CHAPTER 6

Writing an Effective Cover Letter

The purpose of a cover letter is to get an interview, and every interview takes a lot of time to set up and conduct. As a busy human resources manager at the jewelry company All That Glitters, which applicant for a social media marketing internship would you rather meet?

With my excellent communication skills, leadership ability, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal skills I am sure that I can help increase the success of the company.	*I use my Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest accounts every day, and I understand the culture of each social media site and how marketers use social media to sell products. My involvement with social media will allow me to market or blog about the innovative jewelry designs created by All That Glitters.*

IT'S NOT A HARD DECISION IS IT? Of course you would rather meet the person who wrote the cover letter quoted in the right column! Here's what one business owner says about cover letters:

> Resumes reduce people to bullet points, and most people look pretty good as bullet points. **Cover letters say it all.** They immediately tell you if someone wants this job or just any job. And cover letters make something else very clear: They tell you who can write and who can't write. … **When in doubt, always hire the better writer.**[1]

The competition for jobs is fierce. You need a convincing, attractive cover letter and resume to stand out from the crowd and get an interview. You may be able to use the same version of your resume for a variety of job applications, but your cover letter must be customized for every job. FSB has many resources to help you write your resume; this chapter explains how to write a strong cover letter that will convince the hiring committee that you are interested in *their* company and *their* job.

Your cover letter must make an excellent first impression. It must be designed to get the reader's attention and interest, be written well, and provide information that convinces the reader to review your resume and offer you an interview. An effective cover letter highlights your most important qualifications and emphasizes how those qualifications meet the employer's needs. Because most

of your competitors for the job are equally qualified, you must also come across as a likeable person the reader would want to work with.

Everyone who has a job will tell you that it took many tries to write a strong cover letter. Each stage of the writing process is critical to writing your own strong letter. The rest of this chapter explains how to plan, draft, get feedback on, and revise your cover letter. You will also learn how to format a cover letter.

What If the Ad Doesn't Mention a Cover Letter?

Submitting your resume without a cover letter could cost you consideration for a job.

Even if a job listing doesn't mention a cover letter, employers expect you to include one. Your letter demonstrates the type of professionalism and initiative they want employees to have and shows that you take assignments seriously and do them well. The letter also indicates that you are serious about the job opening.

When you apply for a job online, the application will have a text box for pasting in the text of your cover letter.

The only time you'll use your resume without a cover letter is at job fairs such as Miami's fall Career Fair and Spring ICE (Internship & Career Expo).

Plan Your Cover Letter

Four resources are essential when planning a cover letter:

- The job listing (also called the ad, the job posting, or the job description)
- Your resume
- The company's website and other industry-information websites
- Your qualifications table

Your last resource is one you may not be familiar with—it is something you create for your own use as you draft your application. Figures 6-1 and 6-2 on pages 70-71 show a job listing for an Associate Auditor and the qualifications table created from the job listing.

Use the Job Listing to Plan Your Cover Letter

When you find a job you are interested in, read the entire job listing very carefully. Pay special attention to:

- The general description of the job

- The list of job duties
- The qualifications needed to get the job (major, degree, etc.)
- The skills needed to do the job

The qualifications and skills are usually listed together in a "Qualifications" or "Requirements" section.

Create Your Qualifications Table

Create a two-column table in Word or Excel and copy the job description, list of duties, qualifications, and skills into the left column. Put each item in a separate row, breaking up sentences as needed (see Figure 6-2). Research anything you aren't sure about and write the definition or answer in the appropriate row of the left column. The rest of this section explains how to fill in the right column of the table.

Using Your Qualifications Table

Are you wondering why you should take the time to create a qualifications table? After all, it would be impossible to explain every way you are qualified to do the job—and any cover letter that tried to do this would be unreadable.

