

Cover Letters

Who needs a 'Cover Letter'? Everyone who sends out a resume! Even if the letter never 'came up' in conversation or wasn't mentioned in an advertisement, it is expected that you will write one. 'Cover Letters', also known as 'Employment Letters' or 'Letters of Application', should be tailored to the specific company and the specific job or internship for which you are applying.

The Cover Letter is a 3 to 4 paragraph, one-page letter, typed in a business format that introduces you and your skills. The Cover Letter has the purpose of making the employer aware that you are available and interested in employment. The letter is crucial in that it must stimulate the employer to become interested in you. Your Cover Letter is a reflection of yourself and is used as a tool to market your experience and abilities. It will offer you another chance to emphasize what you have to contribute to the company or organization, giving you an edge over other applicants. A Cover Letter will demonstrate, to an employer, your written communication skills, your ability to apply your skills to a professional setting, and your understanding of the company and position of interest.

Yes, writing a Cover Letter can take even more time when doing an internship or job search. But it will be worth it in the end. Don't give the person screening the resumes a second to entertain the thought: "**But how can this person help us?**" The Cover Letter will answer that question in your own words.

COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS USED TO HIGHLIGHT YOUR 'SOFT SKILLS' & PERSONALITY TRAITS EMPLOYERS FIND ATTRACTIVE

active	independent
adaptable	loyal
assertive	mature
alert	methodical
ambitious	motivated
analytical	optimistic
approachable	organized
attentive	passionate
caring	perceptive
caring	personable
conscientious	persuasive
consistent	pleasant
constructive	positive
creative	motivated
dependable	productive
determined	proficient
detailed; detail-oriented	realistic
disciplined	reliable
efficient	resourceful
empathetic	respectful
energetic	self-reliant
excited	sense of humor
enterprising	sensitive
enthusiastic	sincere
extroverted	sophisticated
focused	talented

COVER LETTER REMINDERS

- ⇒ Every letter should be **individually** tailored to each position.
- ⇒ Use the same paper for your Resume and Cover Letter (good quality 8 ½ x 11).
- ⇒ The letter must conform to good business style and must be free of errors.
- ⇒ The letter should be addressed to a specific person when possible.
- ⇒ The letter should be no longer than one page in length.
- ⇒ The letter should indicate a special interest in the specific organization.
- ⇒ The letter should demonstrate skills not necessarily listed on your resume.
- ⇒ The letter should use self-descriptive words to highlight your ‘soft skills.’
- ⇒ The letter should reflect the fact that you have researched the organization or company.

BEFORE WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER

- ⇒ **Review job descriptions**
 - Read the entire description thoroughly
 - Pay attention to job responsibilities
 - Highlight your skills that match the description of the job
- ⇒ **Research the Employer**
 - Visit company websites (corporate culture; trends in company and industry)
 - Speak to employer insiders when possible
 - Read company literature, the company annual report, or the company newsletter
 - Visit “**Vault Guides**” (Career Center website)
- ⇒ **Use appropriate adjectives related to the position of interest**
 - Sales/Marketing (assertive; persuasive)
 - Counseling/Education (empathetic; sensitive; approachable)
 - Accounting/Business (detail-oriented; organized)
 - Computer Science/IT (analytical; problem-solver)
- ⇒ **Determine what kind of candidate the employer is seeking:**
 - Skill Sets (functional, technical, adaptive, transferrable)
 - Practical Experience
 - Education/Training
 - Personality Traits

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Address

Date

Contact Person, Title
Department, Company Name
Address

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. (Contact Person):

Introduction –Paragraph I (2 - 4 sentences)

Establishes the purpose of your letter, attracts attention and arouses interest

- State why you are writing by naming the specific position or type of job.
- Tell how you heard about the position/employer (Career Center, College Central Network, Job Fair, newspaper advertisement, faculty/ employee referral).
- Demonstrate why you are interested in the position.
- Insert a brief sentence that provides degree, major, college affiliation, and graduation date.

