

Cover Letter Guide

Anatomy of a Cover Letter

A cover letter generally consists of three or four paragraphs and is always less than a page; very experienced candidates applying for senior positions may write more. The goal is to give employers enough information to want to meet you, without overwhelming them.

Prepare

- Research the employer to identify what about the organization or its products appeals to you
- Review the job description in detail
- List each type of experience and skill the employer is seeking
- Outline how your qualifications meet the employer's needs
- Choose two or three of your best qualifications and identify concrete examples to illustrate them
- Outline how your skills, interests, and goals match those of the employer. Focus on the positive. Do not refer to qualifications that you lack

Salutation

- Address your letter to a specific person whenever possible
- Be sure of the correct spelling and appropriate title (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.); you should not address the contact by their first name unless you know them personally
- Avoid "To Whom It May Concern." Acceptable alternatives include "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Search Committee"
- Use the same heading on your cover letter as you did on your resume

First Paragraph

Explain clearly and concisely why you are writing. Since your name is at the bottom of the letter, you do not need to introduce yourself. State the full name of the position and how you learned about it, including the name of the person, publication or website and the date of the listing. This paragraph can be as simple as the following:

- *"I am writing to apply to the Special Events Assistant posted on Husky Career Link. I believe my skills and experience would enable me to excel in their position."*

Some applicants prefer to begin this paragraph in a way they hope will grab the reader's attention. This can be an effective technique if you know the personality of the organization or the individual receiving the letter, but it is risky if you don't:

- *"Alpha Software's commitment to innovative mobile application development resonates with me as a computer engineer with an interested in mobile technology."*
- *"As a recent Electrical Engineering graduate with a 3.9 GPA, I can offer your firm a mastery of the latest technologies..."*

If you were referred by somebody:

- *"I'm writing to apply to the Public Relations Assistant position at PR Worldwide posted on Husky Career Link. After speaking with Arnold Warner, a former PR Assistant at PR Worldwide, I am confident my past experience and education make me a viable candidate for this position."*

Cover Letter Guide (continued)

Second/Third Paragraph

Write these paragraphs using the outline you prepared, tailoring your letter to the job. Do not repeat the content on your resume; instead use this space to explain the value that your experience would bring to the employer. Highlight experience relevant to that position and briefly describe concrete examples to match your qualifications to the job description:

- *“The research paper I wrote about the benefits Islamic banking would have on the U.S. economy required me to do extensive research of literary sources and interview experts in the field of finance. I am confident I could utilize these skills successfully as a Market Researcher at World Banking Inc.”*

Employers are interested in your motivation as well as your experience. Be sure to explain **why** this job and this organization appeal to you and fit into your career goals. Demonstrate that you have researched the organization by referring to company products, services, philosophy or mission in your explanation of why you are a good match:

- *“Boston Pharmaceuticals’ cancer vaccine has revolutionized preventative medicine. One of my most important career goals is to help bring cutting-edge health care products to doctors and patients, which is why I would be proud to work for your organization.”*

Sometimes a resume leaves questions in the employer’s mind, for example, about periods of unemployment or reasons for a career change or relocation. These questions may be serious enough to prevent you from getting an interview, so it is usually best to address them directly:

- *“I resigned from my last position six months ago in order to care for an ailing family member. I am now ready to recommit myself full time to my career.”*
- *“Although I currently live in Boston, I am preparing to relocate to the San Diego area in order to be closer to my family.”*

Do not point out qualifications/experience listed in the job description that you may not have. Focus and highlight the relevant experience you do have and your motivation for applying to that particular position.

Last Paragraph

- The closing paragraph can be short and simple.
- Stress your enthusiasm for the position and your interest in meeting for an interview.
- State how and when you can best be contacted.
- Thank the individual and end with an appropriate closing:

“I am eager to discuss with you the kind of contributions I can make to Zephyr Advertising as an Account Representative. Feel free to contact me at 123-456-7890 or jobseeker@yahoo.com. Thank you for your kind attention to my application; I look forward to hearing from you.”

