



Career and Professional
Development Center
STANISLAUS STATE

Cover Letters

CONTENTS	Page
➤ Purpose	1
➤ Guidelines	2
➤ Tips	3
➤ Checklist	4
➤ Example	5

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

(209) 667-3661 | www.csustan.edu/career | career@csustan.edu | [@stanstatecareer](https://twitter.com/stanstatecareer)

Purpose

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself and express and demonstrate interest in the position for which you are applying. Your letter is an opportunity to sell yourself, expand on your abilities and provide examples of why you are the best candidate for the position. A well written letter should draw interest to your résumé.

Employers judge you on your ability to communicate and your ability to manage the presentation of information. A cover letter demonstrates both. Effective cover letters focus on what you can offer, not on what you want from the employer. To write an employer-centered cover letter, highlight one or two of your accomplishments or abilities *relevant* to the requirements stated in the position description.

Do not simply repeat what is in your résumé. Since the résumé and cover letter complement each other, the best way to distinguish yourself in a cover letter is to communicate your interest in the position as well as your understanding of the company and the department. Take time to analyze the position description and each employer so you can personalize each letter. If you were doing the hiring for this particular position, what attributes would the ideal candidate possess? In addition to the skills and knowledge mentioned in the job description, you would want the ideal candidate to be ambitious and eager to contribute his or her energy and skills to the success of your organization. Find a genuine way to convey this in your letter.

When emailing a Cover Letter

Personalize your message by highlighting a key point from the meeting, or mentioning the situation where you obtained the email address or the name of the person who made the referral. This helps the recipient remember you and demonstrates your ability to “follow-up.”

Type the body of your letter into the email but remember that email cover letters should be more concise than letters you mail. Create a descriptive subject line that includes the job title and any appropriate keywords to catch the employer’s interest (Counseling Aid – Bilingual Spanish). You can cut and paste the text of your résumé into the email or attach a word or pdf version unless an employer specifies “no attachments.” Always follow the employer’s instructions.

Guidelines

Your Name *(Use the header from your resume)*

Your Street Address

Your Phone • Your Email *(Enter 2 times)*

Today's Date *(Enter 2 times)*

Mr. /Ms. Contact Person's Name

Job Title

Company Name

Street Address

City, State Zip Code *(Enter 2 times)*

Dear Mr. / Ms. Contact's Last Name: *(Enter 2 times)*

Paragraph 1 - State the position you are applying for and how you heard about the opening. Explain why your background makes you the best candidate for the position you are applying for. Keep the first paragraph short and hard-hitting. *(Enter 2 times)*

Paragraph 2 - Detail what you could do to contribute to this company/organization. Show how your qualifications will benefit the employer. Point out your unique background and how your experiences make you a qualified candidate for the position. Remember to keep this letter short; few, if any, employers will read a cover letter that exceeds one page. *(Enter 2 times)*

Paragraph 3 - Describe your interest in the organization. Subtly emphasize your knowledge about the employer (from the results of your research) and your familiarity with the industry as a whole. You should present yourself as eager to work for this employer. *(Enter 2 times)*

Paragraph 4 - In the closing paragraph, you should specifically request an interview. Indicate that you will follow up with a telephone call to discuss "next steps" in the hiring process. Alternatively, you may include your telephone number and the hours you can be reached, so the recruiter may contact you to schedule an interview. Thank them for their time and consideration. *(Enter 2 times)*

Sincerely, *(Enter 4 times)*

Your Signature *(Leave this area blank for your actual signature)*

Your First and Last Name (typed) *(Enter 2 times)*

Enclosure: Resume [for multiple enclosures – Enclosures (3)]

Cover Letter Tips

Preparation

- ✓ Research the organization before you write your cover letter by visiting their website, reviewing annual reports, or contacting people in the organization
- ✓ Address your cover letter specifically to the person by name and title who will be interviewing you
 - Do not address the letter to "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam"
 - Call the employer's primary telephone number to ask for this information
 - If you are answering a blind newspaper advertisement - one in which the employer is not specified - you can address your letter "Dear Hiring Manager"

Introduction

- ✓ Briefly introduce yourself and your interest in the organization (but don't include your own name)
- ✓ If you are aware of a specific opening, refer to it now
- ✓ Mention any referral or cite other research that prompted you to write (article, etc.)