Breaking the job listing into separate items for the left column of the table will force you to read the ad carefully and analyze the requirements. Filling in the right column will help you see the strongest connections between your experiences and skills and the employer's needs. This "evidence" will help you write a confident, customized letter that shows you understand this job and can do it.

Very few job seekers get the first job they apply for. Your qualifications tables for similar jobs will show you what employers in your career field are looking for, and you can take steps to get the skills you lack. When you get an interview, your careful study of the job listing will help you impress the interviewer.

Use Your Resume to Plan Your Cover Letter

Your resume will help you make the connections between your experience and the job requirements as you record them in your qualifications table. Look at both documents and think about how your experience matches the job listing. For example, the Associate Auditor in Figure 6-1 on the next page will "[make] recommendations for improving processes, procedures, and controls." An accounting major may not have worked as an auditor, but she may have had an internship where she worked on a team project that improved a process.

Use the qualifications list and your resume to jog your memory about your responsibilities and accomplishments in your jobs, school organizations, and volunteer groups. Fill in the right column of the qualifications table with this information. Don't use exact phrases from your resume; write a short description of the relevant experience and accomplishments. Don't panic if you don't meet all of the qualifications—your letter will focus on your strongest selling points.

Figure 6-1. Sample Job Listing (Associate Auditor)

Working Title:	Associate Auditor	
Department:	Internal Audit & Consulting Services	
Job Summary:	Conducts internal audits in accordance with internal auditing policies, procedures, and accepted auditing standards.	General description of the job.
Qualifications:	This entry-level position requires a Bachelor's or Master's degree, with major in Accountancy upon hire. Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills, as well as strong analytical and technology skills. Certification as a Certified Internal Auditor is required within two years of employment as Associate Auditor.	The qualifications needed to get the job and the skills needed to do the job.
Duties:	Analyzes records, systems and processes while performing financial, operational, and compliance audits. May also perform work to accomplish investigative and/or advisory services. Evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls. Makes recommendations for improving processes, procedures, and controls. Supports the audit process through planning audit activities, performing the audit plan, preparing working paper documents, reporting findings, and making recommendations for improvement. Performs other duties, as required. Reports to the Director of Internal Audit and Consulting Services.	The duties the job involves (what the Associate Auditor "does" 40 hours a week).
Special Instructions to Applicants:	Please include your resume, cover letter, contact information for three references, and a copy of your college transcript.	The required application materials

Create a 2-column table and copy the job description, list of duties, qualifications, and skills into the left column. Break up sentences so each requirement is listed separately. Use the right column to describe how you meet the requirements. Don't expect to fill in every row.

Figure 6-2. Blank Qualifications Table (created from ad in Figure 6-1)

Associate Auditor in Internal Audit & Consulting Services department	
Conducts internal audits in accordance with internal auditing policies, procedures, and accepted auditing standards.	
This entry-level position requires a Bachelor's or Master's degree, with major in Accountancy upon hire.	
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	
strong analytical skills	
strong technology skills	
Certification as a Certified Internal Auditor is required within two years of employment as Associate Auditor.	
Analyzes records, systems and processes	
while performing financial, operational, and compliance audits	
May also perform work to accomplish investigative and/or advisory services.	
Evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls.	
Makes recommendations for improving processes, procedures, and controls.	
Supports the audit process	
through planning audit activities,	
performing the audit plan,	
preparing working paper documents,	
reporting findings,	
and making recommendations for improvement.	
Perform other duties, as required.	
Reports to the Director of Internal Audit and Consulting Services.	

Think About Class Projects

This section has talked about using your resume to plan your cover letter, but you should also think about class projects that aren't listed in your resume. If you've worked in hourly positions that aren't in your career field, a multifaceted class project may be a better way to showcase your analytical, organizational, technology, and presentation skills. Here's how a BUS 102 student describes a class project and explains how his prospective employer will benefit from knowledge he gained:

> I took the course International Studies in my first semester at Miami. I was the team leader for a project to promote a new plan for sustainable energy in Southeast Asia, and our team's plan to install solar bottle lamps for fishing villages won the first prize. Through the course, I gained a deep understanding about Asians, their economies and, more importantly, their cultural values, and I would like to contribute my knowledge and experience to Highlights for Children's international marketing group.

