COVER LETTER GUIDELINES & SAMPLES

A cover letter is an opportunity to fill in the blanks from your resume. Through a cover letter, you set yourself apart from other candidates by telling a story of your greatest experiences. Each letter must be unique to every position you apply to, and should only be about 3-5 paragraphs. When writing a cover letter follow the steps below:

PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER

- Introduce yourself to the employer and state the position to which you are applying.
- Express why you are interested in working for the organization. (Be very specific here with examples.)
- Emphasize your qualifications and how they contribute to the role and organization.
- Request an interview.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Address each letter to a specific person, using their title, and organization using a business letter format.
- Ask others to proofread the letter for clarity, grammar, and spelling.
- Tailor your cover letter to the job posting and requirements by using their language and adapting your experiences to fit the skills they are seeking. (Don’t lie, but make sure it is clear you are qualified.)

SAMPLE FORMAT

Your address
Your phone number
Date

Employer’s name
Employer’s title
Organization name
Address

Dear Hiring Manager, (or Name, if it’s possible to get a contact name):

YOUR PITCH: State the reason you are writing. Attract the employer’s attention by pitching the letter to his or her needs or interests, rather than to your career goals. Tell the employer why you want to work for them.

YOUR EXPERIENCE: Explain how your abilities, background, and qualifications will enable you to contribute to the role and organization. Describe how your specific skills, strengths, or personal attributes are relevant to the position. You may emphasize one or two items from your resume, but try not to be redundant. The cover letter supplements your resume, it does not repeat it. It should highlight your special qualities, values, passions, and achievements that might help persuade an employer to contact you. Try to pick two or three key experiences that directly speak to the job description. Keep it oriented to the employer’s needs.

YOUR CONCLUSION: Reiterate your interest and ask for an interview at the employer’s convenience. Provide contact information (NYU email and phone number) where the employer can easily reach you. Thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,
Your name typed

[DON’T COPY - BE ORIGINAL!]
Ms. Allison Nivet  
Assistant Vice President, Operations  
National Banking Corporation  
280 Park Blvd., 10th Floor  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Nivet:

I am interested in the Junior Systems Analyst position with National Banking Corporation listed on NYU CareerNet. As a senior at New York University majoring in Computer Science, I believe my education and experiences in computer science are an excellent match with the responsibilities outlined in your job description. National Banking Corporation’s commitment to innovation and inclusion through your involvement in the TedX Charity Conference every year and your progressive policies are exciting initiatives.

Many challenges exist with systems analysis at a large organization like the National Banking Corporation. These issues stem from both the constant upgrading of systems and the diversity of application needs. As the Computer Operation Faculty Liaison at NYU, I gained a wide range of experience in this type of environment. On several occasions, I advised university departments on their selection and setup of LAN hardware and appropriate new software. Being able to adapt to constant changes is where I thrive and have been the most successful. I hope to bring this flexibility with me to this role so I can help add value to National Banking Corporation.

In addition to a strong technical base, I perform well both independently and as part of a team. I communicate effectively with all levels of personnel, as reflected with my experience working with student assistants and department directors on the above-mentioned projects. In my latest Manager role, I was recently in charge of merging two groups of student assistants with very different backgrounds to make them collaborate effectively. After understanding the needs of the directors, I was able to implement specific expectations and processes that leveraged the strengths of both groups, but also built a strong, cohesive team to ensure a productive atmosphere.

I would greatly appreciate the chance to work for the National Banking Corporation, and look forward to the possibility of meeting with you to discuss this position in further detail. In the meantime, I can be reached at (212) 555-5555 or you can email me at student@nyu.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Norman Gates
[Today’s date]

New Directions Community Agency
13 Norwick Street
Brooklyn, NY 13356-7765

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to apply to the Social Worker position at New Directions that you listed on idealist.org. I believe my education and work experience in social work fit well with the required qualifications. Having worked in psychiatric social work at a large urban medical center, I am now interested in transitioning to a community agency such as New Directions.

