



Tisch Office of Career Development

Guide to Cover Letter Writing

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Cover Letter Guidelines

A cover letter should always accompany a resume when applying to a job or introducing yourself to a potential employer. The purpose of the cover letter is to:

- Introduce yourself to the employer and specify what position you're seeking.
- Express why you are interested in working for the organization.
- Emphasize how your qualifications will contribute to the organization.
- Request an interview.
- Prompt the employer to review your resume.

Take your time and write a letter that accomplishes this, but also reflects your voice, background, and interests. Be genuine, but remain professional. When writing, use the job description and your resume as a guide. The description provides helpful clues to what kind of experience and qualities the employer is looking for. Select a few specific experiences from your resume to highlight rather than restating your entire work history.

Helpful Hints

When preparing a cover letter, remember to:

- Individualize each letter, addressing it to a specific person and organization. If you're unable to identify who you should address it to, "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam" is acceptable.
- Use a business letter format (see the samples in this packet). The physical address information can be omitted when sending a letter via email.
- If you're applying to a large company and the listing includes a Job ID or Requisition Number, note it in your cover letter. Some companies may have multiple positions with similar titles so this makes it easier for them to know which one you're interested in.
- Be concise and persuasive. Your goal is to clearly articulate the relevance of your skills to the open position.
- Proofread the letter for clarity, grammar, and spelling. Ask others to help – it's always good to have another set of eyes checking your materials!
- Use the same bond paper as your resume, and use matching envelopes.

Notes for Performers Preparing Cover Letters

When introducing yourself to a casting director, manager, or agent, it is important to tailor your letter to the appropriate audience. It should be a personalized letter that specifically provides information relevant to the person you are writing to.

- These letters should be as brief as possible. Be direct and address a specific skill or ability you possess that will be of interest to the person you're writing to. Take time to research the individual or the role before writing.
- Limit your letter to 3-4 short paragraphs. In the first one, be sure to explicitly say why you are writing and who referred you (if possible). Make an immediate connection.
- When citing your performance credits, limit it to 2-3 of your most recent ones.
- Be consistent with your headshot and resume. If you use certain font or paper, try to use this for your cover letter as well. Consider it your own personal branding.

Sample Format – General Cover Letter

Your address
Your phone number
Date

Employer's name
Employer's title
Organization name
Address

Dear Mr./Ms. [last name, or Dear Sir/Madam if it's impossible to get a contact name]:

First paragraph: State the reason you are writing. Attract the employer's attention by pitching the letter to his or her needs or interests, rather than to your career goals. Make a connection between you and the opportunity, company, or individual.

Second paragraph: Explain how your abilities, background, and qualifications will enable you to contribute to the organization. Describe how your specific skills, strengths, or personal attributes are relevant to the position. You may emphasize one or two items from your resume, but try not to be redundant. The cover letter supplements your resume by serving as an introduction and highlighting your special qualities that might help persuade an employer to contact you. Keep it oriented to the employer's needs!

Final paragraph: Reiterate your interest and ask for an interview at the employer's convenience. You may provide a date when you will contact him/her to set up an appointment. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your signature]
Your name typed
Enc. Resume

Sample Format – Actors/Performers

Your address
Your phone number
Date

Employer's name
Employer's title
Organization name
Address

Dear Mr./Ms. [last name, or Dear Sir/Madam if it's impossible to get a contact name]:

First paragraph: State your reason for writing and who you are. If you were referred, include the referral's name in the first sentence.

Second paragraph: Highlight recent performances, special skills, and training you have that are of interest. Do your research - highlight connections between the project or role and your past experience, if they exist. Limit this to a maximum of 2-3 recent works – your resume will further detail your experience if they interested.

Final paragraph: Provide your contact information and thank them for reading. This is the section to let them know how you will follow up.

Sincerely,

[Your signature]
Your name typed
Enc. Resume

Good Vs. Bad – Tailoring A Cover Letter

Sarah and Dara are both applying for the same Production Assistant Internship at Moguldom Media. Read the internship posting below and then see the difference between what not to write and what makes a great cover letter!

Production Assistant Intern

Moguldom Media Group- New York, NY

Moguldom Media Group, one of America’s fastest growing media companies, has a great opportunity for a Junior/Senior level Film or Television student to take on the role of PA Intern in our New York office.

The Production Assistant Intern will produce short original content videos for Moguldom’s brands StyleBlazer and MommyNoire. They will be responsible for filming, editing, and operating audio and lighting equipment. The Production Assistant Intern will conduct interviews, film and edit videos, and produce short form content. The Intern will learn how to effectively produce short videos that will cater to the StyleBlazer and MommyNoire audience by mastering shooting, editing, and producing video content on a small scale.

