

# COVER LETTER GUIDE

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a one page, 3-4 paragraph "cover page" for your application and a writing sample for the employer. It should communicate your interest in the company and your qualifications for the position/ internship you are applying for. A cover letter must also describe how you differentiate yourself from the crowd. Even if it is not required, you should **always** submit a cover letter that is tailored to each position you apply for.

## INTRODUCTION: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Open with a captivating introductory sentence that grabs the reader's attention. Explicitly state 1) the position that you are applying to, 2) how you learned about the position (e.g. UCSC Extension Job Board or through a referral etc.), and 3) your interest for the job and something about the company.

## BODY PARAGRAPHS: EXPLANATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Expand on why you are qualified for this position. State your **relevant skills** and how (where and when) you gained these skills (not a list of previous experiences/positions). Explain how these skills will allow you to effectively carry out the responsibilities listed in the job description. Convince the reader that the company will benefit from hiring you.

- What makes you a good candidate for this position?
- Think about what skills employers are looking for and how they can relate to the position:

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	Oral/Written Communication
Teamwork/Collaboration	Digital Technology
Leadership	Professionalism/Work Ethic
Career Management	Global/Intercultural Fluency

Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

## CLOSING PARAGRAPH: CONCLUSION

Re-emphasize why you are a qualified candidate. Thank the reader for their time and consideration and express your enthusiasm for an interview to discuss this opportunity in the near future.

- Be careful with wording: you don't want to be overconfident by conveying that you expect an interview, but instead you want to be **assertive** by letting the hiring manager know you want to meet with them to discuss **why** you are a good candidate.

\*Sample cover letter on reverse side

## Cover Letter Template

SAMMY SLUG  
1156 High Street Santa Cruz, CA 95064  
(831) 459-4420, sammyslugin@ucsc.edu

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May 31, 2018

Lauren Brown (If no direct contact write "Dear Hiring Manager" )  
Advocacy Division Coordinator  
Center for American Progress  
1333 H Street, NW, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am excited about the opportunity to apply for the Advocacy Campaign Assistant position posted on UCSC's Handshake website. My passion for advocating progressive politics, refined communication and interpersonal skills, and keen ability to collaborate in a team environment make me a strong candidate for this position.

As a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies from University of California, Santa Cruz, I am a [team player](#) who thrives in collaborative environments while also excelling in my individual work. During my tenure as a campus tour guide, I have become a professional and tactful [communicator](#) with experience interacting with people from [diverse backgrounds](#). Through my internship working with constituents in Congressman Farr's district office, I have learned to approach every single endeavor fairly and consider a broad spectrum of perspectives in every decision I make. In the Congressional office, I utilized my [work ethic](#) and great attention to detail to ensure that every project I took on was completed thoroughly and met deadlines.

As a driven, team-oriented leader, I act as an advocate for social change with a thorough understanding of the purpose and intentions behind my work. I am confident that my abilities passionately represent the ideals and objectives of the Center for American Progress. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to being in contact with you regarding this great opportunity in the near future.

Best Regards,  
Sammy Slug

*\*words in blue and underlined are examples of employer skills*

## COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

- ✓ Contains **no** spelling or grammatical errors
- ✓ Does **not** exceed one page
- ✓ **Clearly** states what I'm applying for and how I heard about it
- ✓ Focuses on my **relevant skills** to the position
- ✓ Demonstrates I've **researched** the employer and/or the position I'm applying for
- ✓ Is **addressed** to the hiring manager (or selection committee)
- ✓ Is a good reflection of my **writing abilities**
- ✓ **Does not** restate the experience on your resume-- focus instead on how your skills match the job description