Body-Paragraph II & III (3-4 sentences each)

Indicate how your skills, education and experience match the employer's needs

- Indicate how you can help the employer achieve organizational goals in your specialty.
- Focus on what you can do for the employer rather than what the employer can do for you.
- Highlight most significant accomplishments, abilities, and experiences specific to the position.
- Sell your credentials - your mission is to prove you should be invited to an interview.
- Highlight specific experiences and key assets related to the position of interest.
- Use the 2nd paragraph to discuss specific experiences that relate to the position and company.
- Use the 3rd paragraph to discuss more of the 'soft skills' that cannot be seen on the resume.

Closing- Paragraph IV (3-4 sentences)

State your commitment to action

- Mention enclosed resume, sample work, or portfolio if applicable.
- Take initiative to make clear what happens next: ("I will be in touch to follow-up")
- State your availability. Let them know if/when you will be in the area, especially positions that would require relocation
- Restate contact information including phone and email so the employer can contact you.
- Thank the employer.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name Typed

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (SHADOWING)

Sarah Elizabeth Smith
Saint Vincent College Box 9999
300 Fraser Purchase Road
Latrobe, PA 15650
724.555.8888 ~ ses1@email.stvincent.edu

April 30, 2010

Family Eye Care
ATTN: Dr. Christopher Jenkins
511 Main Street
Anytown, PA 15650

Dear Dr. Jenkins:

I am a current college sophomore majoring in Biology and plan to apply to medical school the fall of my senior year. I am exploring different areas of medicine and have become particularly interested in the field of optometry. Would your practice be willing to bring in a student to shadow during the summer? If so, I would welcome and appreciate the opportunity as I learn more about optometry, the daily business of an eye care office and the various diagnoses that exist.

Some of the relevant classes I have completed with an A average include General Biology I and II, Organic Chemistry I and their corresponding labs. I have always been interested in eye care and am looking forward to learning more about optometry.

My schedule is flexible and I would be willing to come into your eye care office multiple times throughout the summer as your schedule permits.

I have attached a resume which includes all of my coursework completed to date and showcases more information about me. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sarah Elizabeth Smith

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (FULL-TIME)

401 Riverview Lane
Latrobe, PA 15650

October 19, 2009

Dr. Michael Mauch
Assistant Director, Human Resources
ST&M Bank
221 Poplar Street
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Dr. Mauch:

I am writing to apply for the Financial Consultant position at ST&M Bank. I learned of the position through College Central Network at Saint Vincent College. As a senior at Saint Vincent College, I will be graduating in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. I believe my educational background along with my interests and internship in finance and accounting at Kennametal is what will allow me to contribute to the success of ST&M Bank as a Financial Consultant.

As a student at Saint Vincent College, I believe practical experience is crucial to reaching my career goals in the banking and finance industry. My internship at Kennametal, as the Financial Analyst Intern, allowed me to gain that experience in a professional business environment. At Kennametal, I had the opportunity to analyze monthly financial statements and I even created and implemented a database, allowing the organization to better organize company invoices and other financial data. I served as an Assistant at the Small Business Development Center located on Saint Vincent's college campus. As the Assistant, I gained knowledge and experience in areas such as creating client business plans, analyzing financial statements and assisting clients with researching low interest loan programs available through small businesses.

During the last two years of my academic career at Saint Vincent College, I was selected to serve as a Prefect. Here I led students and served as a role model by enforcing all college policies. I collaborated daily with campus administrators, faculty and staff to promote social and educational events, diversity, and wellness throughout the campus community. I also worked to establish trust among the residents creating an overall positive and healthy environment. Other leadership roles I have served, such as the Co-Captain of the Lacrosse Team and Treasurer of the Math Club, have given me the perfect skills to serve as the Accounting Associate. Through these I have gained excellent organizational, time management, interpersonal and teamwork skills.

I believe I can make an immediate contribution given that your bank is launching efforts to convert to SAP. I have attached my resume for your review. Thank you in advance for your time and efforts in this process. I will be in touch soon to follow-up. Until then, if you have any questions regarding my qualifications, please feel free to contact me at 724-555-1234 or via email at leo.w.hanson@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Leo W. Hanson

Leo W. Hanson

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (INTERNSHIP)

Luke DiNardo
Saint Vincent College Box 7500
300 Fraser Purchase Road
Latrobe, PA 15650
724.555.2123
luke.dinardo@email.stvincent.edu

April 15, 2010

Augustus Manufacturing
ATTN: Michael Dell
12 Industry Way
Greensburg, PA 15601

Dear Mr. Dell:

I am attaching my resume to be considered for the Accounting Office Intern opening that was advertised at Saint Vincent College through College Central. I am in the process of completing my sophomore year as an accounting major. The job description is a great match for my interests and I am looking forward to your consideration.

