



Cover Letter Examples

For Various Career Fields

From the broadest sense, cover letters serve two purposes:

Express your **interest** in the organization and position to which you are applying

Expand upon your **skills and experiences** highlighted on your resume

With that said, there can often be **nuances** in how to approach constructing a cover letter for various industries. In addition, questions are often raised about which **what types of experiences** to include in a cover letter. While some may choose to highlight **work experience**, others will focus on their **personal projects**, or previous **research, academic, or extracurricular** experiences.

The goal of this packet is to break down the **structure of a cover letter**, and show you examples of how to **incorporate different experiences** into your letters for various career fields.

The following pages consist of cover letters written by students interested in pursuing jobs in:

- Chemical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Computer Science
- Civil Engineering
- Finance
- Consulting
- Research

Crafting an Effective Cover Letter

Paragraph 1: Introduce Yourself

- **Identify the position** you are applying for, and how you learned of it.
- Explain why you are **interested** in applying for this role.
- You may want to include your year (e.g. junior), college, and major.
- Be sure to include something **specific** about the company (it's important to tailor your letter; **don't use generic language** that could apply to any company in that industry).
- Answer the questions: Why is this position right for me? Why do I want to work for this specific organization?

Paragraphs 2 & 3: Sell Yourself

- Indicate that you **understand the position requirements** and illustrate that you possess the skills required to add value in the role.
- **Highlight character traits** and/or specific experiences that prove you are a good fit for the organization and the role.
- **Do not** simply repeat what is on your resume.
- **DO** elaborate on skills and stories – be specific!!
- Look at the **required skills section** of the job posting for ideas of what to highlight.
- Answer the question: Why am I right for this position?

Paragraph 4: Closing

- Keep this paragraph **short and sweet**.
- Summarize your qualifications for the position and **reiterate why you** are a good fit.
- Provide **contact information** (cellphone and email).
- Say **thank you!**
- Answer the questions: Does the recruiter know how to contact me, and the type of position I am seeking?

A Few Tips & Tricks

- If you don't have the name of a contact, address the letter to "Dear Hiring Manager," or "Dear Human Resources Director." Don't address the letter to "To whom it may concern," or "Dear Sir/Madam"
- Limit the letter to 3-4 paragraphs, and 1 page.
- Expand on your resume; do not repeat it verbatim.
- Don not copy exact words/phrases from sample cover letters.
- Confirm that you've included the correct company name and contact information.
- Be enthusiastic. Show off your personality!

Look at the examples below to better understand how to apply this outline.

Example 1

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING HIGHLIGHTING WORK/RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & A PERSONAL CONNECTION

I am writing to express my interest in the Undergraduate Chemical Engineering Intern position for Summer 20xx at Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. I am currently a junior in the College of Engineering at Cornell University, majoring in Chemical Engineering with a minor in Business. I have a strong interest in process engineering, and would be excited to contribute to Air Product's sustainability efforts and innovative, customer-first approach to developing gas products.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to experience both a research-based work environment, and operations of a carbon capture pilot plant. For seven weeks, I interned at the Argonne National Laboratory, spearheading a research project involving IrO₂ nanostructure surfaces and electrocatalysis for hydrogen production applications. I also studied abroad at Imperial College London for five weeks, where I gained hands-on experience working on their carbon capture pilot plant. This dichotomy of experiences made me realize that my true passion lies in chemical engineering processes and applications.

Upon speaking with several Air Products representatives at my university's career fair, I was intrigued to learn more about how your employees impact and contribute to your company's mission. From my interview with Ms. Rita Ramos, I was inspired by her experiences as a Process Engineer and a Project Manager. She spoke highly of the company and how she could not be as successful as she is now as a Project Manager without the hands-on experiences she gained from being a Process Engineer.

After learning more about Air Products, I find that my values align with those of the company. With my background in engineering and business, and desire for continuous learning and improvement, I know I can contribute positively to Air Products' culture of discovery and success. I am a fast learner and an innovative thinker, and I believe I can bring a high level of value to your organization. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxx@cornell.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

In the second paragraph, this student highlights her relevant experience in a "research-based work environment," which relates directly to the position at Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. In the following paragraph, this student highlights how the personal connections she made at the career fair enhanced her interest. Drawing attention to details like this will separate applicants from those who simply applied after reading an online description.