Describe Your Transferable Skills

The "excellent written and verbal communication skills" and "strong analytical and technology skills" the Associate Auditor needs are transferable skills that are needed in every job and that transfer into any workplace. Most ads have a longer list of transferable skills than the ad in Figure 6-1. The list might include teamwork and collaboration, adaptability and flexibility, leadership ability or potential, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, ability to follow directions, ability to prioritize and multitask, and math skills.

You won't persuade the reader that you possess the skills listed in the ad by simply saying you do. It is much more convincing to write about a situation where you demonstrated one or two of the skills. Identify your strongest transferable skills and complete the qualifications table by writing about an impressive situation that shows you possess the skills.

Your completed qualifications table will contain much more evidence than you can include in your letter, but creating the table will ensure that you understand the job and can make the strongest case for yourself. When you draft your cover letter, you will decide which experiences to write about.

Use the Company's Website to Plan Your Cover Letter

You won't be selected for an interview unless the hiring committee believes that you are genuinely interested in their company and their job opening. Using language from the job listing is one way to do this; another is to say something complimentary about the company in the opening paragraph. Explore the

company's website: history, mission statement, press releases, and so on. Try to "talk their language" by using some of the key words and concepts the company uses to describe itself. One of your goals is to get your audience to see you as a natural fit with the culture of the company.

Conducting Further Research

Sometimes you may see a job listing that does not provide extensive details about the expected skills and duties. The Bureau of Labor Statistics ***Occupational Outlook Handbook*** (www.bls.gov/ooh) is an excellent resource to help you learn more about various occupations. This site includes a searchable database and an alphabetical list of hundreds of professional positions. For each occupation, OOH provides the following detailed information:

- What professionals in the occupation do
- Work environment
- How to become a professional (education, certifications and licenses, advancement, and the most important skills needed)
- Median pay
- Job outlook for 2012-2022
- Similar occupations
- Link to O*Net (a resource that lists characteristics of professionals in the occupation)

O*Net is especially useful if you need more information about the skills and knowledge you need for a position. The site provides survey-based feedback from employers that details the core and supplemental tasks, tools and technology, knowledge, skills, education, interests, work styles, etc. that professionals in the occupation must possess.

Draft Your Cover Letter

A cover letter is a structured document with established conventions for the appearance and content. That's because hiring committees read a lot of cover letters for every position, and they need to be able to compare the job applicants quickly. When you write a cover letter, you will want to follow these conventions while also providing the specific and unique details that will make you stand out as a candidate.

The sections below explain how to write the opening paragraph, the body of the letter (the one to three paragraphs that make up your "sales pitch"), and the closing paragraph.

What Counts in a Cover Letter?

Your cover letter will be judged in four key areas.

- The **appearance** of your letter needs to show that you are a professional who knows how things are done in the business world.
- The **tone** of your letter, especially in the opening and closing paragraphs, needs to show that you are a likeable person who can make a positive contribution to the organization.
- The **content** of your letter—your sales pitch—needs to convince readers that you understand the job and are qualified to do it.
- Your **writing** needs to demonstrate that you have strong communication, organization, and thinking skills.