My cumulative GPA is a 3.75/4.00 and I have completed coursework in Elementary Accounting I & II, Intermediate Accounting I & II, Principles of Microeconomics and Principles of Macroeconomics. The job description online requires an accounting major who is proactive and willing to learn accounting principles and assist with general office duties. I would welcome the opportunity to supplement my education and am eager to learn more about an accounting department within a small, manufacturing environment. I am also qualified to help with general office procedures. During the semesters I am a work study in the Career Center where I answer phones, take messages, file, complete documentation and perform data entry.

I hope to be considered and look forward to interviewing at your earliest convenience. I can be reached via email or my mobile phone, 724.555.2123. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Luke DiNardo

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (FULL-TIME)

300 Fraser Purchase Road
Box # 135724
Latrobe, PA 15650

March 13, 2010

Human Resources
Cambria Hospital
1230 Hanna Drive
Johnstown, PA 15904

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to apply for the Coordinator of Community Initiatives position at Cambria Hospital. I learned of the position after speaking with Mr. Armstrong at the WANT job fair on Wednesday, February 26, 2010. I am a senior at Saint Vincent College with a double major in communication and marketing and plan to graduate in May 2010. My education, along with my practical experiences is what will allow me to succeed as the Coordinator of Community Initiatives.

As an intern at the American Red Cross this past summer, I had the chance to form and maintain relationships with community leaders as well as high school and college administrators. I was responsible for creating the new marketing publications to educate high school and college students of the importance of participating in local blood drives. I created a power point presentation depicting stories of individuals whose lives were saved by donors through the American Red Cross. My primary focus was to help raise awareness and to increase participation among the teenage and young adult population. As part of my project, I also created posters, flyers and brochures that are currently being distributed to schools throughout Cambria and surrounding counties in Pennsylvania. Through this experience, I had the opportunity to enhance both my oral presentation and written communication skills. Externally, I collaborated with high school and college officials, healthcare organizations, and American Red Cross organizations, nationwide. My goal-oriented drive is evident by my initiative to take on challenging, fast-paced, professional projects. I was even asked to supervise three young volunteers at the organization, while enforcing Red Cross policies and procedures.

I would like the opportunity to prove my skills and knowledge to Cambria Hospital as the Coordinator of Community Initiatives. The mission and culture of the hospital as well as the level of support the organization provides to its community, is what motivates me to become a part of your team. As I think about my career goals as a young professional, being able to contribute to an organization as well as the surrounding community is extremely important to me.

My resume is attached for your review. I would like to meet with you in person to discuss my qualifications further. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach me by phone at 724.555.2525 or by email at janiejenkins@saintvincent.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Janie Jenkins

Janie Jenkins

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (FULL-TIME)

1801 Depot Street
Latrobe, PA 15650

January 23, 2010

Dr. David Stephenson
Director of Remediation
LR Kimball Engineering
1324 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Dr. Stephenson:

I recently read a description of the environmental scientist's position with your company listed on imaginemynewjob.com. I was excited to see that I have experience garnered from my internship in the skill sets that you are seeking. Attached you will find my resume chronicling my experience and education.

As a result of relevant coursework in environmental science and an internship with the Monastery Run Improvement Project, I have 2 years of knowledge concerning the physical, chemical, and biological analysis of water using instruments such as a pH meter, Secchi Disk, Ion Chromatograph, and HACH Testing Kits. Also while analyzing the wetlands within the project, I learned several important wetland plants such as reeds, sedges, cattails, and horse nettle. As a wetland guide, my duties included interacting with visitors of all ages. During the summer of 2009, I researched, prepared, and presented a document concerning storm water management systems and legislation, specifically NPDES permitting and Phase I and II regulations.

I believe I will excel in an environmental scientist's position because I enjoy field analysis and document preparation. The position utilizes the best of my experiences in college and allows me to apply the skills I possess. I find that both working in the field and seeing a project completed to be a rewarding experience. As a student approaching graduation for a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, I have found that receiving a Benedictine liberal arts education has taught me the value of hard work, strong ethics, and working in project teams that this job entails.

