

# Cover Letters

Cover letters serve as a bridge between your resume and the specific job to which you are applying. Therefore, there isn't a "one size fits all" cover letter. A cover letter is also a reflection of your writing skills, so take time and care to proofread and review your document. It needs to be specific to the organization and position— a generic cover letter will not help you.

## SEND A COVER LETTER WHEN:

- Applying through Handshake or another online database and the employer has requested it
- Responding to a job posting via direct mail or email
- Sending a response to a referral from a friend or acquaintance

## GUIDELINES

### A COVER LETTER SHOULD BE:

- Formal, polished, and grammatically correct
- Precise, concise, cordial, and confident
- Written in the active voice
- Varied in sentence structure—don't begin all sentences with "I"
- Printed on the same type of paper as your resume
- Targeted to the needs of the company and requirements of the position
- A way of connecting the job description with your resume and skills

### ADDRESS COVER LETTERS TO A SPECIFIC PERSON

If you do not have a contact name:

- Investigate the company website and other online resources for contacts and addresses
- Call the company and request the name of the person responsible for hiring college graduates in your career area
- If all efforts fail, use a proper salutation such as "Dear Sir or Madam" or "Dear Hiring Manager"



## ADDITIONAL TIPS

- A cover letter is not a repetition of the wording on your resume
- When sending a resume via email, follow the cover letter format to introduce your attached resume and write the cover letter in the body of the email (do not include the addresses and the date)
- Include the position/job title and your full name in the subject line for cover letters sent via email
- Use the term "Enclosure" or "Enclosures" only if sending hard copies of documents
- The font and formatting of your cover letter should match the font and formatting of your resume

## CONTENT

### FIRST PARAGRAPH - "WHY THEM?"

- States WHY you are writing
  - Responding to an advertised opening
  - Inquiring about a possible opening
- States WHY you are applying to, or are interested in, this employer
  - Company's training program
  - Company's product or service
  - Demonstrate your company research
- Mention your contact/referral if you have one

### SECOND PARAGRAPH - "WHY YOU?"

- States WHAT qualifications you bring to the position
- Highlights two or three experiences or academic achievements that directly relate to the qualifications the employer is seeking
- Proves through examples of experiences and activities that you have key skills for the position—i.e., leadership, communication, problem-solving ability, and analytical skills
- May close with a summary sentence of your qualifications and a confident statement that you can make a contribution to the organization

### THIRD PARAGRAPH - "NEXT STEPS"

- States WHAT you WANT—an interview or an opportunity to further discuss your qualifications and employment opportunities
- May reference your enclosed or attached resume
- Thanks the person and indicates that you look forward to speaking to or meeting with him/her, but indicates flexibility as to time and place
- Optional: Can state that you will call the contact person at a certain time/day to discuss scheduling a meeting or an interview

See Sample Cover Letters on the following pages.

Schedule an appointment for a resume or cover letter review online at [undergradcareers.nd.edu](http://undergradcareers.nd.edu).

# Sample Cover Letters

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

Chart your course for success in a fast-paced learning environment and get set to become a top-performing account manager in the group insurance segment of the employee benefits industry. Highly motivated and results driven recent grads and early-career professionals will experience on-the-job and classroom training, coaching and mentoring as part of CIGNA Group Insurance's Leadership Development Program.

Use this format to draw attention to specific skills and show when and how you have used them

August 22, XXXX

Ms. Kim Dean  
University Relations Specialist  
CIGNA Corporation  
900 Cottage Grove Road, A-122  
Hartford, CT 06152

Address your letter to a specific person

Immediately state the purpose of your letter

Dear Ms. Dean:

Please consider my enclosed resume for the CIGNA Leadership Development Program. Currently, I am a senior majoring in marketing at the University of Notre Dame. The qualities I have to offer CIGNA in this program include:

- **An achiever with outstanding interpersonal skills:** While working as an intern at XYZ Company, I was selected for the marketing strategy team that partnered to increase revenue by 41% and customer base by 20%. Prior to attending Notre Dame, I volunteered for a local non-profit organization where I worked with clients from different cultures. Based on my contributions and commitment to the organization, I earned recognition as "Volunteer of the Month."
- **Demonstrated leader and team player:** I co-founded a student organization aimed at increasing community service involvement campus-wide. Over the past three years, we have been able to generate a 32% increase in student participation, and have made valuable contributions to the community. I also served as a Resident Assistant in one of the University's largest residence halls while achieving a 3.59 GPA in my classes.
- **Excellent analytical and quantitative abilities:** In a team-based business simulation, I continuously analyzed the market and our competition for a financial services firm throughout the semester. The professor acknowledged our final project as being "an outstanding example for future classes." Last summer as an intern, I participated in a cross-functional team to assess a proposed business venture expanding customer product offerings.