The Opening Paragraph

As the saying goes, you only get one chance to make a first impression. To make sure it's a great first impression, show genuine interest in the company; project a competent, confident image; and begin to answer the question every employer has: "How will this person help us, and why should we hire *this* person?" To accomplish all of these things:

- Write as if you were talking to the reader—strike the right balance between sounding conversational and professional
- Use the name of the company and the exact job title
- Tell the reader where you found the job listing
- Express enthusiasm for the company and/or position (but don't use exclamation points)
- When you apply for internships and your first job, use the words "Miami University" and state your major(s)
- Preview your qualifications
- Focus on what you will contribute—not what you will gain

Here are four excellent opening paragraphs for internship cover letters:

> I am writing to express my interest in J.M. Smucker's Accounting internship. I learned about this position at Miami University's career fair earlier this month, where I was impressed by the recruitment team's obvious pride and enthusiasm. Madeleine Simmons looked at my enclosed resume and encouraged me to apply for this plant-based internship. I have taken 12 hours of accounting classes and possess the integrity and attention to detail the position requires.

I am a sophomore finance major in Miami University's Farmer School of Business, and I would like to be considered for the Financial Analyst internship listed on Miami's CAREERlink site. I admire T-Mobile as a forward-thinking company, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute my strong background in financial statements, GAAP, and applied business statistics to the success of your Financial Planning & Analysis group.

I was excited to read about Nestle USA's Supply Chain & Procurement Summer Internship at your website. I am a sophomore majoring in supply chain and operations management at Miami University, and I have previous experience working in logistics. I admire your commitment to provide interns with meaningful challenges in an inclusive work environment and would be honored to use my strong analytical and problem-solving skills in your Corporate Supply Chain, Distribution, or Procurement group.

Please accept my application for WalkAbout's Digital Marketing Internship, posted on InternMatch.com. I am majoring in marketing and interactive media studies at Miami University, and I am looking forward to returning to my hometown of Denver this summer. I thrive in a high-energy work environment and am excited by the possibility of contributing my communication and social media skills to your innovative Digital Marketing Team. *(Mention your hometown if you live near the internship; many companies give preference to applicants who don't need summer housing.)*

Lead with What They Need—Not with What You Will Gain

The hiring committee already knows you want the job. Expressing your enthusiasm in terms of what you will gain, rather than what you will contribute, is a fatal mistake in an opening paragraph. These five writers are just as enthusiastic about the internships as the writers above, but they come across as opportunistic—not a good first impression.

- ✖ It would be a privilege to learn about the field of finance through an internship at Morgan Stanley, which is widely regarded as one of the most respected financial institutions in the world.
- ✖ As a marketing major at Miami University's Farmer School of Business, I am thoroughly interested in this internship and the opportunity to increase my knowledge of using social media in marketing.
- ✖ The thought of being able to pursue an internship position in the Management or Administration department is something very special to me.
- ✖ I am writing to let you know that I am looking for a summer internship opportunity with Sherwin-Williams.

✖ I am a huge hockey fan and becoming part of the Columbus Blue Jackets as a Sales and Marketing Intern would be an absolute thrill for me.

In various ways, each of these openings is more about what the applicant will gain rather than what the applicant can contribute. The last example raises another interesting question: How relevant is your personal experience as a consumer of a product or service? The company is considering you as a potential employee, not as a valued customer; however, some companies actively seek employees who are familiar with and are even users of their brand. What the hockey fan could have written is:

✓ I am passionate and knowledgeable about hockey—both as a fan and as a player. As a Sales and Marketing Intern for the Columbus Blue Jackets, I would put my knowledge and passion to use to help grow the Blue Jackets' fan base.

The Body of the Letter

The body of the letter consists of one to three paragraphs that explain why, and how, you are qualified for the position. In a sense you are making a sales pitch about yourself. You need to show that you:

- Have experience doing many of the duties listed in the ad
- Possess many of the skills listed in the ad
- Are confident about your qualifications, without sounding arrogant
- Have a positive attitude and would be great to work with
- Can write and communicate well

There is no single formula for a successful sales pitch. The details in your cover letter will vary from someone else's depending on your experiences, your particular skill sets, and your personality. Write to your strengths.