Would it be possible to schedule an interview? I am available at any mutually agreed time and can be reached at 724-555-0002.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexander Watson

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (INTERNSHIP)

Saint Vincent College
300 Fraser Purchase Road
Box 700987
Latrobe, PA 15650

December 20, 2009

Mr. James Olewine
Human Resource Manager
Teen's Institute and Clinic of Philadelphia
15 Woodrow Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19019

Dear Mr. Olewine:

I would like to express my interest in the newly posted Addictions Specialist internship position at Life Way Behavioral Clinic. I learned of the position through the Career Center at Saint Vincent College. The Internship Coordinator suggested I contact you directly to discuss my interests in the internship. As a junior Psychology student at Saint Vincent, I believe my education and knowledge gained through my previous experience at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic has provided me with the skills necessary for the Addictions Specialist internship position.

This past semester, I served as the intern at Western Psychiatric in Pittsburgh, PA. Western Psychiatric is "committed to providing comprehensive addiction and dual diagnosis treatment, prevention, education, and research programs that are patient-oriented, research-based, and recovery-focused." As an intern, I had the opportunity to assist counselors and social workers in group therapy sessions with addicts and their families. Seeing many work through personal issues while gaining a new sense of confidence and control, was an amazing opportunity. This experience gave me a greater passion for the field and allowed me to use my degree and experience to positively impact the lives of many. I would love the opportunity to do this at Life Way Behavioral Clinic.

In addition to my education and practical experience, I am also very an active member of my college community serving in two leadership roles on campus. My role as the Vice-President of the Psychology Club and President of SADD have both given me the patience and passion to work with others in a challenging, fast-paced environment.

I am extremely motivated in all that I do, both in and outside of the professional environment. I would like the chance to prove my skills and knowledge as the Addictions Specialist Intern. My resume is attached for your review. I welcome all questions and can be reached via email MarleighMondie@saintvincent.edu or by phone at 724-555-1212. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Marleigh Mondie

Marleigh Mondie

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (INTERNSHIP)

James Wilkes
Saint Vincent College Box 8975
300 Fraser Purchase Road
Latrobe, PA 15650

Carnegie Museum of Art
Attention: Mrs. Genevieve O'Hara
4400 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

March 1, 2010

Dear Mrs. O'Hara:

I am submitting this letter of application and resume for the position of Summer Intern. I learned of the opening after visiting your website's employment page.

I am a Saint Vincent College junior majoring in Art History seeking a summer opportunity where I can not only learn more about your world-renowned collections, but also the daily activities necessary to preserve and showcase these extensive exhibitions.

Some of my coursework includes Art History I and II, American Art and Architecture and Renaissance Art and Architecture. I believe my studies in these classes have further encouraged my interest in art and a future career in a museum. I hope to further my education in Art History and pursue a career as an exhibit designer, educator or curator. I have excellent communication skills which I further developed working part time at a mall retail store where I dealt with customers on a daily basis. Additionally, I volunteer at the local library reading to children and participate in various clubs on campus.

Attached is my resume and I look forward to being considered and can interview at your convenience. I can be reached at 412-555-8888 or via email at jamie.wilkes@email.stvincent.edu.

Sincerely,

Jamie Wilkes

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (FULL-TIME)

300 Fraser Purchase Road
P.O. Box 127
Latrobe, PA 15650

March 1, 2009

Andrea Fulbright, Esq.
Director of Pollution Abatement Initiatives
Sierra Club of Western PA
17 Smithfield Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Ms. Fulbright:

Working for an environmental advocacy group has been a career goal of mine since my first year of college. A speech on campus by Dr. Wayne Fontana, who was director of the Delaware Valley Clean Air Society, and who subsequently hired me for an internship on environmental advocacy changed my life.

I am a senior public policy at Saint Vincent College and I eventually plan to apply to a joint degree program in environmental law and master's degree in environmental science. Dr. Cynthia Walter informed me of your opening for an Assistant Director of Air and Quality Awareness. I am aware of the fact that the position is grant funded for only one year, but that is an ideal situation for me as I prepare for law school.

