

CAREER SERVICES

COVER LETTER | GUIDE & EXAMPLES

careerservices.calpoly.edu



INSIDE:

- » Overview
- » General Cover Letter Example
- » Bulleted Format Example
- » Part-Time Position Example
- » Email Format Example
- » Prospecting Letter Example
- » FAQ

CAL POLY

Student Affairs

Career Services

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The cover letter introduces you to potential employers and demonstrates how your strengths, skills and experience match the position. Effective cover letters should:

- Demonstrate your genuine interest and research of the organization
- Focus on the needs of the employer, not your own
- Be modified and tailored to each position

GUIDELINES

- Use the same header (contact information) as your resume
- 1 page – 8.5" x 11"
- .5" to 1" margins all around
- White paper (avoid colors)
- Don't start every sentence with "I"
- Address the person directly when possible (Ms. Jones, Dr. Smith)
- Follow a standard business letter format

CONTENT

First Paragraph: "Why Them?"

- Describe what you are applying for and how you found the position
- Highlight why you are applying to this company and why you are specifically interested in them (demonstrate your research of the company)
- Include a thesis sentence: The top two or three reasons you're qualified for the position

Middle Paragraph(s): "Why You?"

- Prove your thesis sentence with concrete examples demonstrating your skills and experience
- Address specific experience(s) or academic highlights that directly relate to the qualifications the employer is seeking
- May close with a summary sentence of your qualifications and a confident statement that you can make a contribution to the organization

Closing Paragraph(s): "Next Steps"

- Reiterate your interest in the position and thank the employer for taking the time to read your cover letter
- Indicate how and when the employer can reach you

GENERAL COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

Rueben Gutierrez

123 Main St. Apt C, San Luis Obispo, CA • 805.555.5111 • rgutierr@calpoly.edu • www.linkedin.com/rgutierr

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Marketing and Business Development Coordinator at ABC Corporation

This full time coordinator will be responsible for developing and executing marketing campaigns in a fast-paced startup environment. Key responsibilities include: identifying new target markets, developing market entry strategies, developing marketing plans for hard-to-reach demographics, and updating and preparing presentations.

Requirements include:

- Previous marketing experience
- Proven ability to manage projects, multi-task and prioritize
- Attention to detail; self-starter; creative
- Excellent written and verbal skills

October 15, 20xx

Mr. Scott Lui
Director of Sales
ABC Corporation
1 Industry Plaza
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Dear Mr. Lui:

In response to the Marketing and Business Development Coordinator position advertised on MustangJOBS, I would like to submit my application. I have been interested in your company since meeting with Dan Shultz at the Start Up Career Fair in March. Especially appealing are your focus on personalizing data and your unique approaches to engaging customers. I feel that my experiences with project management and marketing through hands-on classroom projects, as well as my involvement on campus would allow me to make unique contributions to your company.

Mention the name of your referral or contact

Working with a minimal budget, thinking creatively, and adapting presentations to appeal to different audiences are second nature to me. Last year I became the Outreach and Recruitment Student Assistant for the Center for Community Engagement at Cal Poly. At that time, the marketing team was working on a shoestring budget and our organization had only 10 members. I took the initiative to implement a social media marketing campaign which included the integration of multi-media announcements, contests, and updates. By the end of the year, our membership had tripled. Also, in my role as a Poly Rep (Cal Poly Representative) I give presentations to large groups several times a week as a campus tour guide, customizing each tour to meet the needs and interests of the group.

Illustrate your relevant skills and experience with anecdotes

In addition to coursework in topics such as listening to the customer, strategic marketing measurement and organizational behavior, I've also had the opportunity to work with local management executives through a Marketing Strategy Project. For this project I worked with a team of four to create a comprehensive marketing strategy identifying target markets, and designing an advertising plan. We also designed market surveys to assess customer preferences which reached 110 customers.

Becoming a member of ABC Corporation, an innovative organization that sees the bigger picture and can create customized customer relationships and solutions is an exciting prospect. I am eager for the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you and how I could effectively contribute as a Marketing and Business Development Coordinator. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rueben Gutierrez

Reuben Gutiérrez

BULLETED FORMAT EXAMPLE

Sarah Nelson

555 Islay Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93407 | (805) 555-5676 | snelson@calpoly.edu

August 22, 20xx

Ms. Kim Dean
Bleacher Report
123 Sleepy Hollow Rd.
Hartford, CA 06152

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Quality editors are responsible for reviewing all content bound for publication, assuring the highest quality in regard to writing mechanics, analytical arguments, factual/statistical support, multimedia elements and formatting prior to approval. Quality editors must also communicate efficiently and effectively across teams to fix substantive issues.

Successful candidates will possess the right balance of sports expertise, prior editing experience, familiarity with established editorial standards and practices, exceptional communication skills and dedication to the team's mission to grow and protect the site.

