



**professional pathways**

*Resources and Guidance  
to Empower Your Future*

# How to Write an Effective Cover Letter



# Agenda

**Purpose of a Cover Letter**

**What NOT to Do**

**Importance of Researching JD/Organization**

**Tailoring your Cover Letter**

**Formatting and Cover Letter Content**

**Tailoring your Cover Letter Activity**

**Additional Tips**

**Next Steps**



## Purpose of a Cover Letter

- Expresses interest & qualifications for a particular position
- Personal but professional
- Tailored to position/company
- Explains how you fit with organization & how you will help them
- Expands main points from your resume
- “Sells” qualifications to the prospective employer

## What NOT to Do

- Generic – same letter for all the jobs you applied
- Writing like your research paper or personal statement
- Write what you want to tell them but NOT what you THINK they want to know
- Listing points from your resume or recite resume
- Tentative language
- Not making connections of your skills/experience for them



# Do Your Research

## Position/Role

- General job responsibilities
- Desired qualifications and skills
- Identify key words from job description

## Company/Organization

- Mission Statement
- Organizational Vision & Goals
- Strengths & Opportunities
- Philanthropy
- Affinity Groups

## Mission

The University of California, Riverside will transform the lives of the diverse people of California, the nation, and the world through the discovery, communication, translation, application, and preservation of knowledge – thereby enriching the state’s economic, social, cultural, and environmental future.



# Tailor Your Cover Letter

## Academic Advisor for Student Athletes Job # 72150

### Description

The Academic Advisor for Student-Athletes holds a professional academic advising position in Athletic Department. The Academic Advisor for Student-Athletes works closely with coaching staff, athletic department administrators, faculty, academic advisors, and other campus offices, departments, and staff who are involved with the academic lives of undergraduate student-athletes to ensure that student-athletes are presented with a broad base of opportunities with which to optimize their experience at University of XYZ. The Academic Advisor for Student-Athletes implements and interprets university and department policies, and identifies and resolves complex issues using advanced knowledge requiring independent judgment.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- Advanced degree
- 1-2 years of experience in academic advising and coordinating academic programs in a college or university
- Participation as a Student-Athlete, and/or experience working with Division I Student-Athletes

### Knowledge & Skills:

- Strong communication skills to clearly and effectively communicate information to Student-Athletes, internal and external audiences, and management.
- Advanced analysis and problem solving skills, including experience with NCAA compliance rules and regulations
- Strong team work and interpersonal skills.
- Advanced customer service skills.
- Relevant computer systems/technology experience.
- Ability to ensure and apply compliance with legal, financial, and university policies and external regulations.

# Formatting

Scott Bears  
900 University Avenue #3  
Riverside, CA 92521  
(951) 827-0000  
scottbears@ucr.edu

Same header as resume to "brand" your documents

September 4, 2017

Ms. Christina Brown  
Vice President  
Bright Green Talent  
4500 3rd Street  
Los Angeles, CA 900

Instead of "To Whom it May Concern, use name or Hiring/Selection Committee/Manager"

Dear Ms. Brown:

I was thrilled to come across Bright Green Talent's advertisement for a College Recruiter on Green with a passion for people and positive psychology, I've kept an eye on your company with great presence. I think I'd be a great addition to Bright Green Talent's Marketing Team because of my and passion for environmental science and my proven ability to successfully work independently.

1<sup>st</sup>: Explain why are you writing, state your purpose

The job description requires someone with strong phone skills, an ability to network and an outgoing personality. In my previous work as a marketing intern, I developed my skills in all three areas. I managed clients remotely, coordinated teams of marketing assistants working in our company, doubled my team's number of projects in one year, and had active engagement in my company's volunteer programs. If possible, I would like to enrich its partnership with Solar Richmond, and expanding the

2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>: Relevant points on qualifications, why you are a strong candidate. Use student organization, work, volunteer and academic experiences.

I recently graduated from UC Riverside with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science. I wrote my senior thesis on how universities are integrating sustainability issues into traditional academic frameworks, in order to prepare students for the 21st century's resource management challenges. This unique background in training and preparation would translate well to helping talented recent graduates find the first steps in their "green career."

I am aware that Bright Green Talent is a small team, and that each person must operate relatively independently. In my previous intern role, I took a leadership position in each of the project teams I worked with, and operated efficiently on remote teams where I had to self-impose deadlines and goals. I look forward to bringing my ability to take the initiative and be self-motivated to Bright Green Talent.

4<sup>th</sup>: Further express your enthusiasm and interest in the position/company.

Overall, I'd love to add my skills and perspective to Bright Green Talent's Marketing Team to grow the business. Please contact me if you have other questions. I look forward to

Sincerely,

Scott Bears  
Enclosure: resume

# Header

- Address the letter to a specific person if possible
- Hiring Manager/Committee, Selection Committee/Team can also be used
- No Sir/Madam

Your Name

City, State | Phone | Email | LinkedIn (optional)

Date

Name of Contact Person

Title

Organization

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms., Mr., Dr., (etc)

OR Hiring Committee/Manager/Team



# Example 1

**Scott Bears**

900 University Avenue, Riverside, CA 92521  
555.555.5555  
scott.bears@gmail.com  
www.linkedin.com/scottbears

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[Month, Day, Year]

Courtney Richardson  
University of XYZ  
55 University Avenue  
Sometown, CA 12345

# Example 2

Scott Bears  
900 University Ave.  
Riverside, CA 92521  
951-827-3631

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Mr. Will Smith  
Superintendent  
ABC College  
100 University Ave.  
Sometown, CA 92521



# First Paragraph

Explain purpose of letter

Introduce yourself


Explain why interested in the position and the company

What qualities make you an ideal candidate for the position?