Sample Entry Level Position
Pharmaceutical Research Associate, Discovery Pharma

Key Accountabilities/Responsibilities:

- Monitor clinical trials at agreed intervals by regular visits, telephone conversations and correspondence
- Select & evaluate suitable investigators/sites to participate
- Co-ordinate the supply of clinical trial materials (drugs, equipment etc.) in order to expedite the initiation of patient recruitment
- Compile necessary trial documentation for submission to ethics committees
- Negotiate and document financial agreements accordingly and co-ordinate timely payments to sites
- Facilitate and optimize recruitment of subjects to meet agreed targets and timelines
- Ensure CRF data is of high quality at all centers directly monitored and is finalized in required timelines
- Ensure all trial documentation is complete and thorough in house and at investigator site
- Ensure that all department documents and databases are kept up to date with trial information as required and local and international colleagues are updated as requested
- Ensure that data queries raised are resolved with site staff within agreed timelines
- Maintain good communication and working relationships with investigators, other site staff, overseas colleagues, external customers and other GSK staff
- Involvement in the regular review of procedures and practices involved in planning, set-up, monitoring and coordinating clinical trials.

Qualifications / Experience:

- A Bachelor Degree in Science or a related discipline.
- High level of written and verbal communication skills
- Previous CRA experience is essential
- Well-developed interpersonal skills; including the ability to competently liaise with and feedback to internal and external customers regarding project issues and company decisions
- Attention to detail and ability to work to achieve required timelines
- Project Management skills
- Ability to negotiate with and motivate others

To apply, submit cover letter and resume to Human Resources Director, Carrie Brady.

Austin T. Duggen

18 Liberty St. Brooklyn, NY 11201

646-123-1234

Atduggen12@gmail.com

Sample Entry Level Position Pharmaceutical Research Associate, Discovery Pharma

Ms. Carrie Brady
Director of Human Resources
Discovery Pharma
101 Main Street
Scienceton, NY, 12345

Dear Ms. Brady:

I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Pharmaceutical Research Associate position posted on the Discovery Pharma website. I have excellent academic qualifications for this position and a passion for contributing to the discovery of drugs to help patients with life-threatening conditions. I believe my prior experience coupled with my academic background and passion for pharmaceutical research make me an ideal candidate.

Throughout my tenure as a Pharmaceutical Science major at Northeastern University, I have maintained a 3.8 GPA while still being an active participant on campus. My strong analytical skills have enabled me to excel in my coursework and my laboratory experience in cancer research and other projects demonstrates my ability to test samples accurately and efficiently. I am extremely detail oriented and have experience with extensive data entry. As a Laboratory Assistant for a Biochemical Engineering professor, I tracked and updated the clinical trial and demographic information for over 500 patients. I am also familiar with clinical trial regulations and have experience writing and submitting that documentation. I am confident these skills would help me be a valuable contributor to the Discovery Pharma team.

Additionally, I have experience running clinical trials when I worked as a co-operative education student at GSK. I often acted as a liaison between patients, my supervisor and other constituents, answering any questions and addressing concerns regarding the trial. I am comfortable working one-on-one with patients, asking questions and having difficult conversations. At GSK, our study focused on pregnancy, specifically mothers who had miscarried; I consistently received feedback from patients complimenting me on my calm and kind demeanor in interviews. I also am fluent in Spanish and Portuguese and found these language skills to be extremely helpful when working with patients who have English as a second language. As the Pharmaceutical Research Associate for Discovery Pharma I am sure I could use my communication skills to ensure a successful clinical trial.

Discovery Pharma's commitment to cancer research resonates with me as a new scientist with a passion for pharmaceuticals and drug discovery. I would welcome the opportunity to speak to you further about the Pharmaceutical Research Associate position. Please contact me with the phone number and email listed above. Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Best,
Austin T. Duggen

Sample Graduate Level Co-op
Assistant Project Manager Co-op for Bohler Engineering, P.C.