Follow these guidelines as you write the body of the letter:

- **Don't simply repeat your resume** by writing a litany of *I did this* and *I did that.*
- **Focus on one or two key qualifications.** Write about the one or two experiences or projects that show you have the qualifications the employer is looking for.
- **Use *their* language to describe *your* qualifications.** This shows that you (1) studied the job listing and (2) understand what the job entails. But don't overdo it. A letter that parrots the job listing too much may send the message that you don't understand the job well enough to put yourself in the picture. In addition, simply using all of their language may mask the unique strengths and experiences you bring.

- **Write concise, straightforward sentences.** Avoid using stilted language and cumbersome phrases that obstruct your message. You want to sound like a real person talking with another real person. You should not be too casual, but you also don't want to be too formal. Imagine you are sitting in an interview with the person reading your letter and choose phrasing that is direct and immediate.

Remember, most of the applicants for a job are equally qualified, and every applicant can use the words in the ad to write a "laundry list" of their experience and skills. The hiring committee wants to see some of this information, but what they are most looking for is persuasive evidence that an applicant has the experience and skills the job requires.

In just 35 words, the example below presents convincing evidence of three areas of experience (marketing, promotion, fundraising) and four skills (leadership, teamwork, writing, time management) that will interest the hiring committee:

> In the Marketing Club, I led a four-person committee that promoted six fundraising events throughout the year. My role required substantial collaboration with team members to write and distribute materials to media outlets on schedule.

> New graduates and students who are able to talk about and highlight past experiences from real-world class projects or career-related volunteer opportunities are the type of job candidates who will rise to the top of employers' lists.[2]

The Closing Paragraph

Here are three excellent closing paragraphs:

> I hope you agree that I have the experience and skills needed to be an outstanding Marketing Intern. Marketing and advertising are areas I intend to pursue as a career, so I would be excited to learn more about this opportunity. I can be reached at [email address] or [phone number]. Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to hearing from you.

I would welcome the opportunity to learn more about Rosetta's Talent Acquisitions Internship. If you have any questions about my qualifications, please contact me at [phone number] or [email address]. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you for considering me for this challenging, exciting opportunity. It would truly be an honor to work as a Macy's Marketing Intern this summer. Should you need more information, please contact me at [email address]. I look forward to hearing from you.

As you can see, there is no one formula for a strong closing paragraph. The most important element is a confident, positive tone. Follow these general guidelines:

- Restate your enthusiasm for the job.
- Briefly restate your qualifications, or say that you believe you are qualified.
- Tell the reader that you would welcome getting more information about the job.
- Encourage the reader to contact you for more information, and repeat your contact information. If space is tight, you can save room by putting your contact information under your name instead; see page 82.
- Thank the reader. Close with a sentence like this: "Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to hearing from you."

Be careful not to sound unprofessional or pushy in your closing. Do not include a sentence like this one:

✖ I plan to be in San Francisco March 10-18, and I will call you next week to set up an appointment to discuss this opportunity in more detail.

Here's a much better choice:

✓ Thank you for considering my application. If you would like to discuss my application further, I can be reached at the contact information above. I will also be in San Francisco from March 10-18 and could, of course, arrange a trip at another time as well.

After reading your letter, the reader should think: This person understands the job and has the skills we need. We will have something concrete and interesting to talk about in the interview.

Get Feedback on Your Cover Letter

As you learned in Chapter 4, feedback is the only way to have an actual reader respond to your writing and tell you if the audience's needs are a being met. For cover letters, get as many people as possible to read your letter and give you feedback on the organization, content, and tone. Your classmates are excellent resources—they know you and can help you figure out if your letter represents you as both a professional and as a person who would be great to work with.

Other reviewers you might seek include an instructor in your career field, a writing instructor, a writing consultant at the Howe Writing Initiative, and consultants and career counselors at FSB and Miami Career Services (as FSB majors you can use both services). When seeking feedback, be sure to share with your reviewer a copy of the ad, your resume, and your qualifications table.

> Any claim you make about your strong communication skills *must* be backed up by your well-written cover letter.