CIGNA is a long-time leader in providing full-service solutions. Through this approach, the company has continued to expand its client base and market position for more than 125 years. Specifically, your mission to help people lead healthier, more secure lives matches my own personal values and interests, as demonstrated through my community service efforts.

I am committed to adding value and contributing to CIGNA's global expansion. Please consider placing me on your interview schedule during your campus visit. Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have questions prior to your visit, please feel free to contact me at (574) 258-5555.

Sincerely,

Peter Smith

Peter Smith

Demonstrate your research and knowledge of the company and express your enthusiasm and interest

1807 Construction Road  
Apartment #18  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

October 15, XXXX

4 blank lines here

Mr. Phillip Sorrel  
Director of Sales  
ABC Corporation  
1 Industry Plaza  
Framington, NJ 20589

2 blank lines here

Dear Mr. Sorrel:

Start out with the name of your referral if applicable

I recently spoke with Mr. Connors at the Fall Career Expo at the University of Notre Dame regarding career opportunities within the pharmaceutical industry, and he suggested I contact you. ABC Corporation's recent market expansion and use of the most current biotechnology in its products is particularly impressive. I am very interested in a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative position with your company and have enclosed my resume for your review.

My Science Business education has exposed me to principles of business—marketing, accounting, finance, and management—while also establishing the strong science foundation necessary in the pharmaceutical industry. As a marketing intern last summer, I applied and developed these skills in a corporate environment. Through interaction with clients ranging from computer hardware businesses to local grocers, I fostered strong communication skills and the ability to work with diverse customers. Additionally, I am committed to achieving results. For example, my new approach to marketing an on-campus community service program increased student participation by 25%. Given my goal-driven nature and desire to succeed, I am confident that I can make a positive contribution to your Sales Department.

I would like the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications and any sales opportunities within ABC Corporation. I will call you during the week of November 1 to see if we might schedule a convenient time to meet. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

4 blank lines for signature

Mary Flint

Enclosure

Include if sending a hard copy of the letter and resume.

Keep the letter short and to the point. Be direct but courteous in the closing

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

Draw attention to relevant skills, as defined by the job description, and demonstrate when and how you have used them

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Pharmaceutical Sales Representative is responsible for achieving sales goals and implementing company-approved programs within a (company assigned) geographically defined territory. This is accomplished by providing company-approved information and services to all classes of accounts such as physicians, retail pharmacies, hospitals, wholesalers, and managed care organizations. The Sales Representative is also responsible for coordinating sales strategies with appropriate teammates to maximize sales in territory.

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

Product Development Engineering careers at Vandelay Industries offer you the chance to drive innovation and embrace bold new challenges as a member of the team responsible for revolutionizing the automotive industry. Today, we're on a new road, with defined goals and renewed energy. You'll see it in our attention to quality and performance, and in the groundbreaking designs and technologies that create an unparalleled driving experience for our customers. We're looking for an Engineer with 0-3 years of experience and a BSME to do the following:

- Design and develop robust manufacturing processes for wiring manufacturing facilities
- Follow Vandelay's Advanced Process Development process throughout the project and assure deliverables are met on time
- Seek out, understand, and interpret product requirements that can be implemented in innovative new manufacturing processes and in a socially and environmentally conscious manner.

1234 Engineering Dr.  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

October 15, XXXX

Mr. George Costanza  
Director of University Recruiting  
Vandelay Industries  
555 Pennypacker Way  
New York, NY 10021

Knowledge and skills gained through classes and projects count as experience

Dear Mr. Costanza:

I recently spoke with Art Vandelay at the Fall Career Expo at the University of Notre Dame regarding the Product Development Engineer position with Vandelay Industries, and he suggested I contact you. Vandelay Industries' innovative approach to providing eco-friendly options for those in the automotive industry are of great importance and particular interest to me. Furthermore, Vandelay Industries' recent market expansion and use of the most current materials technology in its products is extremely impressive.

My Mechanical Engineering education and my experience in and out of the classroom makes me a valuable candidate. As an engineering intern last year at Delphi I learned a great deal of how engineering and technology companies work closely with the automotive industry, and I believe this experience will allow me to contribute immediately to your team. Additionally, I am committed to advancing social and environmental standards in our industry, as shown through my involvement in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and Student Energy Board. Our efforts are to reduce materials waste across Notre Dame's campus, and specifically in regards to materials waste in engineering projects. Our efforts reduced physical waste by nearly 22% in the first year, as well as cut costs for the ME department by 3.5% by researching affordable, alternative materials from which to source project prototypes. Furthermore, my active involvement in student government has helped strengthen my leadership and communication skills, both of which are vital for successful engineers. I am confident that I can help move Vandelay Industries' initiatives forward and make a lasting and immediate impact on your team.

