

Maxwell School Center for CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Cover Letters

Cover letters introduce you and your resume to a prospective employer, demonstrate your writing ability, and summarize why you believe you are right for a position. The letter should be **one page maximum**.

First Paragraph

- Convey your objective for the letter (full-time position or internship).
- Indicate how you found out about the opening.
- Describe why you are interested in that position at that organization, along with your background and qualifications.

Second Paragraph

- Describe why you are a strong candidate by expanding upon your experiences, jobs, academics, skills, or personal traits.
- Provide examples of how you have demonstrated the skills necessary for the job.

Third Paragraph

- Tie together your overall skills and experiences with the particular position and organization.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the skills necessary for the job.

Closing Paragraph

- Re-emphasize your interest in the position and organization.
- Thank them for their time and consideration.

Tips

- Research the organization and position carefully before you start writing, so you can describe exactly why you are a good fit.
- Emphasize aspects of your background that best suit the organization and the position.
- Proofread carefully for grammar and spelling.
- Keep sentences short and clear with strong action verbs.
- Avoid starting sentences continuously with "I" statements.
- Do not use the same cover letter for each position. Customize each letter.

Electronic etiquette

- If applying by email, send a brief message (about a paragraph) that explains your background and states your interest in the position. Then, attach your cover letter and resume documents.
- Always save your cover letter and resume as PDFs.

Providing salary information

Some employers will ask you to include your salary history or your salary requirements when applying for a position. They do so for a variety of reasons. Regardless, it is in your best interest to give the employer the information they seek. Provide at least a \$10,000 range that meets your requirements based on research, your experience, and the location. You may also simply state that your requirements are negotiable.

Sample Cover Letter

George Maxwell

202 Maxwell Hall | Syracuse, NY 13244 | gmax@syr.edu | 315.443.5453

Ms. Yolanda Martinez
Recruiting Specialist
Federal Reserve Board

Monday, January 1, 2019

To Ms. Martinez:

I am writing to express my interest in the Research Assistant position at the Federal Reserve Board. I am struck by the leadership of the Federal Reserve Board in promoting research and policies that create a healthy and stable financial system for our nation and I would value the privilege of partaking in that work.

My significant experience in economic analyses and policy analysis have contributed to my abilities as a researcher. As a research assistant in Political Science, I have gained valuable skills in studying data and interpreting results to form relevant policy recommendations. My work on several academic projects ranged from federal education tax credits to state alcohol regulations afforded me the opportunity to experience a broad scope of policy research involving numerous political, social and economic actors. Through that time, I learned the necessity of understanding the complexity of economic and social issues as a foundation for effective policy. Additionally, assisting in the Laboratory for Rational Decision Making reinforced the importance of teamwork in accomplishing long-term research goals.

My academic career at the Maxwell School and at Cornell University have given me a strong foundation for understanding complex economic systems and conducting research in related fields. My coursework in public sector economics, microeconomics, quantitative analysis, and forecasting provide me with the practical and analytical tools necessary to inform innovative research and policy.

I am eager to apply the skills I have gained in my education and research experience as a Research Assistant at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George Maxwell
George Maxwell

Use the professional heading from your resume on your cover letter as well.

Address your letter to the proper recruiter or hiring manager. Otherwise you may write "To Hiring Committee."

In your opening paragraph, reference the position you are applying to, how you became aware of it, and why you are interested in it.

Provide concrete examples of how you have demonstrated relevant skills and knowledge. Use previous professional experience, as well as academic experience.

Handwrite your signature and type your name at the bottom of your cover letter.

Conclude by further emphasizing why you are interested and qualified in the position. Thank the employer for their time and consideration.