

Cover Letter Starter Kit

Internship and Career Center (ICC) University of California, Davis 2015

Cover letters are a way to create a personalized statement that explains how you as the applicant meet the needs of the employer or internship sponsor. This is about marketing yourself, telling your story. It goes with your resume, which is a summary of your experiences, skills, and accomplishments. Use a cover letter unless specifically told not to do so.

How to Get Started on Writing a Cover Letter

- 1) Use the information on the next two pages of this packet to learn the basic purpose and formatting a resume.
- 2) Review the additional cover letter resources on the ICC website.
 ➔ <http://icc.ucdavis.edu/materials/cover-letters.htm>
- 3) Attend a cover letter writing workshop - see ICC Calendar of Events
 ➔ icc.ucdavis.edu/services/calendar.htm
- 4) Start with the Cover Letter Content Worksheet on last two pages of this packet to create a rough draft of the key points you want in your cover letter.
- 5) Bring the completed (printed) Cover Letter Content Worksheet or a first, rough draft to meet with advisers at the ICC.

Drop-In Advising with Peer Advisers

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.*
Mon – Fri

* Exact times vary. See website for more info.

Drop-In Advising with ICC Coordinators

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Wed – Thurs

30 Min Appointments with ICC Coordinators

Appointments are
scheduled online

➔ icc.ucdavis.edu/services/advising.htm

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A cover letter or letter of intent should go with most resumes submitted for consideration for jobs or internships. If you can only upload one document, you can make your letter/resume into a two-page document with a page break in-between the two sections. A cover letter is important because:

- It introduces you and your resume.
- It explains why you are a good fit for this opportunity.
- It bridges the gap between your resume and the reader/employer.
- It supplements and expands on projects, education and experiences directly related to the opening.
- It can make the difference between having your resume read or ignored.

Cover Letter Do's

- Limit the cover letter to one page if possible, unless applying to academic faculty, teaching or research positions.
- Use the same font and formatting in the cover letter as you use in your resume.
- You might also want to use the same header in both a cover letter and resume. See header formatting examples.
- If providing a printed copy, use the same type of paper for both your cover letter and resume. Resume paper can be purchased at the UC Davis Bookstore or at an office supply store.
- Many tech companies prefer the cover letter not be attached, but uploaded as text in an email with the resume attached.
- Use formal, professional language in a cover letter. This is true when sending your cover letter as text in an email (above point).
- Personalize each cover letter to the specific position you are applying to.
- Address your cover letter to a specific person or the hiring manager whenever possible. If you don't know their name, use one of the following examples: "Dear Hiring Manager," "Dear [insert department here] Hiring Team," "Dear Recruiter," "Dear Search Committee Chair and Committee Members:" (used for academic teaching positions) "To Whom It May Concern: " Note, this last one uses a ":" not a ","
- Check for typos, proper grammar and accuracy.
- Use spellcheck, but do not rely on it to catch all errors.
- Have multiple people review your application materials.
- Make an appointment with an ICC adviser to review your application materials before you apply.

Cover Letter Don'ts

- Unless told explicitly not to, you should always include a cover letter in your application.
- Don't use text abbreviations or emoticons if you are using emailing.
- Don't be too wordy or write just to fill the entire page.
- Don't submit a generic "one size fits all" cover letter; tailor your cover letter to fit each position. Thus, none of your cover letters will be exactly the same, though a lot of content will be similar in each.
- Don't repeat or summarize your resume in your cover letter. Instead, focus the cover letter on your enthusiasm for the job, excitement about working with that organization, to highlight unique skills that make you qualified for the position and a good fit for the employer.
- Don't overuse adjectives or superlatives, especially subjective ones (e.g. "You are the best company in the world" or "I am the most hardworking student intern you will ever meet.").
- Quantify when possible. "I've helped organize three club events, including two successful initiatives attended by 25 people" is a better descriptor than "I've helped organize several club events, including a couple successful initiatives attended by many people."
- Don't exaggerate your skills or experience.
- Don't use UC Davis letterhead, logo, or UC seal in your cover letter. [NOTE: For graduate students and postdocs, some departments allow use of department letterhead for tenure-track faculty applications. Check with your department before using.]

Cover Letter Format and Content Description

Return Address (yours, the sender) City, State Zip
Telephone with area code
Email address

Avoid overuse of adjectives and adverbs. Strive to be objective. Avoid: I am an incredibly hard worker. Better: My past supervisor noted that I am able to complete projects earlier than deadlines.

Date

Name, Title (who is it going toformat: First Name Last Name, Title)
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Explain in the cover letter how your experience relates to this opening using one or two key examples. Do not summarize your whole resume

Dear Ms., /Mr., /Dr., (or Hiring Manager, or To Whom It May Concern:)

In the FIRST PARAGRAPH, tell how you heard about the job and, if appropriate, name the person who told you about it. Mention the specific job title. Express your interest in the company or position. Say you are enclosing/attaching a resume that shows how you are qualified for this job. (optional)

In the SECOND PARAGRAPH (AND MAYBE IN A 3RD PARAGRAPH), analyze your background and skills in relation- ship to the specific job description. Show how you make a 'good fit' with this job/ organization and how you can contribute.

