How to Write a Cover Letter
What is a Cover Letter?

• Accompanies your resume that is being sent to an organization/company for a specific position

• Articulates and clarifies specific aspects of your background which best suit the employer’s needs

• Intends to match your skills and experiences with the qualifications of the position
What should my cover letter accomplish?

- Show that you have tailored the letter to the company, job, organization
- Further describe your experiences in a clear way that matches the information provided on your resume
- Explain how your experiences relate to the job/position you want
- Explain how your experience/skills will help the employer/organization fulfill the position requirements
- Provide a good example of your communication skills

Source: Purdue OWL Engagement
December 7, 2009
Office of Undergraduate Admissions – Limited Enrollment Programs
University of Maryland
Mitchell Building
College Park, MD 20742
ATTN: BMGT Admissions Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my interest in the field of Finance as provided by the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. Currently, I am a sophomore at the University, pursuing a degree in Economics. My interest in quantitative analysis and investment banking has led me to pursue the Finance degree.

Finance is a perfect opportunity to apply my knowledge of economics and strong mathematical skills to specialize in the analysis of corporate finance risks and investments. I have a strong desire to help companies make well-informed decisions that maximize returns with minimal risk. As a member of the finance team, I will be able to work with top executives and contribute to decision-making processes.

In the classroom, I plan to participate in various clubs and activities that will help me develop the necessary skills to become a successful finance professional. I am passionate about learning and am always looking for new opportunities to enhance my knowledge and skills.

I believe that this program will provide me with the tools and resources necessary to succeed in the business world. I am confident that my passion for finance and my strong academic background will make me a valuable addition to your team.

Sincerely,

Student X
studentx@umd.edu
(443) 555-5555
UID: XXXXXXXXXX
February 25, 2013

Office of Undergraduate Admissions – Limited Enrollment Programs
University of Maryland
Mitchell Building
College Park, MD 20742
ATTN: BMGT Admissions Committee

To Whom It May Concern:
Introduction

- Explain why you are writing the letter
  - Use an “attention getting” opener
  - Purpose for writing the letter
  - Position you are applying for
  - How you found out about the position
    - Name and date of publication (if applicable)
    - If you were referred by someone, state that person’s name and connection

- Smith School Application
  - Include: class standing, current major, intended major, why you are interested in your intended major
I am writing to show my interest in the field of Finance as provided by the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland, College Park. Currently, I am a sophomore at the University, pursuing a degree in Economics. My interest in quantitative analysis and investment banking has led me to pursue the Finance degree.
Body Paragraphs

- Match the characteristics of your resume to the position
  - Explain why you are a strong candidate
  - Accentuate your interests, skills, abilities, and experience to further clarify how you would be able to fulfill the employer’s needs
- Give succinct illustrations justifying your candidacy for admission.
  - Use language found in Smith School admissions documents
    - Smith School Admissions Website
- Possibly 2-3 paragraphs
I present to you real-world exposure to the business era and my interest to participate in it. Working with team members to complete a hypothetical business plan under Business Exploration Series (BES) within Letters and Science, in order to win a professionally judged competition exemplifies this well. In addition, through the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, I participated in a four day convention in Washington, D.C. that allowed me to attend professional workshops teaching integrity, goal-making, and networking tactics. These leadership skills are evident in my efforts to stay optimistic and on top.

Finance is a perfect opportunity to apply my knowledge of economics and strong mathematical skills to specialize in the analysis of corporate finance risks and investments. I have a very strong liking for computing statistics which is evident in my high grades in mathematical based classes. These skills and my easy adaptation to change will allow me to investigate corporate decisions in better allocating budgets to various sectors based on time, risk, and money.
During my time here on campus, I have been a member of the Maryland Club Sport team. My involvement in this club, as well as serving as co-captain of my club ice hockey team, has allowed me to experience first-hand the importance of teamwork and leadership in a competitive environment — crucial characteristics for anyone looking to enter the business world. I have also been recently elected as the Director of Finance for my sorority, Greek Letters. I have gladly accepted this position, and am honored that my sisters had enough confidence in my leadership abilities to manage the chapter’s funds, prepare annual budgets, and handle other financial matters.

connect campus involvement with qualities the Smith School & employers are looking for
Closing Format

