

# COVER LETTER GUIDE

## PURPOSE

A cover letter is typically your first formal communication with a potential employer. It is used to introduce yourself and demonstrate to the employer how the skills and experiences presented on your resume align with the position you are applying to.

## FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Business letter format
- Block paragraphs, not indented
- One page in length maximum
- Margins between .5" and 1"
- Typeface, font size, and margins consistent with resume formatting

## HEADER

In your header, include today's date and mailing information for both you and the employer. In lieu of typing out your mailing address at the top of the page, you may consider including the header from your resume.

Do your best to avoid addressing your cover letter with "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Hiring Committee". If the position description does not tell you who to address the cover letter to, try browsing their website or call their HR department and ask.

### EXAMPLE (STANDARD HEADER / RESUME HEADER)

#### MIRANDA SHAW

Providence, RI | 401-555-2345 | miranda.shaw@salve.edu

Date

Mr./Ms./Dr. Recruiter's Full Name

Recruiter's Title

Department Name

Company Name

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

-OR- RE: Position Title: (only if you can't find the recruiter's name)

## BEFORE YOU WRITE

### CONTENT

Cover letters introduce the reader to your personality, so they should supplement your resume, not reiterate it. Think about what you have learned from your experiences and why you are passionate about this particular opportunity and use that to guide your writing.

### TAILORING

Just like with your resume, you want to tailor your cover letter to the position you are applying for rather than sending a generic cover letter to each job you apply for. Think about what experiences and skill sets the employer will be interested in hearing about. Be specific whenever you can.

### ORGANIZATION AND WRITING TECHNIQUE

Having a well-organized cover letter that reiterates your main points throughout helps ensure they stick with the reader. It may be helpful to you to outline your main points and organize your thoughts before writing. A well-organized cover letter should be easy to skim. Keep in mind that not all employers may have time to read your cover letter word-for-word.

Address the main points in your introduction, elaborate on them in your body paragraphs using specific statements rather than generic, and reiterate them in your conclusion.

### EXAMPLE

#### Generic Statement

"I know my experiences and skills make me an excellent candidate for this position."

#### Specific Statement (Better)

"In this position with Mentor Foundation USA, I will use my background in social media marketing, and my experience as a mentor and student leader to help promote engagement and reduce substance abuse among youth."

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OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT  
*Your future starts here.*

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## INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

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- States the job you are applying to
- Tells the employer how you heard about this position (if relevant)
- Briefly explains why you are interested in/qualified for this specific opportunity
- Briefly outlines the main points that you are going to address in your body paragraphs

### EXAMPLE

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Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for considering my application to your open Marketing and Communication Internship position at Mentor Foundation USA. I was recommended to this position by Ms. Nicole Smith, the Director of Marketing and Outreach at your organization. I am a current student at Salve Regina University majoring in English Communications with a passion for creating and fostering strong mentorship relationships to reduce substance abuse among today's youth. Through my previous work and non-profit volunteer experiences as well as my academic work, I have cultivated my written and oral communication skills and have a strong background in social media marketing. I hope to use my communication experience to help engage, inspire, and strengthen relationships with young people in your local community.

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## BODY PARAGRAPHS

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- Begins with a topic sentence that summarizes the main point of that paragraph
- Each main point you address should be tied back into the position you are applying to

### EXAMPLE

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My background in social media marketing will allow me to create a social media platform that engages youth with Mentor Foundation USA. Through my involvement on Salve Regina's campus, I have learned how important it is to stay on the forefront of technology trends by interacting with youth via social media. As a Peer Career Adviser in Salve Regina's Office of Career Development, I have increased student engagement on the office's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages by creating a social media plan that focuses on publishing interactive, weekly content and building a consistent brand for the office. Additionally, my experience as a Resident Adviser has shown me how crucial a role social media outreach can play in establishing mentorship relationships. Creating a strong social media presence on my floor has fostered a sense of community and a willingness among my residents to come to me for guidance and support. As a Marketing and Communications Intern, I will use these same skill sets to promote youth interaction with Mentor Foundation USA's social media pages, inspire young people to recognize their potential, and encourage them to seek out the support they need.

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## CONCLUSION

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- Thanks the employer
- Restates the position you are applying to
- Briefly restates your main points
- Provides your contact information (even if it is at the top of the page)

### EXAMPLE

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Thank you again for reviewing my application to your open Marketing and Communications Internship position. In this role, I will use my background in social media marketing and my experience serving as a mentor and a student leader to help promote engagement and reduce substance abuse among youth. Please feel free to contact me at 401-555-2345 or miranda.shaw@salve.edu with any questions you have about my application.

Sincerely,



Miranda Shaw

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## SAMPLE COVER LETTER

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### MIRANDA SHAW

Providence, RI | 401-555-2345 | miranda.shaw@salve.edu

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Ms. Sarah Jones  
Manger of Youth Programs and Development  
Mentor Foundation USA  
2900 K Street N.W. #501  
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for considering my application to your open Marketing and Communication Internship position at Mentor Foundation USA. I was recommended to this position by Ms. Nicole Smith, the Director of Marketing and Outreach at your organization. I am a current student at Salve Regina University majoring in English Communications with a passion for creating and fostering strong mentorship relationships to reduce substance abuse among today's youth. Through my previous work and non-profit volunteer experiences as well as my academic work, I have cultivated my written and oral communication skills and have a strong background in social media marketing. I hope to use my communication experience to help engage, inspire, and strengthen relationships with young people in your local community.

My background in social media marketing and my academic work in communications will allow me to create a social media platform that engages youth with Mentor Foundation USA. Through my academics and involvement on Salve Regina's campus, I have learned how important it is to stay on the forefront of technology trends by interacting with youth via social media. As a Peer Career Adviser in Salve Regina's Office of Career Development, I have increased student engagement on the office's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages by creating a social media plan that focuses on publishing interactive, weekly content and building a consistent brand for the office. Additionally, my experience as a Resident Adviser has shown me how crucial a role social media outreach can play in establishing mentorship relationships. Creating a strong social media presence on my floor has fostered a sense of community and a willingness among my residents to come to me for guidance and support. As a Marketing and Communications Intern, I will use these same skill sets to promote youth interaction with Mentor Foundation USA's social media pages, inspire young people to recognize their potential, and encourage them to seek out the support they need.

I developed a strong passion for working with the youth in my local community of Newport, RI by volunteering for the local non-profit Boys and Girls Club. There, I have gotten the incredible opportunity to help local kids ages 8-16 learn to recognize their full potential by establishing strong mentorship relationships and working one-on-one with them on their personal development. I have seen the difference non-profit organizations focused on youth mentorship can make on a child's character and leadership ability and I hope to continue that work with Mentor Foundation USA.

Thank you again for reviewing my application to your open Marketing and Communications Internship position. In this role, I will use my background in social media marketing and my experience serving as a mentor and a student leader to help promote engagement and reduce substance abuse among youth. Please feel free to contact me at 401-555-2345 or miranda.shaw@salve.edu with any questions you have about my application.

Sincerely,



Miranda Shaw

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## NOTE

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If you are using a sample cover letter like the one above to help you start writing, be sure to **use your own words** and show your unique personality.