Body

- ✓ Provide a selection of highlights from your background most relevant to the position to communicate you are the best "fit"
- ✓ Focus on your skills and accomplishments and how they could contribute to the employer
- ✓ Demonstrate your passion and that you're knowledgeable about the organization or career field
- ✓ Keep your letter to three or four paragraphs and no longer than one page

Closing

- ✓ Provide your estimation of the next step in the process with a time frame ("I will contact you to follow-up on this letter in the next week" or "I look forward to hearing from you in the next few weeks")
- ✓ Be assertive
 - "I will call you next week to discuss the next steps in the hiring process." If you say you will call next week, be sure to call!
 - Always close your cover letter with a request for an *interview* (not a request to be hired).
- ✓ Thank the prospective employer for their time and consideration
- ✓ Refer to any enclosures (resume, letters of recommendation or list of references)

General

- ✓ Proofread your letter.
- ✓ Use a clear font large enough to allow easy reading. Avoid script and other exotic typefaces. Ideally, utilize the same font as you use in your resume.
- ✓ Avoid bold assertions of worth with egocentric statements - document proof of your capabilities (awards, recognition, etc.)
- ✓ Avoid using the word "although"
- ✓ Use simple, direct, and professional language
- ✓ Avoid too many adjectives or convoluted syntax
- ✓ Use business format (1-inch margins, left margin alignment, no indents, and correct spacing)
- ✓ Never send out a resume without a cover letter - unless the employer clearly requests a resume ONLY.
- ✓ Do not discuss salary or negotiations before you get an offer.
- ✓ Be positive, enthusiastic, and sincere.

Checklist

- ✓ Did you proofread your letter?
- ✓ Is the letter addressed to a specific person with name, job title, organization, and address spelled correctly?
- ✓ Is your contact information correct?
- ✓ Does the letter show passion for the work?
- ✓ Does the letter highlight skills and accomplishments and go beyond a mere statement of what is already on the resume?
- ✓ Does the letter clearly demonstrate that I have a clear idea of the job objective?
- ✓ Is my closing paragraph proactive?
- ✓ Is the letter focused on the needs of the employer, not your needs?
- ✓ Is the letter limited to one page per degree maximum?
- ✓ Is the letter printed on 8 ½" by 11" resume quality paper? Use a matching envelope if mailing out.
- ✓ Did you sign the letter?
- ✓ Did you keep a copy for your records?

Example

Terry Richards

1234 Johnson Drive • Waterford, CA 95386
(209) 222-1111 • trichards3@email.edu

March 3, 2016

Ernest Arnold
Marketing Coordinator
A & E Marketing
1391 Standard Dr.
Modesto, CA 95350

Dear Mr. Arnold,

It was great meeting you during the *Meet the Firms* event hosted by the College of Business at Stanislaus State on September 13. I am applying for the internship position at A & E Marketing. I am a junior majoring in Marketing and am very excited about this opportunity to contribute my social media skills and data analysis experience and knowledge gained from a marketing class project.

For a Marketing Research course, I led a four member team to analyze and interpret the statistical data provided by Palmer Hotels prior to creating a proposal for a campaign to market the launch of the chain's new student hotels. In addition, I contributed two individual research projects including a competitor analysis and a customer satisfaction assessment. During the presentation of our findings, one of the executives noted that the competitor analysis was impressive and the results were worthy of consideration for the actual campaign.

As Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations for Stan State's student chapter of the American Marketing Association, I coordinated a membership campaign in which I wrote a weekly blog and maintained the social media pages, including Facebook and Twitter. I coordinated two networking events, inviting two industry professionals, one a Stan State alum, as keynote speakers, along with marketing faculty to highlight benefits of AMA membership. During the academic year, membership increased by 35% and our social media audience increased by 40%.

I believe the combination of my studies in marketing and my strong track record of using what I am learning in my extracurricular activities with the student chapter of the AMA make me an excellent candidate for the internship position. Thank you for considering my application. I am eager to discuss my qualifications with you in the near future. I can be reached at (209) 222-1111 or by email at trichards3@email.edu.

Best regards,

Terry Richards (use your actual signature, do not substitute with a fancy font or leave blank)

Terry Richards

Enclosure