Example 2

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

HIGHLIGHTING RELEVANT INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

I am writing to apply for a Mechanical Engineering New Hire position at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). As a senior Mechanical Engineering student at Cornell University, I have always been fascinated by space exploration due to the limitless possibilities and the direct impact on the future of humankind. JPL's leading-edge technology and collaborative culture enable new engineers to develop professionally and make significant contributions under the guidance of world-renowned experts. I would love the opportunity to add value to your team. I am confident in my ability to contribute as a mechanical engineer with my technical knowledge, relevant industry experience, and well-rounded skillset.

As a motivated problem solver and diligent learner, I have developed proficiency in the areas of mechanical design and analysis. During my internship in the Propulsion Design Department at SpaceX, I successfully designed two large-scale tooling assemblies for the Merlin 1D Vacuum Engine. I individually modeled and drafted over 200 components in Siemens-NX and worked with many departments and people to ensure we met all the technical and manufacturing specifications. In the end, I delivered a modular, and cost-effective solution on an aggressive timeline and saved hundreds of technician hours. During my internship in the Component Testing Department at GE Aviation, I contributed to my team by performing hand calculations to analyze the stress, fluid flow, and heat transfer in three combustion test rigs. I frequently conducted analysis in areas beyond my expertise by independently studying textbooks and technical papers. Eventually, my analysis contributed to design changes that mitigated potential issues such as the overheating of components.

As an active member of the Cornell community, I have developed the necessary interpersonal skills to succeed in a dynamic work environment. As an Engineering Ambassador and Tour Guide, I effectively communicated my unbiased perspective and knowledge of Cornell to over one thousand prospective students and parents. Additionally, as an Orientation Leader and Peer Adviser, I mentored and encouraged dozens of new students to enable a smooth transition from high school to college. Finally, as a Career Advisor, I developed the professionalism and leadership skills necessary to assist over one hundred engineering students in topics such as resumes, interviews, and job applications.

Working at NASA JPL requires the technical, communication, and leadership abilities that I have demonstrated during my time at Cornell. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

This student discusses in depth a variety of internship experiences and on-campus activities that highlight his diverse skills and strengths. In the second and third paragraphs, the student gives specific numbers and statistics to highlight his achievements, which help quantify his accomplishments. However, rather than listing all the experiences in which the student participated, he focuses on a few of the most important activities.

Example 3

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN COMPUTER SCIENCE HIGHLIGHTING INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE & EXTRACURRICULARS

After attending a Women in Technology Luncheon hosted at Square last year, I was immediately drawn to the collaborative and innovative energy I saw in everyone I met. I have always wanted to be a part of a professional community as creative, forward-thinking, and hard-working as Square. I am confident my enthusiasm, drive, and relevant experience would make me a great fit for your Summer Intern program.

I have a passion for all things electronic, and I am pursuing this passion while working towards a degree in computer science at Cornell University as a junior. Over the past year, I have worked for PubNub, a startup company in San Francisco, first as an intern and now as an independent contractor. Through these experiences, I have learned a great deal about managing my workload, communicating effectively with co-workers, and knowing when to ask for help. I have also gained significant experience adapting to different technologies and programming languages for each project, including Java, Arduino, Swift and Python. It has made me an adaptable learner, and a big advocate for trying new and unfamiliar things.

My work as a member of the Cornell Autonomous Sailboat Team and Cornell University Application Development Training Program has taught me how to be a good team member by listening and contributing in equal parts. My participation in these activities also reflects my desire to explore the possibilities of technology, which I would love to continue to foster as an intern at Square.

My enthusiasm for interesting work is boundless, and I strive to always bring my positive energy to every work environment. As an intern at Square, I would add value to the organization by bringing my teamwork, communication, and presentation skills I developed through the Cornell Speech and Debate Team, as well as the technical abilities I have developed over the past 6 years. I would love the opportunity to further discuss my interest in the position, and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

This student tactfully highlights a previous program she participated in with the company. By doing so, she shows her interest, continued commitment, and in-depth knowledge of the organization. In the second paragraph, she discusses her industry experience in detail, and highlights skills that would help her add value to this specific company, in this specific role. In the third paragraph, the student mentions important transferrable skills she developed through on-campus activities, which will help her succeed as an intern.