Revise Your Cover Letter

First, evaluate the feedback and make the changes you agree with. Next, use a checklist, such as the BUS 102 cover letter evaluation rubric, to check the format, tone, and content of the letter one more time.

Read your letter out loud to hear the tone (this is also a good way to find mistakes). Then, proofread the letter (and your resume). Always ask someone else to proofread the letter too. Proofreading is essential because **your cover letter must be error-free.**

Once you have a "solid" cover letter, you may customize it when you apply for similar jobs, rather than write a new letter from scratch. Double-check the factual information about the job you are applying for: the date, your reader's name and title (if you have them), the company's name and address, the job title, the name of the department, and so on.

Several people will read your letter before you are selected for an interview. Any mistakes in your letter, no matter how small, will be noticed. A careless mistake in this critical document sends the message that you do not pay attention to detail and that you may be careless with the employer's information too.

Format Your Cover Letter

The top of the letter displays your name and contact information, formatted as an attractive letterhead. (Do not make the mistake of thinking you don't need a traditional, attractive cover letter when you apply for jobs online. The online sites will prompt you to attach your formatted cover letter and resume.)

Look at these sample letterheads.

Michael Ward

(555) 555-5555 **107 Somerset Road**
student@miamioh.edu **Cleveland Heights, OH 44118**

CLAIRE SILMAN

555-555-5555 ▪ 828 Edgewood Drive
student@MiamiOH.edu ▪ Charleston, WV 25302

XILONG LIU

1836 Kingfisher Drive ▪ Oxford, OH 45246
555.555.5555 ▪ student@miamioh.edu ▪ linkedin.com/in/xilongliu

Letterhead You will see some letterhead samples that use the writer's campus and home addresses. You may choose to use both addresses, but you also may choose to use just one address, selecting the one which one you think might be most advantageous for the position. For example, if your home address is in Chicago and you are applying for a position in Chicago, you may want to use your home address. If you are an international student, use your campus address.

Use your Miami email address. If you have an up-to-date LinkedIn profile, include the address in the letterhead. Since most of the people who read your letter will read it online, your email address and LinkedIn address should be active links.

Use one phone number in your letterhead. Your cell phone number is the best choice, since only you will answer the phone. (When you are applying for jobs, make sure that callers hear a professional message from your voice mail.)

Your cover letter and resume should match. Use the same letterhead in both documents.

Fonts Your letterhead should not overpower the text of the letter. The largest element, your name, should not be too large—a common recommendation is to not to go higher than 16-pt. type, but if you are creating a particular design effect, you may go higher. Use a standard professional font (typeface) for the text, such as Cambria, Calibri, Times New Roman, Arial, or Helvetica. Many writers choose one font for the letterhead and section titles in the resume (usually a sans serif one such as Arial, Gill Sans, Helvetica, or Verdana) and a different font for the text of the resume and letter (usually a serif font such as Cambria or Times New Roman).

As a student or new college graduate, your cover letter should not be longer than one page. Use 11- or 12-pt., single-spaced text. (The text you are reading now is 11-pt. Cambria.) If you're having trouble saying everything in one page, you can reduce the point size to 10.5 pt. If you still can't fit everything on one page, ask someone to help you edit the letter.

Margins Start with a 1-inch margin everywhere. If space is tight, reduce this to .8-inch, but don't go below that. If your letter is on the short side, increase the top margin so the letter looks balanced on the page. (Word's default left and right margins are 1.25-inch; change them to 1-inch margins for all your FSB work and business documents.)

Block Format *Block format* is the most common business letter format. Starting with the date, begin every element of the letter at the left margin (including the paragraphs, which are not indented). The samples in this chapter are in block format.

Line Spacing Single-space the inside address and paragraphs. (Single-spacing isn't the default in Word; use Paragraph/Line Spacing to set single-spacing.) Insert a blank line after every element (i.e., after the date, after the last line of the inside address, after the greeting, after each paragraph). If space is tight, add 8 to 10 points after each element instead of using a hard return to separate them visually.