Desired Qualifications:

- Engineering student with some experience in a site development based company or position
- A working knowledge of site development (prefer hands on experience)
- Experience in general construction coordination matters, familiarity with estimating and general construction practices

Required Qualifications:

- 4 year degree in civil engineering or construction related field
- Ability to communicate well with others both in written and oral form and strong organizational skills
- Willingness to work independently, frequent daily travel with no overnight stays expected
- Working knowledge of Word, Excel and Office Outlook Programs
- Ability to operate safely and comfortably in both an office and working construction environment

Job Function:

Serve as external construction manager for a Fortune 100 company including but not limited to:

- Management of major remodel restaurant projects under the direction of a Construction Manager
- Handle due diligence/research
- Coordination of consultants including engineers and architects
- Managing projects and the project team through the entitlement process including contract management of consultants
- Hearing attendance and testimony
- Coordination with internal personnel
- Managing the construction of the projects including bidding, award, contract management and close out/punchlists at completion of the project

Karina Candoit

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Sample Graduate Level Co-op Assistant Project Manager Co-op for Bohler Engineering, P.C.

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to apply to the Assistant Project Manager Co-op position at Bohler Engineering, P.C. posted on Husky Career Link. I am approaching the final year of my Master's program in Project Management and am eager to gain more professional experience prior to graduation. I also graduated magna cum laude from Northeastern University's Civil and Environmental Engineering program two years ago. Bohler Engineering's core values and approach to client relationship building resonates with me as a new professional entering the field. I also admire your company's commitment to giving back to the community and know you were recently awarded the 2013 New Good Neighbor Award for your work in New Jersey. I am excited at the prospect of gaining professional experience at such a reputable company as Bohler.

At my last co-op, I worked as an Assistant Civil Engineer for Mahoney Construction when they began developing a new outdoor luxury shopping center. As Assistant Civil Engineer, I worked directly with the Project Manager to research local and state building codes and arranged meetings with local architects, electricians and other contractors. I arranged over 20 meetings for my project manager and assisted him with negotiating contract terms, including timelines and budgets. In the process, I helped my manager cut estimated building costs by 6%. Additionally, I have experience working onsite and in the office. I frequently traveled with my supervisor twice a week to view building sites, but consistently completed all my assigned office work. I am confident my prior experience would be a valuable contribution to the Bohler team as the new Assistant Project Manager Co-op.

Additionally, I am an excellent communicator and enjoy working in a team environment. As the Vice President of the Civil Engineering Club at Northeastern University, I help ensure the club falls within Northeastern University Student Organization guidelines and that all the events are well attended, organized and enjoyable for members and non-members. I often act as a liaison between general members and the executive board, and communicate different requests or concerns from general members. I am deliberate in making sure every member feels heard and that their opinion is recognized. Being a manager requires you to be flexible and listen to all input, but understand when to make an executive decision that takes into account the best interest of the client and the overall business. I admire Bohler's client approach to first build trust and serve not only as a civil engineer but as a friend and consultant. I am confident my experience in a leadership role, coupled with my co-op at Mahoney Construction has prepared me to be successful as the Bohler Engineering, P.C. Assistant Project Manager Co-op.

I am eager to discuss this opportunity further with you. Please feel free to contact me at the phone number or email listed above. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Karina Candoit

Eric Carter

Philadelphia, PA

888-888-8888 | EricCarter13@gmail.com | www.linkedin.com/in/EricCarter13

Advanced Career Changer Example

Dear Recruiting Manager:

I am writing to apply for the New Business Developer position with Grater Corporation posted on the Grater Careers website. I recently completed my Master of Science in Leadership from Northeastern University and have prior experience as an entrepreneur within the science field. I believe this position is a great opportunity for me to utilize my background in Chemistry in a corporate setting and be a valuable contributor to the Grater team.

I worked in the chemistry and materials science field for several years prior to beginning my Master of Science in Leadership program. My goal was to learn how to commercialize chemistry ideas to help innovate within business. As an entrepreneur, I have experience in creating business plans for two startups and have successfully helped them to optimize their unique business models. I am comfortable making business cases based upon value and risk assessments, and seek to build my career in combining the technical and business aspects of early development projects, both internally and externally. I believe my prior experience will allow me to successfully analyze future business and determine their investment worth for Grater.

Additionally, I have strong analytical skills and enjoy synthesizing information as part of evaluating potential new markets and opportunities. Grater's emphasis on product development across industry areas and entrepreneurial culture truly resonates with me as an entrepreneur and scientist. If chosen to be part of the Grater team, I can assure you, I would work hard to achieve benchmarks for outstanding performance and bring value to Grater Corporation through utilizing my combined business and science based professional background.

My resume is attached for your review. I am available to interview at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Eric Carter