



Rowan University

College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
[Center for Professional Success](#)

Cover Letter Best Practices & Resources

Please schedule a cover letter critique appointment with the Center for Professional Success by searching "CHSS Center for Professional Success" through [Starfish/RSN](#).

## **Expectations for a Cover Letter**

While a resume provides a macro view of an individual's qualifications, a cover letter highlights an applicant's specific experiences that reflect the employer's hiring requirements. Due to this orientation, cover letters should include the following concepts:

- Be directed to a specific individual if possible.
- Reflect knowledge relating to the duties and responsibilities for the role the applicant is pursuing. As such, applicants should have specific cover letters reflecting each job title or industry that reflect their career interests.
- State the specific skills and experiences the applicant previously developed and how these proficiencies will benefit the potential employer.
- Specifically, state the job title and company that the applicant is applying to throughout the cover letter.
- Do not repeat the same content that is in an individual's resume. Instead, provide deeper detail and explanation of the applicant's key accomplishments, problems they solved, a new initiative they implemented, etc.
- End each cover letter with a positive message and by suggesting the scheduling of an interview. For instance, this can include "I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications for this position." Another option would be "I am excited about the opportunity to work for a company with the quality reputation of (insert company name)."
- Undergraduate and graduate-level cover letters should be no longer than a single page.
- All resumes and cover letters should be submitted in a PDF format.
- Ensure that the tone and language of the cover letter are portrayed in a professional manner. Conversely, it is also vital to avoid inauthentic cover letters that prevent the applicant's interest and enthusiasm from being represented.

## Identifying Content for the Two-Body Paragraphs

All cover letters should be created to specifically reflect the top responsibilities and qualifications of the role they are pursuing. As such, each applicant must review the job description of their desired position and create a narrative that explains how they will successfully complete these responsibilities. Before writing a cover letter, please complete the steps below to understand what content should be included in the two body paragraphs.

1. Review the job description to the position of interest, and identify the top 3 responsibilities that this role will entail. Please list these responsibilities in the space below:

a. Top job responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Top job responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Top job responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify three relevant and/or transferable experiences from users' previous or current activities (jobs, volunteer experiences, extracurricular activities, community service, internships, etc.) that reflect the top three job responsibilities identified in step one.

a. Top transferable experience: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Top transferable experience: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Top transferable experience: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Evaluate the outlined transferable experiences from step 2, and select the top two transferable experiences that can be utilized for the central idea of the two body paragraphs. Evaluate what transferable experience will provide users enough content to write a six to eight-sentence paragraph, and will showcase how they are qualified to complete the role responsibilities to their desired position.

### Completed Example for a Human Resource Internship Opportunity

Top Job Responsibility	Top Transferable Experience
Example 1: Assist employees by answering basic questions relating to payroll, benefits, and role classification.	Example 1: Over 2 years of customer service experience through serving as a waiter that involves addressing customer questions and concerns.
Example 2: Prepare HR-related reports as needed, such as training budgets for departments.	Example 2: Served as the Vice President for the Rotaract club that entailed completing monthly reports on meeting attendance and the outcomes from all club events.
Example 3: Facilitate training sessions for all new employees.	Example 3: Responsible to train, onboard, and provide feedback to all new interns through my previous office intern position.

## **Breakdown of Needed Content in Each Body Paragraph**

Each body paragraph must have three specific components within its content. These concepts include:

- **Introduction Sentence (One to Two Sentences):** An introduction sentence highlights a relevant experience (part-time job, internship, club experience, leadership role, etc.) an applicant previously completed and briefly mentions how this is relevant for their desired position.
- **Unpacking the Main Topic of the Paragraph (Five to Six Sentences):** The middle section of the body paragraph articulates how the topic of the paragraph (part-time job, internship, club experience, leadership role, etc.) has prepared applicants for their position of interest. Applicants will not copy and paste the content already listed on their resume but include additional depth and breadth to showcase the transferable nature of their selected experiences.
- **Closing Sentence (One to Two Sentences):** The closing sentence must connect and illustrate how the topic (part-time job, internship, club experience, leadership role, etc.) from the paragraph will allow applicants to successfully complete their position of interest.

