



School of Hotel Administration

Cover Letter Writing Guide

**To be used with the
Cornell Career Services
Career Guide**

**Including edits and examples from A. Quagliata, Management Communication (8/2014)
Updated August 2016**

WRITING COVER LETTERS

A cover letter provides an opportunity to explain how your experiences will benefit a potential employer. The letter introduces you to the company by highlighting your transferable skills, special features of your education and other experiences which qualify you for a particular position within the organization. A well-written letter distinguishes you from other applicants and is equally as important as your résumé in a job search.

Cover letters will almost always need to accompany your résumé, however when application instructions are provided, you should follow them exactly. Companies may specify what items they want or do *not* want submitted with an application (i.e. cover letter, references, transcript).

CONTENT AND FORMAT

An effective cover letter is written in a formal business-letter format and is one page in length. Your letter needs to be concise, well-organized and tailored to both the position and company to which you are applying. Your cover letter demonstrates your writing skills, so proofread it multiple times. Employers will notice your grammar, style and spelling. One simple mistake can negatively impact your candidacy.

Your letter should be written to a specific person in the organization. Write to a person who has the ability to hire you (who may or may not be someone in Human Resources). Avoid using the impersonal “Dear Sir or Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern.” If you have any questions about to whom to address the letter, use the resources available at the library or the Office of Student Services, or call the company and ask for the correct name, spelling, and title. Personalization of your letters makes a positive impression with employers.

If you’re sending your cover letter and resume by email, include them as PDF attachments to ensure that the formatting remains intact. Make your accompanying email message short and clear. Indicate the reason for the email and direct the receiver to your attached documents. Make sure your email address is appropriate for communicating with an employer.

Opening Paragraph:

- State why you are writing the letter and how you found out about the position
- State why you are interested in the position, focusing on how you can meet the company’s needs
- Craft an effective statement that will entice the recipient to read your letter in its entirety
- Summarize the body of your e-mail

Body:

- Focus on telling the story of how your experiences will be of benefit to the employer
- Highlight just a few of the most relevant examples from your background which are most directly related to the position and explain why they are of importance to the employer
- Avoid writing a letter which mainly restates the information that is on your resume
- Avoid exaggerating your experience, role in group projects and/or level of content knowledge
- Create one or two short paragraphs for this section (typically 6-8 sentences if using one paragraph; 3-4 sentences per paragraph if using two paragraphs)

Closing:

- Thank the reader for their time and re-express your interest in the position
- Depending on the application instructions for the position, indicate the timeframe within which you will contact the recipient to follow-up on your application
- Sign your letter, even if you are going to send it as a PDF attachment to an e-mail

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

- Develop an organizational system for your job or internship search
- Keep a copy of all of your cover letters and make notes about any follow-up needed or completed
- Demonstrate professionalism in all e-mail, phone and fax communication with employers

COVER LETTER BASICS
FROM CORNELL CAREER SERVICES CAREER GUIDE

<p>Return address indicates where Susan is currently living.</p> <p><i>Address letter to person with hiring responsibility, which may be indicated in the job announcement. If unclear, begin with "Dear Human Resources Director"</i></p> <p><i>Use person's full name if you don't know gender: "Dear Pat Smith."</i></p> <p>Letter opens by stating why she is writing. <i>Identify position or type of work for which you are applying, how you learned of position, and why you're interested in working for the organization. Draw reader in to ensure he or she reads the entire letter. Refer to any contact you've had with the organization, providing names of people with whom you have spoken.</i></p> <p><i>Indicate in the middle paragraphs that you understand position requirements and demonstrate you are a good match for the job. Highlight and expand upon experiences, skills, and interests stated in your resume.</i></p> <p>Concrete examples help demonstrate how Susan's experience has prepared her to fulfill the requirements of the position.</p> <p>She summarizes her qualifications related to the position and outlines options for ensuring that an interview will take place. She demonstrated initiative by saying she will follow up with a phone call.</p> <p>The inclusion of her resume is noted.</p>	<p>1111 Dryden Road Ithaca, New York 14850</p> <p>February 5, 20XX</p> <p>Ms. Joan Lewis Lower School Director Glendale Day School 85 W. 61st Street New York, New York 10004</p> <p>Dear Ms. Lewis:</p> <p>I am writing in application for one of the six teaching fellowships awarded annually at Glendale Day School. As a native New Yorker, I am familiar with Glendale Day School's reputation for educational excellence; as an alumna of the Dalton School, I know the private elementary school environment firsthand.</p> <p>For some time I have known that I want to pursue a career in teaching and have sought summer employment and volunteer activities with this goal in mind. While working at a day camp for three summers, I learned the patience and tolerance needed for working with children on a daily basis. At Asphalt Green Day Camp, I managed and led a group of thirty children in active learning projects, such as discovery hikes. These projects required the ability to maintain control of the group and to ensure their safety, while facilitating both their education and enjoyment.</p> <p>I have also worked with young children on an individual basis. As a math tutor and as a mentor for troubled children, I have designed activities and lessons for individual youngsters coping with academic or emotional difficulties. Currently, I volunteer three hours a week in a first-grade classroom at a local elementary school, where I have gained experience working with children in a formal classroom environment.</p> <p>Working with young children, whether one-on-one, in groups, or in the classroom, requires patience, energy, and dedication. I believe my paid and volunteer experiences, as described in my enclosed resume, have prepared me for the demands of a teaching fellowship. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss available positions with you and can travel to New York any Friday. I will contact you within a week to arrange a meeting. If you would like to contact me sooner, you can reach me at (607) 555-5555 or e-mail me at xx99@cornell.edu. I look forward to speaking with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Very truly yours,</p> <p><i>Susan G. Moore</i></p> <p>Susan G. Moore</p> <p>Enclosure</p>
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Note: Susan is consistent in writing out the state name here and in her resume.

