

Anna Nguyen
456 Side Street
Syracuse, NY 00000
myemail@yahoo.com

February 8, 20XX

Dwayne Jackson
ABC Company
111 Main Street
New York, NY 00000

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Please accept this letter as an application for the position of Associate Consultant with ABC Company. I received your information from Lisa Cooper, whom I recently spoke with at the Syracuse University Career Fair. I will complete my Master's in Business Administration in May 20XX from Syracuse University and am excited about the possibility of joining ABC Company. My strong analytical, communication, and leadership capabilities will add value to ABC Company.

I have taken part in various business classes at Syracuse University designed to enhance my skills and knowledge in the industry. In one project, while working in teams of three, our group performed a front-end analysis and presented recommendations to consultants. I personally received positive feedback on my analytical abilities and teamwork skills from the consultants. Additionally, I volunteer at the WISE Women's Business Center by supporting training on topics such as networking, budgeting, and financing. I work in small group settings to provide aspirational entrepreneurs with advice on how to see the best results when starting their company. As a result of these experiences, I am confident that I can make a significant contribution to your firm and its clients.

Thank you for your time and consideration; I look forward to speaking with you about the possibility of joining your team at ABC Company. I can be reached at 000-000-0000 or myemail@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Anna Nguyen

Cover Letter Example #2

Omar Garcia
100 West Street
Syracuse, NY 00000
myemail@gmail.com

August 16, 20XX

Nonprofit Company
1 Times Square
New York, NY 00000

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to apply for the position of Program Analyst at Nonprofit Company that I found posted on LinkedIn. I received a Master of Arts in International Relations from Syracuse University, with a concentration in modern Chinese sociology. I believe working for Nonprofit Company would provide an excellent opportunity for me to become involved in the nonprofit space and enable me to apply my skills to serve your organization.

Through my studies at highly regarded educational institutions in the U.S. and China, I have enhanced my capabilities in social science research. I have conducted various long-term and short-term research projects, most of which involved extensive investigation and qualitative research. This is experience that I believe would transfer well to the position of Program Analyst. My previous research experience includes a year spent in China, where I conducted extensive qualitative research and a series of interviews in Chinese to examine the issues regarding maternity care in China. Based on the interviews and research findings, I successfully produced a paper that was selected for presentation at a distinguished academic conference at Sarah Lawrence College.

In addition to my strong academic background, I have experience working for various nonprofit organizations where I have acquired skills in planning events and administering logistics. For example, at International Publishing House in Shanghai, I worked closely with the Conferences and Events Coordinator to organize the conference database and communicated with various registrants regarding logistical arrangements at multiple events. This experience enabled me to enhance my communication skills in addition to continue to develop my logistical abilities.

With these qualifications, I have the capability to provide significant support as a Program Analyst to Nonprofit Company. Thank you for considering my application and please let me know if you would like further information regarding my candidacy. Please feel free to contact me at (000) 000-0000 or via email at myemail@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Omar Garcia