Please refer to my attached resume for a more detailed explanation of my experiences and qualifications. I want to thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering me for the Product Development Engineer position. If I can answer any questions please feel free to contact me at [jsmith@email.com](mailto:jsmith@email.com) or (555) 555-1234.

Quantify accomplishments when possible

Sincerely,

**Julie Smith**

Julie Smith

123 Notre Dame Ave  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

February 12, XXXX

Mr. Joe Irish  
Lilly Corporate Center  
Indianapolis, IN 46285

Immediately state why you are interested in the company and position

Dear Mr. Irish:

As a senior Accounting and Economics double major at the University of Notre Dame, I am applying for a full-time position that will utilize my strong communication and analytical skills. I have conducted on Go IRISH and through contact with Ms. Eileen Froehke, I am interested in an associate tax analyst opportunity. What has especially drawn my attention is Lilly's dedication towards research and development and meeting needs that have been previously unmet in the medical field. As well, Lilly's expectations of high integrity and respect for all the people the corporation serves impressed me.

As a tax consultant intern for True Partners Consulting, I worked extensively in researching Section 199 and other complex tax deductions for our clients. I created templates for future use in evaluating the availability of specific deductions and also generated a methodology for the analysis of fixed assets for tax purposes. As an international tax intern for Zimmer, Inc., I was able to learn the foundations of the U.S. and foreign tax structures and experience first hand the importance of tax solutions in a Fortune 500 company.

In my Principles of Marketing class, I led a team of eight through a semester-long project which followed a product through the entire marketing process and resulted in a 200-page report and 20 minute presentation. I led discussions, critiqued my team members' work, and motivated them to produce the best work possible. Outside of my academic and work experiences, I served as the Community Service Coordinator for the Black Cultural Arts Council and fostered a relationship with the Robinson Community Learning Center establishing community service activities for our club.

Accompanying this cover letter is my resume, which I also submitted through Go IRISH for your review. I would like the opportunity to further discuss with you the associate tax analyst position and my qualifications. I noted that Lilly will be conducting on-campus interviews and hope to talk with you sometime before then. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Anthony Hermann*

Anthony Hermann

When applicable, state that you have applied on Handshake, and indicate interest in obtaining an on-campus

Highlight relevant skills gained through specific internship and academic experience

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

As an Associate Financial Analyst, you will experience an exciting career offering a wide range of opportunities for professional development, including the two-year Lilly Initial Financial Experience ("LIFE") training program. By strengthening your skills through a variety of financial assignments, you will deepen your financial expertise, learn and contribute to the business, and impact patients through your work in finance.

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER - Email Format

Use short paragraphs to highlight specific skills and experience

After mentioning your referral, make a strong statement about why the person should continue reading your letter

## Full-time Marketing Position Inquiry

mary.domer@underarmour.com

### Full-time Marketing Position Inquiry - Mary O'Connor

Dear Ms. Domer:

I recently learned of Under Armour's full-time positions through Mr. James Biddick, a Career Counselor at Notre Dame's Meruelo Family Center for Career Development, and I am very interested in this opportunity. My previous corporate internship experience, extra-curricular activities, competitive drive, and passion for athletics make me a strong candidate for this position.

While working as a business analyst intern for Target Inc. this previous summer, I developed several important skills required by this competitive corporate setting: fast-paced learning, dedication, creativity, and the ability to work as part of a team. Through partnering and individual critical thinking skills, my intern team presented an actionable inventory strategy to the division upon completion of the internship.

As an intern in Liz Claiborne's International Marketing Division during the summer of 20XX, I worked with several cross-functional teams. These interactions were the most rewarding experiences of this internship, giving me the opportunity to effectively communicate with, and learn from, a diverse group of professionals.

Serving as the Director of Marketing for the Student International Business Council has given me the opportunity to explore my interests while applying classroom skills to real world business modules. In this challenging leadership position, I successfully led marketing projects with major companies, developing strategies and providing market research for future implementation. Through these experiences, my interpersonal skills, specifically my presentation and communication abilities, have been strengthened. With focus, time management, and determination, I have also maintained an accomplished academic record at Notre Dame.

Becoming a part of Under Armour and representing the brand preferred by today's athletes is an exciting opportunity. I look forward to discussing Under Armour's full-time positions with you at a later date. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Mary O'Connor  
(555) 555-5555  
Linkedin.com/in/moconnor

It is acceptable to leave closing open-ended, but generally better to retain control by asking for a specific appointment

Send

