

Writing a Convincing Cover Letter

Why are cover letters important?

Your **resume** details your education and experiences. The **cover letter** is your opportunity to make the connection between your experiences and *a specific position*. You are demonstrating that you are a great fit for the specific position, that you can communicate clearly, and that you have researched the organization. You are differentiating yourself from other applicants who may have similar qualifications.

What is the purpose of a cover letter?

1. To **introduce** you to the employer and clarify the position being applied for; when, where, or how you learned about the position and/or the organization; and why you are applying for the position.
2. To **highlight** your strengths and qualifications for the position. This is not a repeat of the resume, but a select review of specific areas from your background that are relevant to the particular position.
3. To **encourage** the next step in the application process: e.g. "I look forward to having the opportunity to meet and discuss my qualifications in detail," "I can be reached at (240) 555-7656."

What should the overall structure be?

Section One (a brief paragraph):

Tell who you are, how you learned about the position, why you have an interest in the position and the organization. Be sure to indicate the specific position for which you are applying, as an employer may have several positions open at the same time. Additionally, if you have networked and have a personal contact within the organization, this is the point at which that individual's name should be mentioned, if you have that person's permission. Follow with a brief statement that you feel you are a strong candidate.

Section Two (text alone, or preferably some combination of text with a bulleted list or a table):

Describe your strengths and qualifications as they *specifically relate to this particular position*. Use the job description to identify exactly what qualifications they seek, and then describe how you are a good fit because you have many (but probably not all) of those qualifications. Talk about what you know about the organization to enhance your argument that you are a good fit with their culture.

Section Three (a brief paragraph):

"Let's get together" is the goal of the final paragraph. Be sure to actively convey your interest and strong desire for an interview. Remember, the primary purpose of the resume and cover letter is to obtain an interview, not to get you a job.

Remember to accomplish these three things in your cover letter:

1. Demonstrate your interest in *the specific position and organization* – why do you want to work there?
2. Highlight *two or three strengths* related to the position and reflect your unique experiences.
3. Express *your enthusiasm for the position and organization!*

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR FULL-TIME POSITION

Sam Vuong

541-555-1554 | sam.vuong@oit.edu | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/samvuong>

December 18, 2019

Dear Hiring Manager,

After attending an information session from Black and Veatch, I was compelled to apply for a job on the Black and Veatch website for the Electrical Engineer 1 - Power Delivery position (Job:36953BR). I am very interested in working with power generation and delivery and contributing to Black and Veatch's mission of building a world of difference. I am drawn to the innovative power projects that Black and Veatch is involved in across the world.

I am currently finishing my senior year of a Bachelor of Science in Renewable Energy Engineering at Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Falls. Working with faculty members who are industry professionals, I have had the opportunity to develop skills in **power system analysis, protection, and control**. With the knowledge I have gained, I am able to **design, analyze, and improve power systems following applicable engineering codes**. Oregon Tech's programs offer hands on learning with the latest technology and equipment, and challenging coursework that requires students to learn quickly and put theory into practice.

In addition, I have work experience in a variety of areas that diversify my knowledge base and experience to contribute to Black and Veatch. As a Research Assistant in the Electrical/Renewable Energy Engineering department I worked on **energy storage systems. I analyzed various energy storage techniques for peak load shaving applications**. I am also a staff member at the Oregon Tech Diversity Center. As a staff member, I am in charge of creating events for students, completing all logistics for event planning, and I **manage the event budget**.

My experience and technical skills are detailed in the attached resume, and I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss how I could contribute to Black and Veatch in more detail. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Sam Vuong

WHY THIS WORKS

- Heading matches the applicants resume, used a formal date
Formal closing and signature used
TIP: addresses no longer needed
- Used "Dear Hiring Manager" instead of something general like "Sir or Madam." If you can identify the hiring managers name, even better
- Found the job on the company's website and supplied the exact job title and number
- Showed interaction with the company and knowledge of what they do
- Applicant has several key strengths shown in bold that are a direct fit with the job description
- Drew from multiple experiences to demonstrate their diversity of knowledge

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR INTERNSHIP-BULLET POINTS

Jesse Scofield

541-555-2630 jesse.scofield@oit.edu <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jscofield>

October 17, 2019

Dear Recipient Name,

I am writing in regards to the Undergraduate Manufacturing and Sourcing Intern position listed on Handshake. Nike designs the world's fastest racing footwear "[Designed] to the exact specifications of championship athletes." That is the motto inscribed on the Nike Vaporfly 4%, and that is the motto inscribed in my heart as a championship athlete and aspiring mechanical engineer.

As a current junior in Mechanical Engineering at Oregon Tech, I am gaining the hands-on experience necessary to be successful in this position. I have already completed a design project using **AutoCAD** and will be completing more projects in **Solid Modeling** by June 2019.

Previously, I have experience working on a team-based robotics project. Building a competition-ready robot in only six weeks is no easy feat; but, when faced with a challenge, our team took our robot to the FIRST OMSI District Competition and were undefeated.

