

Cover Letter Guide

Below you will find an overview of best practices and examples specifically for journalism and media-related fields. If you'd like to have your cover letter reviewed or discuss any other career related questions, please schedule an appointment with Hussman Career Services at <http://hussman.unc.edu/ug/studentservices/careerservices>.

Overview:

Cover letters are another important aspect of your application for jobs and internships. A cover letter showcases your writing ability and provides a space to tell the employer a story about you and your experiences. What makes you the ideal candidate for the position?

You will see many examples and templates for cover letters. For the most part, they are not ideal. You are a student in the Hussman School and you should feel comfortable in your writing ability. You should write in a conversational, straightforward tone.

Address your cover letter to someone. Refrain from using "Dear Hiring Manager" or "To Whom It May Concern". If you can't find a specific person, just leave the salutation off.

Heading:

Your heading can be formatted in one of two ways.

1. Use the same heading that is on your resume. This will help brand all of your application documents.
2. Address your cover letter to the company and include your return address. The top left-hand corner would contain the following information:

Your Name
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip

Date

Name of Company
Street Address
City, State, Zip

General tips:

1. Make it conversational. This will help draw your reader into your story. Try to refrain from using a rigid tone.
2. Begin with a hook. What will grab the attention of your reader?
3. If you don't have a hook, consider starting your cover letter with a simple paragraph like this: "I want to be a summer public relations intern at APCO Worldwide."
4. Refrain from starting your cover letter with a summary of your education and how you learned about the opening.

5. Talk about your relevant experiences to the position. Essentially, you want to tell a story they can't learn from reading your resume. Don't feel like you have to include everything you've ever done—pick one or two experiences.
6. Talk about the company and show that you've done your homework. Why do you want to work there and why are you the best fit for the position? Look at the mission statement, values of the company, clients they serve and work they do.

Example #1

Name

Contact Info

Date

FleishmanHillard
220 E. 42nd Street, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10017-5828

Dear (insert name of recruiter/hiring manager),

I never knew the power of storytelling until I wore a feathered hat and striped pirate socks for four months at Walt Disney World.

That experience really solidified my desire to pursue a career in public relations, because I was able to see firsthand the impact that memorable connections have on a brand's target audience. As a Disney College Program intern, I was able to reflect the brand image of The Walt Disney Company and provide exceptional guest service every day. FleishmanHillard's commitment to the power of true and dedication to impacting its clients' brands are attributes that I strive to reflect as I develop my professional career. It is also why I want to be a Graduate Development Professional for the summer of 2017. I am confident that my intellectual curiosity, willingness to accept a challenge and relevant experience indicate that I will be a valuable addition to the Graduate Development Program team. Additional qualifications that I bring to the position include the following:

Professional Writing and Media Relations Skills: In Summer 2016, I was a public relations intern at Largemouth Communications in Durham, N.C. My responsibilities included conducting an independent public relations campaign for LORD Corporation's "SummerSTEM Day," pursuing media relations efforts and creating media lists using VOCUS/Cision. My experience during this internship provided many opportunities for me to strengthen my professional writing skills and participate in research for upcoming client campaigns. As a Graduate Development Professional, I would also contribute my ability to create detail-oriented messages and handle multiple projects.

Social Media Savviness: As the social media intern for Camp Oak Hill & Retreat Center, I was responsible for creating content for Instagram posts and developing a social media marketing plan. The goal was to promote engagement among the organization's teenage audience via the camp Instagram account. Over a period of four months, Camp Oak Hill's account experienced an increase in overall engagement as well as a 65 percent increase in registrations for camp sessions in 2016. My knowledge of social media trends and their connection to specific audiences as well as my ability to produce a significant ROI for clients will benefit the Graduate Development Program.

FleishmanHillard's success in generating impactful social movements confirms its ability to create innovative campaigns that draw audiences' attention. I found this to be especially evident in FleishmanHillard's work with AT&T to create the "It Can Wait" campaign. I was able to further explore the impact of corporate social responsibility campaigns in my Case Studies in Public Relations course, where I compiled a detailed report and presentation analyzing The Allstate Foundation's annual Purple Purse campaign and Kerry Washington's role in gaining extensive media impressions.

I am interested in the following practices at FleishmanHillard: Media Relations, Brand Marketing and Reputation Management. I look forward to interviewing for the Graduate Development Professional position at your convenience. The best way to reach me is by email (insert email) or phone (insert phone). Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Example #2

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

email • phone • LinkedIn URL • Website Link

Dear (insert name of recruiter/hiring manager),

My interest in healthcare communications began with a newborn in a purple cap.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to intern at Mission Hospital in Asheville, NC, where my most rewarding experience was helping gain media attention for a hospital initiative aimed at preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome.

I pitched the campaign, called 'Period of Purple Crying: Keeping Babies Safe in North Carolina,' to a local newspaper with a circulation of 58,000, where it received front-page coverage in the health section. It was such an amazing experience to watch the project come full circle, first working with the journalist on the story and then coordinating the photo shoot for a family in the Mother-Baby Unit with their newborn son wearing his purple cap.

This fall, I executed a study that analyzed the use of Twitter in 23 North Carolina hospitals. Social media is the new frontier for healthcare and presents unparalleled opportunities for growth and change. These platforms are necessary not only to be a part of the healthcare conversation, but also to ultimately improve and shape lives.

My current internship at the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention has given me the opportunity to work in healthcare at a broader level. As a Centers for Disease Control entity, UNC-HPDP works to translate medical studies into targeted solutions for the publics they affect. This combination of medical research and community-based programming has shown me the true scope of healthcare and demonstrated the importance of public relations as a link between researcher and patient.

I am attracted to public relations because it is both an art and a science— it does not fit into just one concept box. The field of healthcare communications is much the same way, an emerging domain with so many possibilities yet to be discovered.

I am drawn to healthcare communications because it is one of the most challenging and rewarding areas of public relations. I am drawn to Edelman because it not only sets the standard in the industry as a company, but also as a community of people sincerely interested in and invested in what they do.

I am a senior in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and expect to graduate in May 2011. I have included my resume as well as a link to my website, which contains additional samples of my work and more information about my past internship experience.

Thank you so much for considering me for a position at Edelman.

Sincerely,