She remembers to sign her name.

Sample: Freshman Cover Letter – Operations

Before writing your cover letter read through the organization’s web site and job posting. Highlight the qualities, skills, and abilities that the employer wants.

Quotes from the job posting are included below. Note how the author demonstrates she understands the needs of her audience.

“An internship allows you to experience our culture, learn our standards and gain exposure to various areas of a hotel or resort.”

“The deeply instilled Four Seasons culture is personified by its employees – people who share a single focus and are inspired to offer great service.”

“Handles all guest interactions with the highest level of hospitality and professionalism, accommodating special requests whenever possible; resolves customer complaints.”

“Exceptional interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills. Ability to work in teams, with people from diverse backgrounds.”

“Works harmoniously and professionally with co-workers and supervisors.”

Tailor each cover letter you write to the job you want. Note how this letter includes the title of the position, name of the organization, and specific examples of how the author will contribute to Four Seasons.

1234 Balch Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14850

March 6, 20XX

Mr. Michael Martin
Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia
One Logan Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103-6933

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am writing to express my interest in a Rooms Division Internship at Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia. As a student at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, I am pursuing a career in hotel operations. The opportunity to learn your standards and gain exposure to various areas of a hotel fits well with my education, experience, and passion for the hospitality industry.

My restaurant experience has provided me the opportunity to develop an appreciation for quality service that will be useful as an intern at your property. As a hostess at the Bocaccinis Italian Bistro & Bar, I greeted guests with a welcoming smile and always aimed to exceed their expectations. As a server, I enjoyed building relationships with customers, learning their names, and making repeat customers feel special. You will find that I am able to adapt to changing priorities and schedules, anticipate customer needs, and resolve customer complaints quickly. As an intern at Four Seasons, I will offer personalized service and strive to create unforgettable memories for guests.

With my strong communication skills and experience working in teams, I am confident that I can step into a customer facing position and be immediately productive. While volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, I developed the ability to explain concepts in an appropriate manner based on my audience, a skill that could come in handy if provided the opportunity to work at the Front Desk, in Guest Services, or with the *Kids For All Seasons* program. In addition, my experience as a varsity athlete has shown that I am comfortable taking the lead when needed, but that I am also good at taking directions.

The attached resume includes more details about my education, experience, and skills; however, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in more detail. I will contact you next to week confirm receipt of my application materials and request a personal interview. If you would like to contact me sooner, you can reach me at (607) xxx-xxxx or flxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

First M. Last
fmlxx@cornell.edu, (607) xxx-xxxx
School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University 20xx

Sample: Sophomore Cover Letter – Operations

1126 College Avenue, #99B
Ithaca, NY 14853

March xx, 20xx

Ms. Jane Lewis
Vice President-Development
Thayer Lodging Group, Inc.
1997 Annapolis Exchange Pkwy, Suite 500
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I was delighted to learn of the Thayer Lodging Group's Rotational Internship opportunity through the Career Management Office at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration. Recently, I declared a sales and marketing concentration, which will enable me to integrate what I've learned, both in the classroom and through my work experience, at Thayer Lodging. I am confident my skills and interests are a good match for this position.

My experience as a Six Sigma Intern for the Westin Crown Center in downtown Kansas City provided me the opportunity to enhance my analytical and management skills. My knowledge of this quality management strategy will allow me to improve service, reduce expenses, and increase net margins at Thayer properties. While at Westin, I collected data by running time trials for a new Westin meetings concept. After assembling and analyzing the data, I developed an Excel labor savings model that compared the traditional meeting concept versus the new meeting concept. In addition, I helped write the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for this project based on suggestions for improvement from the housemen and directors as well as from my own observations.

