

## COVER LETTER GUIDE

The purpose of a cover letter is to capture the reader's attention. It should convey why you are interested in the company (especially if you are interested in a specific position) and emphasize the three or four characteristics of your candidacy that you feel make you an exceptional candidate. As with most correspondences, a lengthy cover letter is not necessarily better. Strive to write in a concise and direct manner. Remember that your goal is to capture the reader's attention and make a good first impression.

Print your cover letter on the same paper that you use to print your résumé. The letter should have one-inch top, left and right margins. A double space should separate paragraphs. The entire text should be left justified. Spelling and grammatical errors are completely unacceptable.

### **Below is an appropriate format:**

Your Street Address, Apartment #  
Your City, State Zip

Date

Contact's Name (When known)  
Contact's Title (When known)  
Contact's Department (When known)  
Company Name (When known)  
Company Street Address, Suite # (When known)  
Company City, State Zip (When known)

Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. CONTACT LAST NAME: (Dear Hiring Manager: is also appropriate)

The first paragraph tells why you are contacting the person, then either mentions your connection with that person or tells where you read about the job. Next, wow them with your researched knowledge of the company if something relevant is available. The goal: demonstrating that you are a worthy applicant and enticing them to read further.

The second and optional third paragraph tell more about yourself, particularly why you are an ideal match for the job by summarizing why you are an ideal candidate for this position. When writing two paragraphs, the first paragraph discusses your educational experiences and how they relate to the position. This is also an opportunity to clarify anything unclear or elaborate upon something relevant that appears on your résumé.

The optional third paragraph is for you to elaborate upon relevant work experience and how it relates to the new position. Split educational and relevant experiences if your second paragraph is over seven lines.

The last paragraph is your goodbye. Thank the reader for his or her time. Include that you look forward to their reply and provide them with telephone and email contact information.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (This is only necessary if you are able to sign the document)

Your name typed out (leave four spaces when including a signature, otherwise, one space)

**COVER LETTER HEADING:**

The cover letter is a business correspondence. Therefore, it should be addressed accordingly. A common mistake is putting too much information in the cover letter heading. Your name, telephone number and email address should not appear at the top of the document.

When writing your greeting, be as formal as possible. Do not use the contact's first name. Instead, use the person's courtesy title such as Ms., Mr., Dr., or military rank with their last name. Dear Hiring Manager: is also appropriate if you do not have the contact's information.

**Below is an appropriate format:**

Your Street Address, Apartment #  
Your City, State Zip

Date

Contact's Name (When known)  
Contact's Title (When known)  
Contact's Department (When known)  
Company Name (When known)  
Company Street Address, Suite # (When known)  
Company City, State Zip (When known)

Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. CONTACT LAST NAME: (Dear Hiring Manager: is also appropriate)

**Example for known contact:**

7400 Bay Road  
University Center, MI

May 10, 2019

Mr. Christopher Wagner  
Recruiting Specialist  
Pacific Financial Corporation  
1120 Stillwell Avenue, Suite 211C  
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Mr. Wagner:

**Example for unknown contact:**

Return address/date same as above

Human Resources  
Pacific Financial Corporation  
1120 Stillwell Avenue, Suite 211C  
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Hiring Manager:

## **COVER LETTER BODY PARAGRAPH:**

The goal of the cover letter body is to provide more information about yourself, particularly why you are the ideal match for the position by summarizing why you are the best candidate. This should cover your education and work experiences and how they relate to the position you are applying for. This is also an opportunity to elaborate upon something relevant that appears on your résumé.

Depending on your level of education or relevant experience, it is acceptable to write two paragraphs. The first paragraph would discuss your educational experience and how it relates to the position you are applying for. The second paragraph would discuss your relevant experiences. Consider splitting the educational and relevant experiences if your body paragraph is over seven lines.

Note that your cover letter will be read along with several others, so longer is not necessarily better. Choose your words carefully and impress the employer with your ability to write clearly.

It is best that the body paragraph be personalized for a specific organization. In the example below, this is done in the last sentence. Removal of the last sentence would be a suitable example of a generic body paragraph suitable for an employment fair or Internet job search site that allows employer viewing.

### **Example body paragraph:**

My enclosed résumé outlines my educational and professional experience. I am scheduled to graduate in May 2019 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from Saginaw Valley State University. During my internship with Brow, Kreager, and Scherzer, I learned to thrive in a fast-paced environment. An important lesson for me during that experience was that when each team member is motivated to do his or her best to support each other, great challenges become exciting instead of daunting. Our team not only met our division's output goals, but also received recognition at the corporate level for our high level of accuracy. I look forward to joining the Pacific Financial Corporation team and contributing to its success.

## **COVER LETTER CONCLUSION:**

The goal of the cover letter conclusion is to thank the reader for his or her time. Include that you look forward to their reply and would appreciate the opportunity to interview for the position. Be sure to provide them with telephone and email contact information.

The closing that you choose should also be appropriate. Here are some examples of appropriate closing for business correspondences:

Sincerely

Sincerely yours

Respectfully

With kind regards

If you are submitting a hard copy of the letter on paper, then you would leave four spaces following the closing before your name. If you do not have the ability to sign your name, do not type your name twice or use a cursive font style in lieu of a personal signature. Many employers believe this looks tacky.

Include any enclosures underneath your name.

### **Example conclusion, one enclosure:**

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would like to schedule a personal interview at your convenience to further discuss my skills and qualifications. Please contact me at 989.964.4954 or [careers@svsu.edu](mailto:careers@svsu.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Susan Student

Enclosure: Résumé

### **Example conclusion, multiple enclosures:**

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would like to schedule a personal interview at your convenience to further discuss my skills and qualifications. Please contact me at 989.964.4954 or [careers@svsu.edu](mailto:careers@svsu.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Susan's Signature if available

Susan Student

Enclosures: Résumé, unofficial transcripts, letter of recommendation

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER:**

7400 Bay Road  
University Center, MI

July 21, 2019

Mr. Christopher Wagner  
Recruiting Specialist  
Pacific Financial Corporation  
1120 Stillwell Avenue, Suite 211C  
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Mr. Wagner:

Please consider this letter as my application to the Financial Planner position with Pacific Financial Corporation. I learned of this opportunity while visiting your company's website. The opportunity to work for a multinational corporation that emphasizes community development and cultivates a team environment is very exciting.

My enclosed résumé outlines my educational and professional experience. During my internship with Sujkowski, Major, and Hellebuyck, I learned to thrive in a fast-paced environment. An important lesson for me during that experience was that when each team member is motivated to do his or her best to support each other, great challenges become exciting instead of daunting. Our team not only met our division's output goals, but also received recognition for our high level of accuracy. I look forward to joining the Pacific Financial Corporation team and contributing to its success.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. It would be an honor to schedule an interview to further discuss my skills and qualifications. Please contact me at 989.964.4954 or at [careers@svsu.edu](mailto:careers@svsu.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (This is only necessary if you are able to sign the document)

Susan Student (leave four spaces when including a signature, otherwise, one space)