Dear Ms Dean:

Please consider my enclosed resume for the position of Quality Editor that I found on your company website. With several years of editing experience, both with Bleacher Report and my university's news organization, I am confident that my skill set and background make me the right fit for this role at one of my favorite sports websites. Some highlights from my experience include:

- **Teamwork and communication:** As Editor-in-Chief of Cal Poly's bi-weekly newspaper, I have learned that the work does not start and stop in the newsroom. Being responsible for publishing articles online requires constant communication with writers and section editors. The successful publication of our paper is truly a team effort so it is vital that as editor I ensure everyone is meeting deadlines, feeling supported, and doing their part.
- **Vigilant research and fact-checking:** I have honed these skills over the past four years as a history major at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, given the school's heavy focus on students conducting their own research in constructing and writing original, engaging essays. During my time at Cal Poly, I have become a published historian and was awarded a scholarship for that publication. I want to bring my enthusiasm for detail and quality to another level working for the organization which has fostered my growth and furthered my interest in the journalistic world.
- **Flexibility and time-management:** I started as a copy editor for Mustang News, and have since risen to Editor-in-Chief by appointment. My role as a vital stylistic and quality cog on this news team has prepared me extensively for round-the-clock news. Also, during my sophomore year as a copy editing intern, then an on-call copy editor with Bleacher Report, I had to balance my shifting school schedule with work hours. As a result, I gained a better understanding of time management and flexibility and learned to work with greater efficiency.

I am intimately familiar with Bleacher Report's style guide, as well as the AP stylebook. This writing and editing experience, I believe, qualifies me for the position of Quality Editor. I would give my whole self to the organization and want to continue with Bleacher Report for as long as I can. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sarah Nelson

Sarah Nelson

Use this format to highlight relevant skills and qualities gained through specific internship and academic experience

PART-TIME POSITION EXAMPLE

Chloe Jensen

cjensen@calpoly.edu • 805-333-8051 • www.chloejensen.com • www.linkedin.com/in/cjensen

January 15, 20xx
Company Name
123 Lane St
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Show that you've done the research to keep the reader's interest

Dear Mr. Smith:

This letter is in response to the Tasting Room Team Member position with XYZ Winery, which was advertised on MustangJOBS at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. In reviewing your website, I was impressed with your emphasis on customer service and the variety of wine tasting experiences you offer to your guests. My customer service experience, passion for learning, and outgoing personality would make me a good fit for this position.

The job description requires someone with strong customer service experience, passion for learning and an outgoing personality. In my current position as a Barista at Starbucks, I learned and exhibited excellent customer service in one of the most fast-paced coffee shops in the city. In order to ensure accuracy of orders and connect with guests, I created a system to memorize customer's names and their specific beverage requests.

As an Agricultural Business major, I offer critical problem solving skills and the ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences. Last quarter, I led four group members in developing a marketing feasibility study project for the Paso Robles Wine Center. Altogether, I feel what I have learned at Cal Poly and my customer service experience makes me an ideal candidate for this position. I would be honored to be given the chance to work for an innovative and customer-driven winery such as XYZ Winery. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Highlight the relevance of a related class project

Sincerely,

Four blank lines for signature

Chloe Jensen

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Tasting Room Team Member is be responsible for engaging and enchanting our guests. Applicants should enjoy interacting with a wide variety of people and be able to remain focused and relaxed in an ever-changing and fast-paced environment. Potential team members will have a passion for learning, be reliable and professional, and have an outgoing and engaging personality, with a strong work ethic and attention to detail. Customer service experience is required.

EMAIL FORMAT EXAMPLE

myers@boschgroup.com

Subject: Mechanical Engineering Internship for Bosch

Dear Mr. Myers:

Thank you for taking time to speak with me yesterday at the Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo Career Fair. After hearing more about the Mechanical Engineering internship at Bosch and researching your core values of enhancing quality of life with solutions that are both innovative and beneficial, I am very interested in joining your team. I am a fourth year mechanical engineering major with a 3.4 cumulative GPA and a concentration in mechatronics. My engineering experience, teamwork and leadership skills would make me an excellent fit for this position.

Include a thesis sentence in the first paragraph

I have developed and applied my engineering skills in a variety of contexts. This past year, I led five team members on a three-wheeled vehicle design project. We designed and sized the necessary mechanical and electrical components. From there, we built and tested the three-wheeled vehicle model. We extensively utilized SolidWorks and Matlab for the modeling and analysis of our frame and suspension components.

As a Design Engineer Intern for Special Devices Incorporated, I conducted multiple CFD analyses using CFXDesign. The skills which I gained from using this program would be useful for setting up and analyzing intake flow rates, exhaust flow rates, and EGT's via the heat transfer capabilities. I also created multiple CAD drawings of mounting brackets for experimental equipment to fly on a DC-8 aircraft.