In addition, I understand the importance of being a team player. Over the last several years, I have gained practical experience in leading teams. I recently served as the marketing director for the 84th Annual Hotel Ezra Cornell, a student-run conference for hospitality industry leaders. In this role, I led a team of seven to ensure high levels of attendance during challenging economic times for the service industry.

My resume is enclosed for your review. I will contact you within the next week to possibly arrange a time to discuss my qualifications. If you would like to contact me sooner, you can reach me at flxx@cornell.edu or (607) xxx-xxxx. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

First M. Last
fmlxx@cornell.edu, c. (607) xxx-xxxx
School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University 20xx

Enclosure

FIRST LAST

flxx@cornell.edu

School Address:

1126 College Avenue, Room 12
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) xxx-xxxx

Home Address:

501 Stony Street
Tempe, AZ 88888
(607) xxx-xxx

February xx, 20xx

Ms. Jane Lewis
Deloitte Consulting LLP
25 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I am writing to apply for the Human Capital Summer Scholar Intern Program for the summer of 20xx. As a junior at the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University, I am pursuing a career in human resources consulting. I am particularly drawn to the size and scope of Deloitte Consulting and the many people-focused services your company offers.

My experience administering employee benefits, handling personal and work issues, developing new employee orientation, and reviewing resumes and applications will serve me well at Deloitte Consulting. This past summer, I worked for an independent training company called Training by Design and helped prepare training materials and executive coaching reports. The training material was implemented throughout a company's southeast region for entry-level management. I've also worked as a Human Resources Coordinator at a 400-room resort in the Key Biscayne, Florida.

In addition to my work experience, I've taken multiple human resources related courses at Cornell University including Human Resources Management, Training and Development, and Corporate Communication. I am also a teaching assistant for the Human Resources Management class in the School of Hotel Administration. Moreover, I am very interested and involved in industry research and analysis and work as a research assistant for two professors. One of my current research projects includes analysis of internal and external branding surveys for the Senior Vice President of Human Resources of Movenpick Hotels & Resorts.

The Human Capital Summer Scholar Intern Program seems like a perfect fit for me, and I thank you for your consideration. I will contact you by the end of next week to arrange a time to further discuss my qualifications for Deloitte Consulting. I am available on most Fridays to be in New York City. I look forward to possibly meeting you and your staff during an interview.

Kind Regards,

First Last
School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University

Sample: Junior Cover Letter – Marketing

1126 College Avenue
Apartment #581K
Ithaca, NY 14850

October xx, 20xx

Mr. Rolando Rodriguez
University Programs Recruiter
Expedia, Inc.
333 108th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98004-5703

Dear Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing to express my interest in the Market Associate internship opportunity with Expedia, Inc. As a junior at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, I am very interested in applying my knowledge, skills, and experience to assist Expedia in meeting its goals.

My experiences in online marketing, hospitality consulting, hotel operations, and food service provide me a strong foundation to aid the Market Management team in identifying, implementing, and executing strategic initiatives designed to improve key business metrics at Expedia. During my time at Starwood Hotels and Resorts, I contributed to their online marketing department, modified metadata to improve search engine ratings, and conducted quality assurance of keyword buys resulting in increased revenues for Starwood's brands. I hope to use my ability to establish relationships, evaluate market trends, use technology, and interpret and analyze data to accomplish similar results at Expedia.

My coursework at Cornell includes Managing Hospitality Distribution Strategies, Yield Management, Management Communication, and Business Computing. Furthermore, as a results focused, self-starting, collaborative individual, I have the personality traits that are necessary to work cohesively within Expedia's Market Management team.

My academic and professional qualifications as well as my personal traits are a perfect match for Expedia. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how I might join Expedia as an intern and will contact you by the end of next week. You can reach me by phone at (607) xxx-xxxx or e-mail me at flxx@cornell.edu. I look forward to speaking with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

First Last

Attachment: Resume

First M. Last

1126 College Avenue
Apartment # 581B
Ithaca, NY 14850

March xx, 20xx

Mr. John Lewis
College Recruiter
Gaylord Hotels
2800 Opryland Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I was excited to learn about the Leader in Training opportunity at Gaylord Hotels through the Career Management website for the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. As a senior graduating with a variety of hotel experience, including a valuable and memorable time at the Gaylord Texas Resort in Dallas, I am confident my skills and interests are a good match for the Leader in Training Program.

My operations experience at Gaylord Texan Resort in Dallas and various Four Season locations provide me with a good background for Leader in Training Program. At Gaylord, I rotated through front desk, housekeeping, and banquets. In addition to operations experience, I participated and contributed to the “green” experience benchmarking process at the Four Seasons Bali Resorts assisting them to become more environmentally friendly. Most recently at the Four Seasons Boston, I worked as a front services intern in three capacities: bellman, valet, and valet cashier, sometimes handling all in one day. However, I am most proud of my special assignment at the Boston property where I applied the knowledge I gained from working in Bali to guide and assist the Engineering Department in strengthening their “green” program to decrease the hotel’s environmental impact. It was a great opportunity to build on all of my previous summer experiences.