- **Closing Paragraph**
  - A succinct and memorable statement summarizing your strengths, experiences, and skills
  - Contact Information
    - Telephone number
    - Email
  - Thank the individual/admissions committee for his/her/their time
  - State that you look forward hearing from him/her/them soon
As you review my application, I believe you will see my strong commitment to academic excellence, as well as a series of leadership and teamwork experiences both here on campus and at home. I hope you will favorably act on my application so that I can begin this coming fall semester. If you have any questions regarding my application, please contact me at email@umd.edu or (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your serious consideration of my application.
Signature

- Complimentary Close – “Sincerely,” etc.
- Contact information if not included in closing paragraph
- Remember to sign your name on hard copy
- 2-3 spaces between “Sincerely” and Name
- Include UID below name

Sincerely,

**BES Student**

BES Student
UID: 123456789
Enclosure

OR

Sincerely,

**BES Student**

BES Student
studentx@umd.edu
(XXX)-XXX-XXXX
UID: XXXXXXXXX
Formatting & Style

- Left justify the heading
- Do not indent business letter paragraphs
- Font size: 12, Minimum: 11
- Use a professional font *(Times New Roman or Arial)*
- Margins: between 1 – 1.25 inches
- Leave 2-3 spaces between “Sincerely” and your name/UID
- The phrase “Enclosure(s)” at the end of your letters refers to the enclosure of a résumé and/or additional materials
- Length: 1 page (maximum)
Writing Your Smith School Cover Letter

- Do...
  - Peruse the Smith School website
    - Think about how your experiences connect to the slogans and buzzwords used – “academic excellence” & “fellowship”
  - Keep in mind what employers are looking for when they hire students
    - Smith School wants students who have and can further develop these qualities
  - Be specific
    - What area(s) of business are you interested in studying and pursuing a career upon graduation?
    - How would you be an asset to the Smith School?
Do...

- Emphasize strongest and most relevant experiences and skills
  - Leadership positions
  - Business/Smith School related experiences
- Highlight participation in any special academic program that has a selective process
  - Living learning program (Honors, College Park Scholars, etc.)
  - Honor Societies (Primanum Honor Society, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, etc.)
- Match your background to your goals
Writing Your Smith School Cover Letter

Don’t...

- Simply rehash your resume!
  - Don’t just list the things you have done or the skills you have gained - explain what you’ve learned and how it’s transferable - *Show; don’t tell*
- Have spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors
- Start every sentence or paragraph with “I”
- Use unprofessional language
- Lie. This obviously extends to all aspects of your application.
Sample Resume
January 1, 2013

Office of Undergraduate Admissions – Limited Enrollment Programs
University of Maryland
Mitchell Building
College Park, MD 20742
ATTN: BMGT Admissions Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to present my interest in the Robert H. Smith School of Business. As of now, I am a sophomore Economics major at the University of Maryland. My interests in quantitative data and financial analysis have prompted my pursuit for an Accounting degree.

I was given the thrilling opportunity to intern at Smith & Williams, CPAs over winter break of freshman year and the summer going into my sophomore year of college. My main responsibilities included bookkeeping, filing federal and state tax and withholding returns, and making weekly and biweekly payroll checks for the employees of clients. Through interning, my work ethic was strengthened. Commuting in heavy D.C., Maryland, and Virginia traffic and working everyday at a demanding 9 to 5 job were challenges. Yet, my diligence increased as an employee, which has helped me as a student at Maryland as well. In addition, I acquired an eclectic understanding of accounting as a profession. I recognized that the profession upholds integrity and accountability, two core values at the Smith School. This distinctive internship experience has facilitated my respect for the profession and the high levels of honesty and responsibility they expect from their students and employees.

I applied for the position of UNIV 100 Peer Leader through the Business Exploration Series (BES) in Letters and Sciences. The selection process was competitive in that only six students out of 20 applicants were granted this leadership position. The freshmen I taught for the fall semester helped me grow as a leader. I slowly swallowed my fear of public speaking. In addition, I was able to independently lead an activity on core values and diversity that focused on the importance of upholding one’s different values and better knowing, understanding, and appreciating diversity amongst peers and students around campus. Having been in their shoes just a year ago and then being able to lead them the following year made for a truly unique experience. Having been a teaching assistant makes me a strong candidate for the business school.

I hope you can infer my desire to do well on all levels and increase my potential as a student, server, and leader at the University of Maryland. If you have any questions regarding my application, please contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Student Name
Student Email
UID #XXXXXXXX