

Before you begin writing your Cover Letter – Guide to Getting Started

Before you begin writing:

1. Be prepared to spend one or two hours creating your first cover letter.
2. Research the company or organization online, using Google, Glassdoor, Vault etc.
 - a. Read articles about the company and the business issues they are currently addressing/facing
 - b. Read the “About Us” section of their website
 - c. Read the Careers section of their website
 - d. Identify their mission, goals, and values as an organization
 - e. Learn about their products and services
 - f. Research the industry as a whole
3. Each cover letter should be tailored to the job or internship description (if you have a detailed one). In order to tailor your cover letter, make a chart:

On one side, list the most important qualifications the employer is seeking in the job description. Re-read the job description and notice any key terms that are mentioned repeatedly. On the other side of your chart, write out how you meet each qualification. If you do not have a detailed job description, you need to determine what the key qualifications are for entry-level opportunities in the field in which you are applying. Whatever is in your chart should frame the content of your cover letter.

Your chart may look something like this:

Sample Qualifications

Analytical Skills

Possible Experiences that Match

- Relevant coursework
- Relevant internships, research, or in depth course projects

Knowledge of the Field

- Relevant coursework
- Internships
- Student Organization(s)
- Alumni Networking/Career Exploration Events

Fluency/Proficiency in another language

- 2 years of language courses
- Study Abroad
- Native non-English language fluency

Ability to build relationships with others

- Leadership role in a student organization
- Relevant internship
- Volunteer Work

Leadership Potential

- Relevant student organization involvement
- Group projects for relevant courses
- Leadership role in an internship/job