Example 4

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN CIVIL ENGINEERING HIGHLIGHTING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, ACADEMICS & INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

During my first year at Cornell University, I switched into civil engineering after embarking on a project to build a girls' school in Sogakope, Ghana for Voices of African Mothers. I went from developing the project to co-leading forty students over the course of nearly three years, which came with a steep learning curve. Arup quickly became my favorite resource. I dove into Arup's online publications, from Cities Alive to Arup International Development's work with Global Program for Safer Schools. Now, as I am looking forward to a career working in the built environment, I am thrilled to be applying for a position as an Arup Graduate Structural Engineer. I am confident I can bring to Arup a strong technical background, diversity of experience in the field, and more than anything, a passion to build beautiful structures that serve their intended communities.

I have focused my civil engineering degree heavily on structural design, taking graduate-level courses in Finite Element Analysis with Applications, Structural Dynamics and Earthquake Engineering, and every available structural design course. I spent a summer working as a Project Engineering Intern at Bulley & Andrews, a highly-regarded general contracting firm in Chicago, where I learned how to see a structure from all perspectives, including the owner, contractor, engineer, and architect. As an Undergraduate Researcher in Mechanics of Structural Materials and Systems Engineering, I am confident I could add value to a team of Arup engineers in an effort to advance the cutting edge of structural design.

I am looking for a career where I can work for the people, and strive for high quality projects while being empathetic and curious about those who will use the structures I help create. As an engineer at Arup, I will help push forward Arup's mission to Shape a Better World. I am currently using what I have learned from working with Voices of African Mothers as a foundation for helping United World Schools Nepal create a more sustainable school model. I want to continue this line of work by eventually joining Arup International Development and spending my career helping Arup make every single project more sustainable and thoughtful.

I am a great fit for Arup because I am motivated by what I believe makes Arup fantastic - a responsibility to create a built environment that improves the quality of life for our communities and future communities to come. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my interest in this position and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

In the intro paragraph, this student clearly explains her connection to, and interest in, the organization and how she will add value to this particular employer. It is apparent that she wrote this cover letter for Arup as she mentions resources specific to the company. In the body paragraphs, she succinctly highlights key academic and industry experiences as they relate to her desired position. In the concluding paragraphs, the student demonstrates her understanding of the company's mission and how her values align with it, which are key to demonstrating that you've thoroughly researched the company and thought about why you are genuinely interested.

Example 5

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN FINANCE

HIGHLIGHTING ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, EXTRACURRICULARS, & PERSONAL CONNECTION

I am writing to express my interest in the Sophomore Leadership Program at Citi. I recently changed my major from Economics to Hotel Administration within Cornell University's College of Business because I wanted to pursue a more practical business degree as opposed to the theoretical side of Economics. In choosing the School of Hotel Administration, I will complete an identical major to other comparable undergraduate business programs while having the added benefit of exposure to hospitality – a quality with extreme utility across the many client-facing roles of the financial services industry.

My passion for finance began my freshman year by joining the Cornell Hedge Fund as an analyst. Through this organization, I was first exposed to fundamental analysis from the buy-side of the industry. By attending educational meetings, seeking mentorship from senior members, and conducting individual research, I developed technical skills from an analytical and modeling standpoint. The stock pitches require extensive research into a company's financial history as well as discounted cash flow and comparable company analysis. Because of my developed passion for the financial markets and collaborative nature, I was promoted my sophomore year to an associate position and elected to the executive board, positions from which I can both provide mentorship to new members and continue to learn from upper-class students.

The Sophomore Leadership Program is an opportunity for me to further explore this industry at a firm that emphasizes diversity and its global reach. The unique rotational nature will allow me to hone my interests in a specific direction. My passion for current events and desire to develop high-touch relationships with institutional clients attracted me to Sales & Trading. Visiting the trading floor over the summer and meeting John Doe in Syndicated Loans only added to my interest in this division. At the same time, my experience in fundamental analysis and working on longer-term financial projects has piqued my interest in banking as well. I met with Jane Doe and recently spoke to Anita Job from the Capital Markets Origination division and exited those conversations with a heightened understanding of structuring and origination. CMO – this hybrid of Investment Banking and Sales & Trading – is perhaps the ideal fit for my interests.

