Cover Letters

Cover letters introduce you and your resume to a prospective employer, demonstrate your writing ability, and summarize why you believe you are right for a position. The letter should be one page maximum.

First Paragraph
- Convey your objective for the letter (full-time position or internship).
- Indicate how you found out about the opening.
- Describe why you are interested in that position at that organization, along with your background and qualifications.

Body
- Describe why you are a strong candidate by expanding upon your experiences, jobs, academics, skills, or personal traits.
- Provide examples of how you have demonstrated the skills necessary for the job.
- Tie together your overall skills and experiences for the particular position and organization.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the skills necessary for the job.

Closing Paragraph
- Re-emphasize your interest in the position and organization.
- Thank them for their time and consideration.

Tips
- Research the organization and position carefully before you start writing, so you can describe exactly why you are a good fit.
- Emphasize aspects of your background that best suit the organization and the position.
- Proofread carefully for grammar and spelling.
- Keep sentences short and clear with strong action verbs.
- Avoid starting sentences continuously with “I” statements.
- Do not use the same cover letter for each position. Customize each letter.

Providing salary information
Some employers will ask you to include your salary history or your salary requirements when applying for a position. They do so for a variety of reasons. Regardless, it is in your best interest to give the employer the information they seek. Provide at least a $10,000 range that meets your requirements based on research, your experience, and the location. You may also simply state that your requirements are negotiable.
**Sample Cover Letter**

**Ezra Cornell**

294 Caldwell Hall | Ithaca, NY 14850 | ec01@cornell.edu | 607.255.0001

Ms. Yolanda Martínez  
Recruiting Specialist  
Federal Reserve Board  
33 Wall St.  
New York, NY 10285

Monday January 1, 2017

Dear Ms. Martínez:

I am writing to apply for the Research Assistant position at the Federal Reserve Board. I will graduate from the Cornell Institute of Public Affairs (CIPA) with an MPA degree in Economics and Financial Policy in May 2017. I believe my strong academic background, personal initiative, and work experience will allow me to add value to the Federal Reserve Board.

My significant experience in economic analyses and policy analysis have enhanced my skills as a researcher. As a research assistant in Political Science, I have gained valuable skills in studying data and interpreting results to form relevant policy recommendations. My work on several academic projects ranged from federal education tax credits to state alcohol regulations afforded me the opportunity to experience a broad scope of policy research involving numerous political, social, and economic actors. Through that time, I learned the necessity of understanding the complexity of economic and social issues as a foundation for effective policy. Additionally, assisting in the Laboratory for Rational Decision Making reinforced the importance of teamwork in accomplishing long-term research goals.

My academic career at University of Southern California and at Cornell University have given me a strong foundation for understanding complex economic systems and conducting research in related fields. My coursework in public sector economics, microeconomics, quantitative analysis, and forecasting provide me with the practical and analytical tools necessary to contribute to the Federal Reserve Bank.

I am eager to apply skills I have gained in my education and research experience as a Research Assistant at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ezra Cornell

---

Use the professional heading from your resume on your cover letter as well.

Address your letter to the proper recruiter or hiring manager. Otherwise you may write “To Hiring Committee.”

In your opening paragraph, reference the position you are applying to, note the name of the person if it was a referral, and why you are interested in it.

Provide concrete examples of how you have demonstrated relevant skills and knowledge. Use previous professional experience, as well as academic experience.

Add your signature and type your name at the bottom of your cover letter.

Conclude by further emphasizing why you are interested and qualified in the position. Thank the employer for their time and consideration.

---

Cornell Institute for Public Affairs  
Office of Career Management, 294 Caldwell Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853  
(607) 255-8018
Sample Cover Letter Requesting a Full-Time Position

102 Tower Road #2B
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 255-0000, fr01@cornell.edu

January 11, 2017

Mr. Michael Wall
Director of Recruiting
ABC Consulting Group, LLC
Two Tower Center Boulevard
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Dear Mr. Wall:

It is a pleasure to write to you and express my interest in the Education Policy consultant position offered by ABC’s public sector practice. After speaking with Ms. Patricia Chen at the information session conducted Cornell University, I believe that I am well qualified to perform the work and meet the challenges of your firm. In May I will receive a Master of Public Administration degree from the Cornell Institute of Public Affairs, with a concentration in Public and Nonprofit Management with a focus on education policy.

My studies grew out of my education reform work and new school development in South Africa. While in South Africa, I directed an education enrichment program that included teacher training, curriculum development and direct instruction. It was a formative and consuming experience which demanded that I gain the trust of educators, politicians, parents, and students. The program established goals, communicated a strategy, and effected change by building on the stakeholders’ strengths. After two years, self-sustaining reforms were established that continue to benefit children.

While in South Africa, it became clear that effective school reform depends on systemic growth in other public sectors, including health services, employment initiatives, and infrastructure and environmental development. To learn more about these public services, sharpen my analytical skills, and learn new strategies for organizational change, I enrolled at Cornell. Appropriately, I have developed my abilities in quantitative analysis and financial and organization management, and have applied these skills through continued work with public service organizations.

I would like to apply this experience and my academic background to the challenges that face the public sector and education system and believe that consulting provides an exciting opportunity to accomplish this goal. With objectivity, strategic thinking, and an articulated vision, cooperative change can happen, and I would like to guide the direction of this change. It is my sincere hope to have the opportunity to do so with the ABC Consulting Group.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with your further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Flora Rose
Sample Cover Letter Requesting a Full-Time Position

102 Tower Road #2B
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607)255-0000, mvror1@cornell.edu

January 11, 2017

Ms. Dana Chen
Recruiting Coordinator
XYZ Consulting
2300 N Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Ms. Chen:

I am writing to apply for an Associate position with your firm. I will graduate from the Cornell Institute of Public Affairs (CIPA) with an MPA degree in Economics and Financial Policy in May 2017. I believe my strong academic background, personal initiative, and work experience will allow me to contribute to XYZ Consulting.

In my most recent position working at the NYC Department of Finance, I analyzed current inefficiencies in revenue operations and offered alternative solutions. I spent several weeks at the Department of Health, Environmental Control Board, Parking Violations, and the Department of Consumer Affairs analyzing current processes and conducting operational analysis. I presented the information gathered from the on-site visits in Joint Application Design sessions, offering solutions and suggesting alternatives aimed at improving customer service and streamlining revenue collections. Currently, the NYC Department of Finance is implementing many of my recommendations.

The success of many projects I conduct at CIPA depend on teamwork. My class team projects involve project planning, task delegation, formal presentations, and open lines of written and oral communication. Also, as part of my CIPA fellowship, I lead a two-hour calculus review for students enrolled in microeconomics.

My experience working at a boutique law firm and at an investment management firm provided me with substantial experience communicating with clients and top management. In both positions, I spent a great deal of time on the phone and in meetings with clients discussing their concerns and relaying this information to management.

I am attracted to XYZ because it is a fast growing, innovative firm. It is distinguished from other consulting firms in that it has many other subsidiaries, as well as its parent company Marsh & McLennan, to utilize for information and resources. I believe the analytical skills I acquired through my experience improving operations at the Department of Finance and the knowledge I am obtaining about financial policy in my current course work at CIPA would make me a valuable addition to your consulting team.

I look forward to hearing from you to discuss my interest and qualifications. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Martha van Rensselaer

She clearly articulates the skills that are necessary to be a successful consultant and gives examples to back up her claims.

2nd Paragraph: Analytical
3rd: Teamwork/Leadership
4th: Communication

Indicates that she has done the appropriate research on the company and knows why she wants to work there.