

COVER LETTER GUIDE

Updated Feb 2017

A cover letter should accompany each résumé you send to a prospective employer **when requested** for full-time employment. Cover letters are usually not required for internship opportunities but may be required to determine how competitive your written communication skills might be. Your cover letter is your introduction; it describes who you are, why you are interested in the position, and the value you can add to the organization. Do not duplicate your résumé in your cover letter. Instead, use your cover letter to add a personal touch and highlight the most relevant experience within your résumé, which tends to be more data-driven and should relate to the job description to which you are applying. The following contain a few cover letter recommendations from employers who hire a large majority of UH students:

Language

Check the spelling and grammar several times, gaining feedback from career counselors, faculty, peers, and friends and family members. Poor writing and grammar coupled with misspellings and typos within a cover letter can eliminate the possibility of interviewing with a company; so be certain it is error-free.

Format

- The cover letter should be brief, no longer than one page in length if sent via hard copy or via email.
- Emailed applications should contain a cover letter in the body of the email with a résumé attached.
- Typically, three to five short, easy-to-read paragraphs are adequate.
- Keep your cover letter looking professional; use a standard font (i.e. Times New Roman, Arial, etc.), 10pt-12pt font size only and avoid using bolded, italicized or underlined text. In special cases, such as when applying for design/media/communications positions, students are encouraged to consider a more unique résumé aesthetic; as a way to highlight their work.

Content

Always begin any professional letter with a date. If you have recruiter contact information, address your cover letter to him or her using Ms. or Mr.; if you do not have recruiter contact information or full name, use, "Dear Recruiter", or "Dear Hiring Manager:"

Research the position and company as much as possible and tailor each cover letter toward the opportunity for which you are applying. This might involve some time and effort but the information can usually be located in the job description. Illustrate that you have the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill the position requirements. It will show that you have done your homework and assure the employer that you are a good match for the position. It will also avoid the appearance that you have sent them a generic cover letter, which could have been sent to any company for almost any position. If you are responding to an advertisement, make sure that you indicate where you viewed the advertisement and within the body of your cover letter be certain to address at least 70%, if not all of the position qualifications listed, to improve your chances for an interview.

NOTE 70% RULE: If you do not meet at least 70% of requirements in a specific job description, you are most likely not qualified for the position. If you do, you are 70% or more likely to obtain the interview.

If you have developed a good networking relationship with an individual within the organization, upon obtaining his/her verbal or written approval, use his/her name in your cover letter or as a reference.

Communicate that you can add value to the organization. Associate the company product with your capabilities. Avoid making the common egocentric mistake of describing why the position would be good for you. Organizations are interested in how your skills, abilities, and ideas will benefit their enterprise.

Let the cover letter reflect your individuality, but avoid appearing too familiar, arrogant, humorous or ironic. Describe what is particularly appealing to you about this company and/or position. If you admire some of their recent work, a current project or their philosophy of operation, let them know. Close the cover letter by taking the initiative and requesting an interview. List your contact information for future follow-up and feedback.

Example 1

John Smith 12345 Main St. • Houston, TX 77003 • (713) 333-3333 • jsmith2@uh.edu

February 2, 2017

Randy Thomas
Senior Vice President
Lockheed Martin
901 Bay Area Blvd, Houston, TX 77058

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Your open position for Mechanical Engineering Associate reflects qualifications, which ideally match my experience and skill set. I will graduate in May 2017 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Mathematics. Working for a company like LOCKHEED MARTIN, who's always on the leading edge of innovation is the reason I welcome an opportunity to incorporate my knowledge and skills to the team.

My experience includes an internship at SPX Flow Technology where I learned valuable skills that included creating bill of materials for a variety of product lines using AutoCAD. I worked closely with a team of engineers to design models that had to be manufactured in a timely manner and reduce the time it took to manufacture a compact expanding gate valve series by 20 %. While interning at Hydraquip during the summer of 2016, I assisted with creating assembly models using SolidWorks for a variety of hydraulic power units. Working with mechanical engineers on site, I was able to maintain the current best practices associated with introducing new technical products and services to maintain quality customer service and performance. I was also selected by upper management to be the first UH Student Ambassador because I consistently maintained high performance standards and executed with operational excellence on assigned projects.

I am the current Aerodynamics team Captain for the Society of Automotive Engineers at the University of Houston, where I lead the design of an aerodynamic package for a Formula-1 style vehicle. Through this project, I have learned valuable leadership experience by managing a team of 4 engineering students. My experience with CFD work has also led me to become a computational fluid dynamics analyst for Paragon Space Development Corporation, where I run CFD on products and write technical documents to convey results.

My diverse internship and work experience have provided me with an excellent spring board to reach both my personal and professional career goals. I am certain I can contribute greatly to LOCKHEED MARTIN as a Mechanical Engineering Associate.