Date The first item under the letterhead is the date in this format: June 12, 2014. Do not use an ordinal number: 1st, 10th, etc.

Campus Resources for Your Career Search

Miami and FSB have excellent services to help with your cover letter and resume.

In FSB:

- FSB Career Services (FSB 1022)
- Howe Writing Initiative (FSB 3064)

Elsewhere on campus:

- Career Services (Hoyt Hall)
- Howe Writing Center (King Library)

Inside Address Leave a blank line under the date and type the inside address: on separate lines, type the name of the person you're writing to (if you know it); the person's title (if you know it); the company's name; street address; and city, state, and ZIP code. You may have to look up the company's street address and ZIP code—don't omit these items, even if they aren't listed in the ad. Show respect by using the company's full name, which you may also have to look up. For example, the full name of the grocery chain Kroger is The Kroger Company.

Greeting Very few job listings include the hiring manager's name. If you don't have the name of someone to write to, use one of these greetings:

Dear Hiring Manager:
Dear Personnel Manager:
Dear Human Resources Manager:

Closing Close your letter with "Sincerely," "Respectfully," or "Best regards." If you can, get a .tif or .jpg of your signature. Under your signature, type your name. If you don't have your actual signature, type your name in the same font as the rest of the letter.

Most of the people who read your letter will read it online, and your letterhead will scroll off the screen. Repeat your contact information for your preferred method of communication in the closing paragraph or, if space is tight, under your name, as shown here:

Sincerely,
Grant Hogan-Sanders
555-555-5555 student@miamioh.edu linkedin.com/in/granthogansanders

When you are sure your letter is error-free, save it as a PDF file to preserve the formatting. If a job listing does not specify a file type, upload your cover letter and resume as PDF files.

> If you apply for several jobs without getting an interview, reach out to your network (e.g., faculty, career services, peers, contacts in the field) for advice. You may not be applying for the right jobs—or you may need to write a better cover letter.

Checklist for Writing a Cover Letter

Use this checklist in the planning, drafting, peer responding, and editing stages to help you (and your peers) determine if your cover letter is appropriate for the audience, purpose and context.

My cover letter:

- ❒ Demonstrates confidence and enthusiasm
- ❒ Shows interest in the company or organization and the specific job opening
- ❒ Convinces the reader that my qualifications meet the company's needs
- ❒ Uses a conversational, yet professional, tone, with concise, easy-to-read sentences
- ❒ Has an attractive letterhead
- ❒ Follows the conventional structure and format of a cover letter
- ❒ Is free of errors

BUS 102 Student Samples

BUS 102 students wrote the samples on the next pages. Pay attention to how the writers approach the rhetorical situation and how they use the rhetorical appeals to produce well-written cover letters. These are not hard-and-fast templates, so please do not rely too heavily on these when you draft your own cover letters.

[1] Fried, Jason. "Never Read Another Resume." Inc., 1 June 2010. Web. 11 June 2014.

[2] Driscoll, Emily. "What Employers Want from College Grads." *Fox Business.* 4 June 2012. Web. 19 June 2014.

STUDENT SAMPLE 1 Cover Letter (Grace Tan)

GRACE TAN
203 Symmes Hall ▪ Oxford, OH 45056
555-555-5555 ▪ student@miamioh.edu

March 17, 2014

Ms. _____
University Relations Specialist
Fifth Third Bank
580 Walnut Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Ms. _____:

I am interested in the Finance and Accounting Leadership Program Internship position posted at Miami University's CAREERlink website. As an accounting major, I admire Fifth Third Bank's core values of integrity, teamwork and collaboration, respect and inclusion, and accountability. Last fall, I visited the booth at the Farmer School of Business's Career Fair and have since then hoped to be able to contribute to Fifth Third Bank's highly competitive yet collaborative environment.