The knowledge I gained from summer internships and my education enables me to provide Gaylord Hotels with a strong work ethic and skill-set. In addition to my hands-on knowledge, the leadership skills I’ve gained as Co-chair of the Cornell University Orientation Steering Committee positions me as a candidate capable of assuming a wide range of challenges. As Co-chair, I was directly responsible for providing the incoming Cornell freshman class (about 3500 students) with a great orientation experience. My experience included training the 700 orientation volunteers and organizing six large scale events.

I have attached my résumé for your review. I would welcome the opportunity to work for Gaylord again and to meet you and your staff to discuss my qualifications for the Leader in Training Program. I will contact you on March xx. If you would like to contact me sooner, you can reach me by phone at (607) xxx-xxxx or email at flxx@cornell.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

First Last

Sample: Senior Cover Letter – Operations

1126 College Avenue, #99B
Ithaca, NY 14850

January xx, 20xx

Ms. Jane Lewis
Executive Assistant - HR
Breakers Palm Beach, Inc.
One South County Road
Palm Beach, Florida 33480

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I am delighted the Breakers is recruiting at Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, offering opportunities in the Management Trainee Program. The Breakers' premier reputation and international clientele and staff provide the diverse hospitality experience that I am looking for.

My work experiences at four different hotel properties have exposed me to a variety of exciting situations. I most enjoyed finding solutions for guests, identifying payroll errors, and finding revenue discrepancies of up to \$5,000 per day. I have been fortunate in my previous positions to develop team-building, interpersonal, and analytical skills. This past summer, I gained team-building experiences at Pulehu, an upscale restaurant in Maui, Hawaii. As part of the wait staff for 150 table-tops, I enjoyed building interpersonal relationships with guests. I also participated in part of the company's Management Training Program. At the Four Seasons, I worked with guests first hand as a front desk agent. This enabled me to learn the vast aspects of the rooms division and learn specific skills on PBX, reservations, and others—all to achieve a common goal of providing memorable experiences for guests.

In addition to my experience, I am acquiring skills regarding demand forecasting, booking curve analysis, and room rate optimization. As a senior at the School of Hotel Administration, I am taking two master's courses in revenue management: yield management and restaurant revenue management. Through these courses, I am developing analytical skills—personal assets I hope to continue to develop at the Breakers as a Management Trainee.

As you will see on my resume, my experiences and education will be an asset to the Breakers Palm Beach. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications. If you have any questions, please contact me by phone at (607) xxx-xxxx or by email at flxx@cornell.edu. I look forward to speaking with you when you visit campus. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

First Last

First Last
1126 College Avenue, Apt. 99B
Ithaca, NY 14850

September xx, 20xx

Mr. John Lewis
Senior Analyst
Sunstone Hotel Investors
120 Vantis, Suite 350
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

Dear Mr. Lewis:

As a senior at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, I have developed a passion for the real estate and hospitality industries and a unique skill-set that has prepared me to succeed. The combination of my professional work, diverse experiences, and strong desire to learn makes me an excellent candidate for the Financial Analyst position. I am particularly interested in Sunstone Hotel Investors because of its renowned reputation as one of the most successful hotel real estate advisory firms in the world. The skills I look forward to bringing to your company include:

Analytical Skills

- Spearheaded project to analyze 200 commercial real-estate properties and implemented solution to monitor, analyze and report defects, resulting in savings of \$1 million.
- Applied customized financial models for Hotel, Restaurant, and Financial Service companies.
- Performed advanced discounted cash flow analyses that examined the effects of altering the capital structure of real estate transactions.

Communication Experience

- Presentation to the Fidelity management team resulted in implementation of a strategy for asset disposition and a system for determining whether to lease or buy properties.
- Wrote a valuation report of the Statler Hotel that was nominated as a finalist for a School of Hotel Administration writing award.
- Led a team of seven to ensure high levels of attendance at Hotel Ezra Cornell, a student-run conference for hospitality industry leaders.

Quality Service

- Recognized, anticipated, and acted on the needs of guests as a server in the Banquets & Events department at the Statler Hotel.
- Responded to requests in a timely fashion; provided accurate and consistent information as a rotational intern atx
- Earned the reputation of going above and beyond to service clients.

I look forward to further exploring this mutual opportunity, and I will contact you on September xx. You can reach me in the meantime at either (607) xxx-xxxx or flxx@cornell.edu. Thank you.

Sincerely,

First Last
Enclosure