Please find my attached résumé, which provides full details of my qualifications. Feel free to contact me at (713) 123-4567 or jsmith@uh.edu for any additional information you may require. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to further discussing the Mechanical Engineering Associate opportunity with you.

Sincerely,

John Smith

Example 2

Washington T. Oakley

toakley@uh.edu • 713-214-2815

January 4, 2015

Richard Hiram
CSI Manager
Genu Systems, Inc.
Renault, ND 00000
Ph: 888-777-4444

Dear Mr. Hiram,

Your advertisement in Job Choices 2015 prompted me to contact you about part-time intern positions in computer engineering at Genu Systems, LTD. The product engineering program at your company is very appealing and in line with my current and future career goals. I am particularly interested in the digital systems projects within your CSI Department. In May 2015, I will receive a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering from the University of Houston and I hope to discuss employment possibilities within your organization.

In addition to the knowledge I have obtained from my education, I possess project experience analyzing and testing digital signal processing and analog/digital circuits and my previous experience as an assistant to a plant engineer has provided me with an excellent background in the practical aspects of electrical and computer engineering and leading a team.

While at the University of Houston, I have taken on additional responsibilities outside of academics. As a freshman, I was inducted into the Engineering Honor Society and voluntarily tutored college freshman Physics and Math. During my sophomore year, I was employed by the Student Services Office where I received first-hand experience providing client-based customer service, which improved my organization skills, in addition to, the added value of learning to work as part of a team.

I hope you will seriously consider my enclosed résumé which provides full details of my qualifications and skills. I look forward to speaking with you. I may be reached between the hours of 10am and 4pm at (832) 713-2810 or via email at washo@uh.edu.

Sincerely,

Washington T. Oakley

Example 3

February 15, 2015

Michela Anton
Senior Vice President
Anchor Systems, Ltd.
345 First Avenue
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Anton:

I am writing to express my interest in the full-time Electrical Engineering II position with Anchor Systems, Ltd., currently listed on the University of Houston UCS Cougar Pathway. As a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and a minor in finance and economics, my academic background, coupled with my relevant work experience, has provided me with the tools and skills necessary to add value to the position, and ultimately your organization.

I secured an IT Analyst internship with First Allied and gained exposure to the financial industry while enhancing their software by developing search subroutines and uploading script modules. I also had the opportunity to serve as Treasurer of the UH Chapter of IEEE, where I not only gained important leadership experience, but through diligent networking and follow through, amassed the largest chapter donation of \$100K in the history of the organization. I also obtained additional internship experience at ProsThets, where I received valuable training from a team of electrical, computer and mechanical engineers working on exclusive FDA funded nanotechnology for cutting edge prosthetic devices. I have also earned several awards while attending UH, including the Bausch and Lomb Award for Excellence in Science in June 2012 and maintained my status on the Dean's List consecutively from fall 2011 through fall 2015.

Please find my attached résumé, which provides full details of my qualifications. Feel free to contact me at (281) 832-7133 or at jcoolidge@gmail.com for any additional information you may require. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to further discussing the Electrical Engineering II opportunity with you.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Coolidge, II
Jcoolidge3@gmail.com
281-832-7133

Example 4

August 20, 2015

Dear Hiring Manager,

Your open position for an Associate Engineer-I within your PROMISE Rotational Program, reflects qualifications which ideally match my experience and high interest to work with an environmentally conscious oil and gas organization. I will graduate in December 2015 with a Bachelor of Science in Petroleum Engineering and a minor in English. I have completed two consecutive summer engineering internship projects and currently work in the UH Engineering Career Center providing administrative assistance to students and employers regarding part-time and full-time career placement opportunities.

While interning at WellProInc, I maintained the highest performance standards utilizing a diverse range of administrative capabilities which included maintaining an advanced database used to assist in providing analytical and statistical data for testing well pressure, coordinating client meetings, tracking and monitoring proposals and assisting with green project updates. I also worked with professional civil, mechanical and electrical engineers regarding design specifications for a newly functioning oil rig in the Gulf Coast.

During my previous role as an intern with OilCo, I assisted with streamlining warehouse operations and reduced costs by 20%, associated with materials procurement while working with an industrial engineer maintaining current best practices associated with introducing new technical products and services to maintain quality customer service and performance. Additionally, I spent 12 weeks working with four petroleum engineers regarding planning, evaluation, construction, production and maintenance of two separate oil and gas wells. I received the OilCo Recognition Award for Excellence regarding safety and green initiatives, I am currently OSHA certified and was selected by upper management to be the first OilCo/UH Student Ambassador for consistently maintaining high performance standards and executing with operational excellence on my assigned projects.

My diverse internship and work experiences provided me with an excellent spring board to reach both my personal and professional career goals. I am certain I can contribute greatly to EnergyPlus as an Associate Engineer-I.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and candidacy in further detail. I have attached my resume for your review. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Janet Collins Noble
12222 Bay Drive
Hickory, TX 00000
noble1@uh.edu
(713) -281-8320