It is about what you can do for them, not what they can do for you. Give one or two examples of related experience. Keep the job description in mind and do NOT restate your resume. This letter shows brief highlights of your 'fit' with a specific job using specific skills, qualities, knowledge, interests you have that relate to the opening. (Break big paragraphs up, using one paragraph for each skill set is one way to organize them. Smaller paragraphs are more readable.)

In the LAST PARAGRAPH, tell how you will follow through with this application. For example, "I am eager to meet with you to discuss this opportunity. I am available for an interview at a mutually convenient time. And remind the reader how to reach you best." For example, "I will be in the Bay area during the week of March 25." or "I am able to drive to Roseville any day except Tuesdays and Thursdays." And "I can best be reached at 530-555-1212 or james.stewart@ucdavis.edu." I look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely,
(typically leave 4 spaces for your signature)

Use SPELLCHECK often, but do not rely on it to catch all errors. Then copy and paste your letter as the text of your email and attach it in pdf format.

James Stewart (if emailing, use a script-like font to simulate your signature in this space)

James Stewart (Just type your name here—2 spaces below signature)

Attachments (if email) referring to your resume or Enclosures (if paper mail)

Cover Letter for Internship Position

555 A Street
Davis, CA 95616
(520) 867-XXXX
jbeech@gmail.com

November 10, 20XX

Human Resources Department – Internship Program
National Public Radio
123 Government Street
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Internship Coordinator,

I am very interested in the internship with the Communications/Public and Media Relations Department during the Winter Quarter. I am a Junior at the University of California, Davis, pursuing a bachelor's degree in American Studies with a minor in Communication. My research experience has sparked my interest in the way that media is delivered through marketing and advertising. I believe in the mission of National Public Radio and would be excited to be an intern with your organization.

This summer while studying abroad I was able to look at American culture from a different perspective. This has increased my interest in news delivery and how it helps to inform citizens. I was the only freshman to be elected to the position of Senator for the Associated Students of UC Davis, and rose to the challenge of representing first-year students while collaborating on larger university issues. Through these experiences I learned the value of effective communication through all forms of media.

I am confident that my experiences, skills and strong interests in the goals of NPR have prepared me to be a strong intern for your program. I have attached my resume and look forward to discussing my qualifications with you. Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Josie Beech
Josie Beech

Attachment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Cover Letter Content Worksheet

Begin the process of writing your cover letter by using the grid below.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Personal Contact Info</p> <p>Name, Address, Phone, Email</p> | <p>Optional: LinkedIn, Online portfolio</p> | |
| <p>Date</p> | | |
| <p>Employer 's Contact Info</p> <p>Name, Department, Company, Address</p> | <p>If no specific person's name use position title or dept. name, If no address use email with city/ state</p> | |
| <p>Greeting</p> <p>"Dear Ms., Mr. _____,"</p> <p>Or... Dear Chris Bender,</p> | <p>If unsure about gender use first & last name, If no specific name can use "Dear Search Committee," "Dear Hiring Manager", or "To Whom it May Concern:"</p> | |
| <p>Beginning Paragraph</p> <p>Possible ideas: Position applying for, Organization name, How you discovered position, Who you are – Year in school, university, major, Why you're interested in job/ company (be specific!), Why you're qualified</p> | <p>Why you're qualified section (last sentence of this paragraph) should be a quick one sentence summary of why you are a good fit for the position, similar to a thesis statement of your qualifications</p> | |

Cover Letter Content Worksheet (continued)

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Middle Paragraph(s)</p> <p>Describe 1-3 of your experiences/projects that show your job specific skills and qualifications (Refer to qualifications section on job description and select applicable skills to showcase) – You may include your position title, organization, main roles you had, transferable skills, how you can add value to organization.</p> | <p>Add scope (quantity, quality, impact), Be modest/objective, Avoid using words like “best” or “excellent” (but okay to say “my supervisor remarked that I am the best...”), Focus on what you will bring to the organization that will make them glad they hired you</p> | |
| <p>Ending/ Summarizing Paragraph</p> <p>Final interest and fit statement, Refer to materials that you have attached, Express willingness to provide additional materials, State practical remarks, Proactive statement – “I look forward to...”, Thank you statement</p> | <p>Practical remarks section is where you can state things like if you will be going on vacation and will not be able to be contacted, if you have not completed a certification yet but are scheduled to take the exam, if you will be relocating or will be visiting the area soon</p> | |
| <p>Closing and Signature</p> <p>“Sincerely”, “Best Regards”, “Yours,” Hand-written signature AND Typed name</p> | <p>Best to hand-write signature but if you are unable to scan document you can use script-like font instead</p> | |