

COVER LETTER WRITING GUIDE

WHY DO YOU NEED A COVER LETTER?

- A cover letter is your opportunity to convey your most marketable qualifications. This is your chance to let the company know why you are interested in them as potential employers and why they should be interested in you.

COVER LETTER BASICS

- Cover letters are an opportunity to use a narrative format to convey how your academic, relevant experience & qualifications, and Spartan Ready competencies align with the position or organization.
- The cover letter should be focused on the employer's needs.
- It serves as an accompanying document for your resume. It should **NOT be** a repeat of your resume!
- Use this document to showcase your top 3-4 differentiators.
- It should be tailored to each position you apply for.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Use a consistent font style and font size throughout (10 – 12 pt recommended)
- .75”-.1” margins for top & bottom, left & right
- Fill ¾ page in length with text from your writing. The page may be full with the salutation, body of the document, and sign-off.
- Use block paragraph format (single space, no indentation, one space between each paragraph).
- Do not use a template.
- Use the same header you used for your resume.
- Avoid beginning every sentence with “I” statements.

DO NOT INCLUDE...

- References—list them on a separate page with a full heading to match your cover letter and resume. Only present them when requested by an employer.
- “To whom this may concern,”. Include a specific name (as best you can), and if you are not able, you can use: “Dear XCompany Hiring Manager,” “Dear Department Title,” “Dear Hiring Committee,” etc.
- A headshot – the cover letter should be a text only document.
- Birthday, ethnicity, political/religious affiliation— companies do not need this information about you, nor should it be part of their hiring process.

BEFORE SENDING YOUR COVER LETTER

- Ensure that you are addressing the correct company and job title in the letter.
- Ask for support and a secondary set of eyes to proofread it. The Career Center offers drop-in sessions Monday through Friday with peer educators. The Saunders Writing Center is also available to assist with proofreading and document support.

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EXAMPLE COVER LETTER OUTLINE

NAME

Header as it appears on your resume

DATE

Dear/To First and Last Name: (or “Hiring Manger” or “Hiring Committee”)

First Paragraph: Introduction

Explain the reason for the letter and show enthusiasm! Mention how you learned of the position. Demonstrate knowledge of the company by using one or two sentences to tell them why you are interested in them! This demonstrates that you have researched them. Finally, state two or three reasons why you are qualified.

Second Paragraph: “Why You”

Your opportunity to expand on two or three qualifications and reasons for interest. Highlight internship experience, class projects, extra-curricular experience, or other experiences that demonstrate how you meet/exceed their requirements for the role based on the job/internship description. Include information about your academic area of emphasis, your classification in school, and your coursework. Be sure to use industry language and verbs used in the job/internship description.

Third Paragraph: Closing

Re-emphasize your interest in the role, direct the employer to find more details about you in your resume, and thank the employer for considering you as a candidate.

Sincerely,

Your Name

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EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

Sally Spartan
888.888.8888 | Tampa, FL | LinkedIn URL

August 31, 2020

Dear Dalí Museum Human Resources Team,

I am writing to express my interest in the Human Resources Internship, which I learned about through Joe Thomas, who represented your organization at the University of Tampa's internship fair. The Dalí Museum's commitment to innovation and the arts deeply resonates with me, and I would be proud to contribute to such a unique and inspiring institution. I hope to demonstrate my leadership and project management skills, combined with my long-term interest and passion for the arts.

As a student at the University of Tampa, I've had the privilege of serving as the Recruitment Coordinator on the executive board of my sorority. In this role, I led initiatives to increase recruitment during the 2018–2019 academic year. I regularly used Microsoft Word to draft guidelines, Excel to track recruitment data, and various email platforms to communicate with potential members. I also managed applications through Engage and participated in updating our UTampa sorority chapter handbook. These experiences align closely with the responsibilities outlined in your internship description, such as updates to the employee handbook, updating job requirements and description, and doing HR documentation.

Beyond my leadership role, I've collaborated on several group projects in my Communications coursework. These experiences have sharpened my interpersonal and project management skills, as well as my ability to write reports and deliver compelling presentations. I was honored to win first place in UT's Elevator Pitch Competition, which reflects my strength in public speaking and attention to detail.

I am particularly drawn to this internship because it combines my passion for the arts with my interest in human resources. I am confident that my background in leadership, communication, and organizational management would allow me to make a meaningful contribution to your team. Thank you for considering my application. I invite you to review my resume and LinkedIn profile for additional details. I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you further.

Sincerely,
Sally P. Spartan
Sally P. Spartan

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