Be direct but courteous in the closing

Attached is my resume. Please contact me with any additional questions at 805-555-5555. I look forward to speaking with you more about the great opportunity to join your team at Bosch. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John A. Cho
805-555-5555
jcemail@calpoly.edu
www.linkedin/in/jacho

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Mechanical Engineering Internship

The Bosch Group operates in most countries in the world. With over 300,000 associates, a career at Bosch offers a chance to grow an exceptional career in an environment that values diversity, initiative, and a drive for results. Requirements:

- Must be currently enrolled in an accredited university and pursuing a Bachelors or Masters degree with at least one semester completed
- Minimum overall GPA of at least 3.0
- Must be a minimum of 18 years of age
- Eligible to work in the US without sponsorship
- Knowledge of SolidWorks, AutoCAD and Matlab

PROSPECTING LETTER EXAMPLE

Matthew Stuart

www.linkedin.com/matthewstuart | (805) 334-7331 | mstuart2@calpoly.edu

Address
your letter
to a specific
person

June 26, 20xx

Mr. Joseph Elliot
Community Service Director
The Family Care Network, Inc.
1255 Kendall Rd.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Since you don't have a mutual contact, you have to find another way to connect with the reader. Establish that you are interested specifically in this organization and explain why you are targeting them

Dear Mr. Elliot:

I learned about The Family Care Network while researching nonprofits online. Your mission matches my desire to help foster youth with compassionate assistance, care, and guidance and I am interested in Family Care Network's range of services and successful track record. I am writing to see whether you would be interested in hiring an intern for your Community Relations Department this summer.

Currently, I am a junior at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, pursuing my BA in Sociology with a concentration in Social Services. I am strongly considering a career in social work or nonprofit management. My interest in working with foster youth was sparked last quarter when I became a mentor with the Bakari Project at Cal Poly. As part of this program, I work one-on-one weekly with two at-risk youth ages 15 and 17, helping them to actualize their potential for success and take advantage of life opportunities. This experience has been invigorating and very impactful. Additionally, I am a Resident Advisor (RA) and have successfully built community by creating programs and planning events that strengthened community development and cultural awareness.

Highlight
relevant
skills gained
through
specific
volunteer
and
leadership
experience

In researching the Family Care Network, I was impressed that you specialize in multiple areas including Community-Linked Services, Therapeutic Foster care, Family Support and Transitional Housing. I would like to contribute to your Community Resources Development department by assisting with planning and organizing events as well as conducting outreach and marketing. I am available to work up to 20 hours a week this summer and welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the possibility of interning. I will follow up in a week to see if we can set up a time. Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

Matthew Stuart

Matthew Stuart
Enclosure: Resume

1. HOW LONG SHOULD A COVER LETTER BE?

It should be brief, three to four paragraphs, no longer than one page, and should be targeted to the position for which you are applying. Focus on the most relevant aspects of your background that relate to the job opening. The one page rule applies to most traditional job applications (additional pages are acceptable if you are applying for academic or government positions). If you have more than one page and are printing the letter to deliver/mail it, staple both pages together.

2. DO I NEED A COVER LETTER IF THE JOB POSTING DID NOT ASK FOR ONE?

Normally you should not provide an employer with more than they ask for in their job posting. However, if it is "optional" or if the job posting is not clear on what to submit, you should include one. Also, if you are applying for an opportunity you learned about from a connection, then a cover letter is used as an introduction.

3. CAN I USE MY EMAIL AS THE COVER LETTER?

If the job announcement asks for a cover letter, write a cover letter and attach it with your resume (attach both as a PDF so the formatting doesn't change). If they do not ask for a cover letter, then you can use your email as your letter of introduction without officially sending a cover letter. Make sure you always reference the job announcement #/title in your email subject line.

4. THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT ASKED ME TO INCLUDE MY SALARY HISTORY. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Do not write "negotiable." A good answer to this question in your cover letter is: *Based on my research, someone with my education and experience in this location makes between \$_____ to \$_____ range, with appropriate benefits.*

5. TO WHOM SHOULD I ADDRESS THE COVER LETTER?

Address your cover letter to an individual by name if possible. Call the company and ask to whom it should be directed. If possible, please do not address the cover letter as "Dear Sir or Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern." This makes it appear to be a mass mailing rather than a targeted cover letter. If you exhaust all resources, you may use "Dear Selection Committee" or "Dear Hiring Manager."

FOR ADDITIONAL HELP (visit website for details)

- » Make an appointment with a career counselor
- » See your College Specialist Career Counselor's drop-in hours
- » Stop by FasTrak (no appointment needed)
- » Attend a workshop

CAL POLY

Student Affairs
Career Services

careerservices.calpoly.edu
805-756-2501