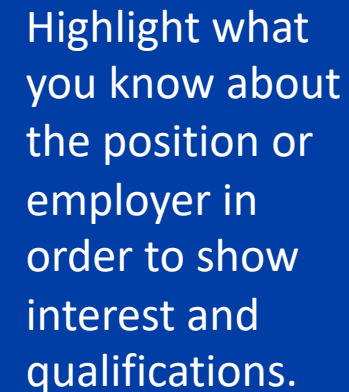
# First Paragraph Example

I am very excited to express my interest in the Academic Advisor for Student Athletes position at the University of XYZ.

The University of XYZ is a national leader in Division I athletics and is well-respected for emphasizing the holistic development of academic, career and life skills for all student athletes. It would be an honor to be a part of this program. I believe I am an ideal candidate for the position due to my personal experience as a student athlete, my experience serving as an academic advisor for student athletes, and my educational preparation.



Explain why are you writing, state your purpose



Highlight what you know about the position or employer in order to show interest and qualifications.



# Middle Paragraphs

Highlight skills and benefits to the company

Emphasize interest in the company

Provide concrete evidence

Show, don't tell

Do not include all information from your resume

# Body Paragraphs Example

As an athletic academic advisor, I developed the skills to **investigate and analyze information to draw conclusions** about academic concerns regarding at-risk freshmen football athletes. Evaluating grades, course history, and teacher's comments, I focused my appointments on noticeable behaviors that may have influenced each student's particular situation.

**Making sure I scheduled follow-up appointments, I interpreted and applied guidelines and procedures for each individual athlete** so they understood what was required of them to remain eligible for current and post seasons.

Successfully witnessing breakthroughs with multiple athletes, **we saw as a department** student-athletes holding themselves accountable and being educated enough **on the expectations of remaining eligible and compliant with university academic expectations**. Seeing athletes succeed academically motivates me to continue to put in the extra time needed to ensure they are prepared. I fully intend on bringing the same service to the University of XYZ.

Each paragraph highlights a skill/experience you have that the job description states as requirement.

## Skills & Qualifications Mentioned:

- Analytical
- Communication & Interpersonal
- Teamwork
- Follow policies and procedures

Real examples are provided.



# Final Paragraph

Conclude with next step

Provide contact information

## Example

Connecting my personal experiences as a former student athlete with current athletes is something that is extremely important to me. If given the opportunity to use this platform to help students, I assure you that my work ethic and attention to detail will exceed the expectations of the position. If you have any questions, please call me at [951-827-3631](tel:951-827-3631) or e-mail me at [scottbears@ucr.edu](mailto:scottbears@ucr.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.



# Closing Formats

Sincerely,

*Scott Bears*

Scott Bears

Sincerely,

*Scott Bears*

Scott Bears

900 University Avenue #3

Riverside, CA 92521

951-827-3631

[scottbears@ucr.edu](mailto:scottbears@ucr.edu)

# Let's Try This Together

## Software Engineering Intern at Snap

### About the job

Snap Inc. is a camera company. We believe that reinventing the camera represents our greatest opportunity to improve the way people live and communicate. Our products empower people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together.

We're looking for an intern to join our Software Engineering team at Snap Inc! Working on our platform team, you will be tasked with solving interesting technical challenges such as architecting and deploying infrastructure to handle our scale, designing a slick and secure mobile client, and maintaining software used by millions every day

### What You'll Do

Evaluate the technical tradeoffs of every decision  
Perform code reviews and ensure exceptional code quality  
Build robust, lasting, and scalable products  
Iterate quickly without compromising quality

### Minimum Qualifications

Currently pursuing a BS/MS degree in computer science or a related technical field

### Preferred Qualifications

- Strong CS fundamentals
- Good problem solving skills
- Someone who gets excited by tough technical challenges
- Someone who loves to learn, and is passionate about helping others
- Experience with mobile apps and/or databases
- Someone who can collaborate and work well with others
- A passion for Snapchat and creativity!



# Practice

## Software Engineering Intern at Snap

### About the job

Snap Inc. is a camera company. We believe that **reinventing the camera** represents our greatest opportunity to **improve the way people live and communicate**. Our products empower people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together.

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- Someone who can collaborate and **work well with others**
- **A passion for Snapchat and creativity!**



# Body Paragraphs Practice

Main themes:

Problem-Solving

Teamwork

Technical, especially mobile apps

Love Snapchat – know this platform well



## Additional Tips

- TAILOR IT! - read JD
- Avoid unprofessional language
- Length – should be one page, depends on industries
- Strongest and most relevant qualifications should be highlighted – limit to a few – ELABORATE!
- Demonstrate enthusiasm and originality
- Proofread for typos, grammar error, and spelling
- For a polished look, use the same header style for your contact information that you used for resume
- Font size 10-12
- Margin 0.5-1 inch
- DO NOT write it like a personal statement or list all of your qualifications from your resume.

**Questions?**

**Location:** We are located in the Career Center Plaza.  
Our entrance is the University Lecture Hall and the Surge Building, behind the UCR Campus Store.

**Hours:**  
Mon. - Fri. 8 am to 5 pm

*Individual counseling appointments available  
Schedule on Handshake*



**Career Center**