During the summer of my freshman year, I interned as an Administration Officer at a financial education center in a university in Singapore. I actively collaborated with my colleagues and coordinated financial education workshops for master's students. Through this experience I learned to better articulate myself, and I also improved my teamwork skills. Additionally, I created and delivered large-scale presentations to groups of 25 or more students to raise awareness and spread knowledge of Chinese culture and history. I demonstrated my strong verbal communication skills and also my skills as a leader in organizing events for students to interact with one another. I believe that I possess the skills this internship requires.

I would like to further explore the Finance and Accounting Leadership Program internship with you. Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Grace Tan
[email address] [phone number]

STUDENT SAMPLE 2 Cover Letter (Spencer Dragul)

Spencer Dragul

(555) 555-5555
student@miamioh.edu

1650 Hedgerow Lane
Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113

March 11, 2014

T-Mobile
12920 SE 38th Street
Bellevue, WA 98006

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am a sophomore finance major in Miami University's Farmer School of Business, and I would like to be considered for the Financial Analyst internship listed on Miami's CAREERlink site. I admire T-Mobile as a forward-thinking company, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute my strong background in financial statements, GAAP, and applied business statistics to the success of your Financial Planning & Analysis group.

As described in my resume, I work part time with GDA Real Estate LLC, where I analyze and review different investment options. Working with the head of the acquisitions team and the president of the company directly, I decide where money should be invested to make the company as profitable as possible. Once I determine the strongest financial option, I present the information to the rest of the company in a clear and understandable manner. GDA relies on me to inform them of the important financial information that determines whether or not they can make money when buying a property.

At Miami University, I successfully applied my knowledge of financial statements to complete a project for my financial accounting class. I reviewed the financial statements of multiple companies and then evaluated which ones were healthy relative to the market. My proficiency in Microsoft Excel enabled me to complete this project in an efficient, successful, and timely manner.

I would like to be considered for the Financial Analyst internship, and I am excited at the opportunity to positively impact T-Mobile. Thank you for your time and consideration, and if you need to contact me for further information, you can do so at [phone number] or [email].

Best Regards,
Spencer Dragul

STUDENT SAMPLE 2 Cover Letter (Emmy Silverman)

EMMY SILVERMAN
student@miamioh.edu | 555.555.5555 | 12 Lee Ct. | Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

March 4, 2014

Rustic Pathways
15345 Chardon Windsor Road
Huntsburg, OH 44046

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to apply for the Marketing Internship for Rustic Pathways, which was emailed to me because I am a Rustic Pathways alum. As a first-year marketing major at Miami University with excellent writing and communication skills, I believe that I qualify to be considered for this position.

In the summer of 2012 I traveled to India with Rustic Pathways and went on both the Service in the Clouds and the Northern India Cultural Experience trips. The cultural bridges I built with the people I lived with have given me a greater global understanding and sense of cooperation. I have kept up the connections I made with the people I met and worked beside on my travels. My experiences in India helped me develop leadership and communication skills that I have used to connect with people all over the world.

In high school I was an editor for the school newspaper. I created story ideas and communicated with the writers to help them develop each story to its full potential. This role taught me to be an organized, proactive leader and communicator. I received the "Unsung Hero" award from the faculty adviser for my work ethic, creativity, and positive attitude on the board of editors.

For the past four summers I have worked as a counselor at a day camp. I led a group of 13 children, ages three to 15, in activities such as soccer, art, and lunch. This experience has taught me problem-solving skills, as I always have to be on my toes to solve the many problems that arise during the camp day. I have also begun working on promoting the camp through social media and helping out at camp fairs.

I hope you agree that I have the experience and skills needed to be an outstanding Marketing Intern. Marketing and advertising are areas I intend to pursue as a career, so I would be excited to learn more about this opportunity. I can be reached at [email address] or [phone number]. Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Emmy Silverman