The Sophomore Leadership Program at Citi will help me explore and identify my fit in finance. To the firm, I will bring my strong ability to work in a team, enthusiasm, and ability to balance multiple priorities. I am confident my experiences in both the Cornell Hedge Fund and my business fraternity, Phi Gamma Nu, have fostered the skills necessary to thrive with both peers and mentors across Citi. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

This student uses extracurricular involvement to highlight his interest in finance. He also dedicates an entire paragraph to explaining why this specific program at this specific firm is a good fit. Although not always necessary, it can be useful when you want to highlight that you have done your research on the position. This student also mentions three personal connections he has made at the firm which demonstrates his genuine interest in learning more about the firm.

Example 6

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN CONSULTING

HIGHLIGHTING ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

I am writing to express my interest in the Summer 20xx Intern Program at Oliver Wyman. I am currently a junior at Cornell University, majoring in Operations Research and Engineering with a minor in Business. I have a strong desire to use my technical background and problem-solving skills to tackle relevant business problems. I am very interested in Oliver Wyman's commitment to developing solutions that have lasting impacts on global clients, as well as its investment in employees' professional development through personal career advisors.

The main reason I chose Operations Research was the opportunity to solve global issues with innovative ideas. I am a unique thinker, and I love tackling challenging problems. I want to apply my engineering background to address higher-level business problems and put forth creative solutions. I am drawn to management consulting for the opportunity to use my analytical skills and creativity to help businesses identify and resolve key pain points. I enjoy close interaction with clients and creating dynamic solutions tailored towards their specific needs.

As part of the Cornell Consulting Group on campus, I worked on a project last semester for an equipment financing and leasing company based out of Rochester, NY. They were interested in learning how technology was disrupting the commercial finance space and how they could enhance their customer experience through FinTech adoption. After weekly client calls and a site visit, our final recommendations involved using technology solutions to make the client's leasing process more convenient, efficient, and engaging. Through technologically optimized services, the client could access and retain a larger customer base, strengthen their customer relationships, and maintain its top position in the equipment financing industry.

I am very interested in Oliver Wyman for their emphasis on data-driven insight, due diligence, and the delivery of impactful and sustainable solutions. The company's values match my original intentions of using my technical knowledge to generate solutions, and with my background, I am confident I can bring diversity and value to your team. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

This student dedicates an entire paragraph to explaining why she chose her major, how it relates to consulting, and how the technical skills she developed through the engineering curriculum are relevant to this field. In the third paragraph, this student uses extracurricular involvement to highlight her interest in consulting and her experience using technology to solve a problem for a real client. In the last paragraph, she reiterates her interest in working for this company by mentioning aspects that are specific to this organization.

Example 7

APPLYING FOR A POSITION IN RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTING RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

I am writing to express my interest in the Summer 20xx Intern position at D. E. Shaw Research. I am a junior in the College of Engineering at Cornell University, majoring in Chemical Engineering with a minor in Business. I am very interested in how D. E. Shaw Research is using computational methods to better understand and improve the process of drug discovery.

This past summer, I interned at the Argonne National Laboratory in the Nanoscience and Technology Division where I spearheaded a project investigating catalysis on iridium oxide surfaces through theory and computational modeling. To execute this project, I first had to understand the theory behind the plane-wave density function code used to model the molecular structures which required extensive literature research on density functional theory. I then proceeded to use the computational power of the facilities at the Center of Nanoscale Material (CNM) to model out several iridium oxide surfaces. Using the models, I computed equilibrium lattice constants, k-point convergences, bulk modulus, and surface energies to analyze the accuracy of the model and understand the electrocatalytic properties. I also created several Bash and Octave scripts on my own to extract pertinent values from the output script, which greatly sped up the process of computing many of these properties and parameters. I delivered a generalized version of my scripts to my supervisor which she continues to use in her work on a similar project. From this experience, I learned the power of computational modeling for gaining insight into experimental phenomena that are not yet fully explained.

I am very interested in the work at D. E. Shaw Research and the motivation and passion behind its people. With my background in Chemical Engineering and my experience in theory and computational modeling, I am confident I can contribute positively to the efforts of the organization. I am very interested in how to model various biochemical processes, and I believe I can bring the same level of passion and motivation to D. E. Shaw Research. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and xxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Analysis

The middle paragraph is dedicated solely to emphasizing previous research experience as it relates to the position with this organization. It is key to highlight, as this student does in the final paragraph, how the skills he gained from his previous research experience will serve him in this internship. To determine the most relevant skills and attributes to highlight in a cover letter, review the position description thoroughly noting the required/desired qualifications.