Examples to each of these sections include:

- **Introduction Sentence:** Serving as a School Counselor for Maverick Middle School provided me various transferable experiences critical for this opportunity.
- **Unpacking the Main Topic of the Paragraph:** Specifically, I provided individual counseling and classroom guidance interventions to foster students' career, personal, academic, and social wellbeing. Promoting this development was achieved by engaging students, teachers, and parents to comprehend the institution's educational curriculum and how School Counseling services can complement these learning outcomes. Building these relationships allowed me to identify character education guidance lessons as a viable intervention to enhance students' education. As such, I began facilitating monthly character education lessons for all first to fifth-grade classes and tailored all lessons to student's current developmental level.
- **Closing Sentence:** The accumulation of these experiences allowed me to collaborate with teachers and parents to bolster students' educational outcomes.

## **Cover Letter Format & Examples**

**It is recommended that applicants use the same contact material (name, address, and contact information) and format from their resume in this area for their cover letter.**

Use "Dear Dr. Mr., Mrs., Ms." if the applicant knows the contact individual's last name. However, it is appropriate to use "To Whom It May Concern," if this information is not known.

### **INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH**

The applicant must state why they are writing and express their interest in the specific job title and organization they're pursuing. It is also important to highlight two centralized concepts in this section. First, it is vital to illustrate the applicant's top accomplishments (completion of their future degree, previously completed internships or jobs, leadership opportunities, etc.). Secondly, applicants must also demonstrate how these experiences have provided them the top three skills needed for their position of interest.

**BODY PARAGRAPH (Each cover letter should contain at least one body paragraph. Conversely, each additional body paragraph can be created based on the space and available content).**

The applicant must illustrate their professional and/or educational qualifications but not restate the exact content from their resume. For example, each paragraph should concentrate on one or two topics that explicitly qualify the applicant for their position of interest. It is also essential to connect the applicant's qualifications (current experience, education, training, etc.) to the content listed in the job description. This involves unpacking the applicant's information to help the reader understand how this content will benefit the employer.

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### **CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

The closing paragraph should briefly outline that the applicant's experience from their body paragraph or paragraphs has provided them with the necessary qualifications for their position of interest. The applicant must also illustrate their excitement to be employed and how they welcome the opportunity to discuss how their relevant experience will contribute to the success of this opportunity.

Lastly, thank the employer for their time and consideration.

(Your typed name)

## Example Cover Letter

**Paul Solo**

9601 Apple Street, Maple, Massachusetts 85937

paul.solo42@gmail.com

851-748-2480

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my interest in the Camp Counselor position for the Life Time Wellness organization. Having one year of experience as a Life Coach and Office Assistant makes me an excellent applicant for this role. My previous experience has provided me with the communication, organization, and supervisory competencies needed to successfully fulfill these job duties.

Through my experience as a Life Coach, I have developed specific client engagement competencies. As a Life Coach, I was assigned a caseload of clients that I provided individual counseling services for and served as an advocate for external referrals. In this framework, all of my interventions and services met the unique needs of clients. To ensure that client's needs were addressed, one of my essential responsibilities was to develop a rapport with each individual. Having this relationship provided a platform for clients to solve their concerns but also strengthen their self-advocacy skills. Serving as a Life Coach has granted me the capability to identify clients' underlying needs and will provide a seamless transition with the Life Time Wellness camper population.

Serving as an Office Assistant for Rowan University's Financial Aid Office also provided me a variety of experiences that is critical for his opportunity. As an Office Assistant, I supported the planning and facilitation of training presentations and sessions for our undergraduate student employees. This responsibility entailed me collecting data on what topics our employees needed additional training on and then researching the most effective pathway to instruct this material. I was then able to establish a training curriculum that articulates all the lesson plans and learning objectives for each created session. Being responsible for coordinating these activities will allow me to create, instill, and supervise a diverse array of services for our camper population.

In conclusion, my experience as a Life Coach and Office Assistant has provided me the necessary credentials for this role. I am excited to have the opportunity to work for your organization and would welcome the chance to meet with you to discuss my experience for this opportunity.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Solo