- Innovated how the game was played
- Shared with other teams our keys to success
- Won the Innovation in Control and Inspire Awards
- Won a scholarship from FIRST for my proposal on casual consumer airspace.

My excitement for working for Nike stems from my passion for running. At the start of the season, my coach told me I could be an All-American if I wanted to (top 30 in the country). I didn't just believe him, I went out and finished 24th at the Cross Country National Championship as a freshman in college. The next year, I finished eighth.

As a prospective employee at Nike, I am confident I can help elevate human potential and drive the future of sport. I firmly believe sport is an art, and that the paintbrush is in my hand. I look forward to hearing from you and am available for an interview at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jesse Scofield

WHY THIS WORKS

- Used correct formatting: same heading as resume, formal date, greeting, closing, signature
- Shows knowledge of the company and includes the specific position for which they are applying
- Expresses a personal connection and passion for the industry
- Uses specific project examples to demonstrate strengths that match the job description
- Included bullet points to highlight key achievements
- Ends on a confident note and encourages the next step

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR INTERNSHIP-EMAILED

 Send	To...	hire@intel.com
	Cc...	
	Subject	Data Center Intern - 746840

Dear Hiring Manager:

While browsing the Intel website, I saw a posting for a Data Center Intern in the Jobs at Intel section. A career with Intel has been an aspiration because your reputation for innovation is unmatched. I believe my combination of education and experience would enable me to quickly contribute to Intel's mission.

I am currently finishing my sophomore year of a **BS in Information Technology** at Oregon Tech Wilsonville, taking a full course load and maintaining a **strong GPA** while also working part-time to help finance my education. Working with faculty who are industry experts, I have had the opportunity to hone my skills in **database systems, networking administration and information security**. With this knowledge I am able to operate in a **Windows and Linux** environment and comprehend **system optimization and security principals**. Oregon Tech's programs are intensive, hands-on learning using the latest equipment and technology, and my courses challenge me every day. In addition, I am a **US military veteran** with extensive experience working under very challenging circumstances while deployed overseas.

Our rigorous curriculum requires students to learn quickly and troubleshoot on a regular basis. In a course project (describe **problem-solving achievement in course project**). In the military, I also was required to learn complex technology quickly and apply that knowledge in the field under very complex situations.

My experience and technical skills are detailed in the attached resume, and I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss how I could contribute to Intel in more detail.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Favero

WHY THIS WORKS

- It's addressed "Dear Hiring Manager" rather than "Dear Sir/Madam" or something else vague. If you can identify the hiring manager's name, even better. Consider sending them a hard copy of your application via snail mail as well as submitting your materials online
- The student found the opening on the company website, indicating a stronger level on interest than finding it on a job board. If you find it on a job board, go view it on the company's website
- The student has several key strengths that make them a good fit with the requirements
- Experience as a military veteran is a plus related to both working in a challenging and dynamic environment, learning quickly, and troubleshooting complex situations

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR FULL-TIME POSITION-TABLE

Alejandra M. Hernandez

(541) 555-5032 ● alejandraH13@gmail.com

October 22, 2019

Dear Bonnie Rivers,

My name is Alejandra Hernandez, and I am senior Electrical Engineering student at Oregon Institute of Technology (Oregon Tech). Please accept this letter of great interest in the available position of an Antenna Design Engineer 1 with the Technology Team. I have attended several Garmin informational sessions at Oregon Tech, and during those sessions I learned of Garmin’s values and mission to work with honesty and integrity while creating high tech products that are built to last. These qualities ring true to my own set of values and my passion for creating.

I bring a variety of relatable skillsets both from my education, volunteer and internship experience. Over this last summer I was an intern for Micro Systems Engineering Inc. I worked in the **RF department** developing test methodology for coexistence testing. While I was there, I gained hands-on experience with many types of RF test equipment.

Key Skillsets:

Developing test methodology
Coexistence testing
Sodera network protocol analyzer

Spectrum and network analyzers
Vector signal generators
Test Data Analysis

Another opportunity I have had is helping start the Amateur Radio Club at Oregon Tech for which I am currently the Vice President. We have been working continuously on a radio telescope project for the last two years, and have presented our work at the GNU Radio Conference. I worked with a team to prototype and validate both a Yagi and a Horn antenna for the telescope. It has been a wonderful experience, and I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of designing the antennas and accomplishing goals as a part of a team.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to set up an interview; I can be reached any time at 541-555-5032. Thank you for your time and consideration for this position. I look forward to further discussing my qualifications with you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Alejandra Hernandez

Alejandra Hernandez

WHY THIS WORKS

- Used appropriate formatting including a heading that matches the resume, formal date, greeting, closing, and a signature
Used the hiring managers name in the greeting
Showed their interested in and knowledge of the company.
Talked about the multiple interactions they have had with the company
Used a Table to draw attention to key qualifications
Described 2 experiences directly targeted to the job description while showing key strengths as they relate to the position
Ended on a confident and positive note encouraging the next step in the hiring process