My internship for the Delaware Valley Clean Air Society entailed efforts to seek more stringent tests in southeastern Pennsylvania for automotive pollution control and the use of reformulated gas in the summer months to abate hydrocarbon pollution. Also, I was involved in a project doing research on a litigation case against oil refiners despoiling Delaware Bay with their toxic effluent. I was fortunate to take a host of courses dealing with the environment as electives including: environmental administration and environmental law. I took ecology and environmental disturbances as electives and I am currently taking general chemistry. As cited above my career plans include an eventual master's degree in environmental science in addition to a JD degree. This background will afford me the environmental expertise as a litigator in environmental advocacy court cases.

I think that I could make an immediate contribution to the Sierra Club of Western Pennsylvania. I have a command of the entire core competencies cited in the job description. Furthermore, I am inclined to believe that my technical courses related to environmental issues also will be a plus.

My interest in this position is also fueled by the efforts you are taking to clean up the Clairton Coke works. Allegheny County has the highest rate of particulate pollution in the country and something has to be done. I would certainly appreciate in helping you on this public health crusade and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rachel Carson, III

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE (INTERNSHIP)

300 Fraser Purchase Road
P.O. Box 13574
Latrobe, PA 15650

February 1, 2010

Dr. Vincent Colosimo
Director of Research for Unmanned Space Vehicles
NASA-Cleveland Branch
300 Vairo Blvd
Cleveland, OH, 23564

Dear Dr. Colosimo:

I am interested in applying for the GS 3, scientific research summer internship position that was listed on the USA Jobs website.

I have had a great deal of planetarium experience interning for the Buhl Planetarium in Pittsburgh during the summer of 2008. I did extensive mapping for Dr. Roger Paget in his research on identifying the cause of black holes. This entailed using theoretical constructs learned in my higher level math courses at Saint Vincent College in addition to my courses in astronomy and minor in physics.

Last summer, I interned at Wallops Island Virginia for the Department of Defense calculating trajectories for experimental interceptor missiles as part of the defense initiative. I was also able to assist researchers working on lasers and superconductivity in this internship. During this internship I also acquired government security clearances.

I am seeking to complement this defense department and planetarium experience with a research internship at NASA in order to acquire the background for a future career with Goddard Space Center as an aeronautical engineer. I am in the 3-2 engineering program at Saint Vincent College and I have been accepted into the aeronautical engineering program at Penn State next fall. This internship would provide me with the ideal opportunity to assist your organization and to expand my research skills.

I will be in the Cleveland area during spring break in two weeks, and I hope to schedule an interview at a mutually convenient time. I will be in touch soon to follow-up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Werner Von Braun

Emailing versus Mailing a Cover Letter

Computers have quickly become our primary means of communicating and with that, comes electronic mail. Although the opportunity still exists for job seekers to mail their cover letters and resumes via regular mail, now often referred to as “snail mail”, most employers are receiving correspondence through email. With online postings being so prevalent, emailing your application materials is practically expected.

When applying via email, you attach your resume to the email but that leaves one question, “*Do I type my cover letter in the body of the email or do I attach a separate Word document with my cover letter?*”

Typically, it would be best to type the cover letter in the body of the email to save the reader the extra step of opening an attachment. The employer can quickly and easily read your cover letter upon opening his or her email and then open the attached resume.

When typing your emailed cover letter please remember the following tips:

- ✓ This is a formal, business style letter. Often, email is considered a casual method of communicating, and grammar, spelling and punctuation rules go out the window. Remember you are a job seeker and **MUST** follow the proper letter writing format.
- ✓ Keep the cover letter concise so the reader does not have to scroll too far, but be sure to include the necessary information to grab the reader’s attention (position to which you are applying, your education, why you are a good match for the position).

EXAMPLE

April 10, 2010

A & M Financial
2000 Sugardale Boulevard, Suite 100
New York, NY 10011

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Your recent online posting for Financial Planner matches not only my qualifications but also my career interests. I have attached my resume for your consideration.

I will graduate in May with my Bachelor of Science in Business with a focus in Finance. My business classes were cutting edge and I feel well-versed in a variety of financial planning options including mutual funds, stocks as well as other savings tools. I am trained in the most up-to-date financial software thanks to my summer internship with Jones Group Financial Services, Inc. There I also learned how to interact with customers seeking financial advice and how to implement the most useful financial models to best plan for their futures.

I look forward to the opportunity to interview and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Jenkins
(724) 555-1000