I was happy to learn that New Directions offers mental health services at the preventive and treatment maintenance level. In my current role, I provide a variety of preventative interventions such as parent training and stress management to individuals and groups at risk. I submitted a recent proposal with the intent to establish a series of similar workshops for young parents in low-income areas. This proposal is currently under budgetary considerations from the state level. I am a firm believer in preventative approaches, and would be excited to conduct and implement such workshops at your agency.

New Directions is a leader in providing exceptional mental health services. I am prepared to serve the needs of the diverse local population and contribute positively to New Directions. My caseload spans patients of all ages and from many ethnic backgrounds. These experiences have allowed me to develop a passion in serving those in marginalized communities. I look forward to discussing the position in greater detail. Please feel free to reach me at (718) 555-5555 or at reggie.harris@nyu.edu at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Reggie Harris, MSW
[Today's date]

Mr. David Newton, Director
American Environmental Council
716 Scranton Avenue, Room 200
White Plains, NY 70889-0090

Dear David Newton:

I am a rising senior at New York University majoring in Environmental Science. Similar to the American Environmental Council, I believe conservation can be achieved through intentional collaborations between businesses and environmental groups. Your goal of convincing businesses that they benefit when they strive to preserve the environment is an incredibly worthwhile pursuit, and I am eager to contribute to these efforts. However, I am aware of the difficulty in convincing the public that these endeavors are worthwhile and have worked hard to persuade many.

As President of the Sustainability Club on campus, I had firsthand experience in using my sphere of influence to meet the mission of our organization. My responsibilities include recruiting for new membership, convincing members to pay a reasonable increase in dues, and donating funds to a local sustainability organization. I was able to accomplish my goals by utilizing my written and oral communication skills as well as my motivation to achieve results.

I would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to discuss your experiences, and gain any insight you may have to offer as I begin my full-time job search. Please let me know if you have availability in the next few weeks to get together for coffee, or a phone appointment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jen Li
[Today’s date]

Ms. Amy Greenburg
Vice President
Global Entertainment, Inc.
17 Sunrise Boulevard, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 89904

Dear Amy Greenburg:

I received your contact through Michael Powers from Triangle Studios. In my summer internship at Triangle Studios, I assisted him with various tasks and developed a deep interest in the business side of entertainment. I plan to relocate to Los Angeles upon graduation from New York University this May, and hope to start a career on the west coast. Michael suggested that I should contact you as you have recommendations on which companies I should pursue and the best strategy to take when searching for jobs.

As a student at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts, I am especially interested in pursuing a career in film distribution due to its requirements of having both knowledge of film and a strong business sense. As a drama major, I gained an extensive understanding of film production and the distribution schedule. In my various managerial positions, I learned how to negotiate with vendors and implement strategies to motivate a staff in order to have projects accomplished on time. Along with these skills, a passion for the industry, and a “don’t quit” attitude, I believe I can make exceptional contributions to a company.

My resume summarizes my background, and you can find it attached in this email for your review. I will arrive in Los Angeles by the end of this month, and hope we can connect. I would appreciate any insights you can share in the meantime as I prepare. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Riz Ahmed
Ms. Kelsey Davis
Vice President
Global Transactions Division
Statecorp, N.A.
399 Park Lane
New York, NY 10021

Dear Kelsey Davis:

I want to thank you for meeting with me yesterday to discuss the Associate Analyst position at Statecorp. It was great to learn more about your research and design work.

Upon reflection, my enthusiasm for the position and interest in working for Statecorp were strengthened as a result of our interview. I am particularly excited about the professional development opportunities that are available within your organization including attending conferences and association membership. I believe that my academic background and work experience provide a good fit given the requirements of the position. If given the opportunity, I am confident I could make a significant contribution to Statecorp.

Please contact me at (212) 555-5555, if I can provide you with any additional information. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Healy