Qualifications The ideal candidate will meet the following qualifications:

- Pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Film/Television
- GPA of 3.0+ preferred
- Junior/Senior class level preferred

Moguldom is moving quickly. We have big plans for the future and are searching for someone as determined as we are who will thrive in our fast-paced and exciting environment. If you crave constant direction and predictability, this is probably not the company for you. To apply, please send cover letter and resume to jobs@moguldomxyz.com

[WHAT NOT TO WRITE EXAMPLE]

Hi!

Don’t use casual greetings!

Beware of typos!

I am writing today to express my interest in your company and the intership you posted at NYU Tisch. I am not familiar with StyleBlazer and MommyNoir but I want to get expierence with digital media and you guys sound cool.

I have a busy schedule next semester so I’m not sure what hours I would be able to work in your office but I’d love to be considered anyway for this position (assuming this is a paid internship!). I haven’t found another internship yet for this spring so I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sarah Q. Tisch

This cover letter is too short and doesn’t convey why Sarah is right for the internship. See a stronger cover letter example, written by Dara, on the next page. ↓

[WHAT TO WRITE EXAMPLE]

720 Broadway, Apt. 1
New York, NY 10003
(718) 555-1234
January 30, 2015

Moguldom Media Group
171 Madison Avenue
Penthouse
New York, NY 10016

Sarah called and asked for the name and address of the hiring manager.

Listing specific internship title, as there may be more than one internship available at this company.

Responding to specific qualifications of the internship.

Dear Mr. Jones,

It is with great interest that I apply for the Production Assistant Intern position which I found on the College Central website at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. I am a Junior Film & Television major specializing in editing. My experience shooting and editing short films as a Digital Media intern at Starz this past summer, along with my academic success at NYU provides an excellent fit for this role.

Last semester at NYU Tisch, I was a production assistant on *Secrets of Mice*, which went on to win the Audience Favorite Award at the Fusion Film Festival. I have learned how to work best under pressure and gained valuable production experience through a number of NYU student productions. I have continued to develop my editing skills on Final Cut and Avid and hope to bring that experience to this internship.

Through my coursework and previous production experience, I possess the in-depth knowledge of producing original content videos, as well as the ability to onboard quickly with your fast-paced company. At this point in my program, I am ready to utilize my education and work experience as a valued intern with Moguldom Media Group. Please contact me at 718-555-1234 or darar@nyu.edu with any questions or to arrange an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dara R. Tisch

Leaving questions such as pay and hours to the interview- she'll have more leverage when they see what a great fit she is for the role.

Focusing on strengths, not what she is unfamiliar with.

[APPLICATION COVER LETTER SAMPLE]

80 Madison Street
New York, NY 10002
(212) 555-5555
August 10, 2015

Mr. Richard Spencer
Assistant Vice President, Operations
National Banking Corporation
280 Park Avenue, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Spencer:

I am interested in the Assistant Producer position for Project 21. My on-set experience and passion for producing are an excellent match for this exciting opportunity.

In the past two years, I have helped to produce “A, B, C”, which went on to win national and international film awards. As a production assistant, I was responsible for coordinating schedules, meetings, and hiring staff members. I learned to adapt quickly to the ever-changing needs a producer encounters. From managing crew to completing last-minute errands (with speed and grace!), I excel in fast paced environments and rise to the challenge of getting a film made.

Prior to working on “A, B, C”, I attended the Tisch School of the Arts where I studied Film and Television production. As a student, I was able to cultivate my passion for film-making and hone my story-telling skills through class projects and an internship with Montel Productions. I understand that a great story drives a film project, and working in production ensures that it is told as effectively as possible.

I would greatly appreciate the chance to work with you on Project 21. I will call you next week to discuss the possibility of setting up an interview. In the meantime, I can be reached at (212) 555-5555 or you can e-mail me at norman.tisch@nyu.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Norman Tisch

Norman Tisch

[PROSPECTING COVER LETTER SAMPLE]

2003 Gun Hill Road
Bronx, NY 10007
(718) 555-5555
February 2, 2015

Ms. Jennifer Simon, Editorial Director
Metropolitan Books
2050 Broadway, Suite 10
New York, NY 10015

Do your research!
Try to address your
letter to a specific
person whenever
possible.

Dear Ms. Simon:

Are you looking for a resourceful assistant with strong oral and written communication skills? I am a great admirer of several of your recently published books, and would be extremely interested in working for you.

Be sure to tailor this section so that you are highlighting skills relevant to the specific department or company of interest.

I can offer Metropolitan the following qualifications:

- Creativity. As an undergraduate at NYU, I wrote and designed the copy and layout for over five widely distributed publications. I am also a frequent contributor to *Facets*, a student-run literary journal.
- Technical Skills. I am skilled in Adobe Creative Suite, and can learn and use other computer applications quickly.
- Belief in your product and direction. I am an avid reader of your short story collections, and I also have taken a strong professional interest in your innovations in the e-book market. As the publishing industry evolves, I'm inspired by how Metropolitan continues to find new ways to engage readers and champion writers from non-traditional backgrounds.

Metropolitan is the type of growing publishing house with which I hope to start my editing career. I work well with co-workers and thrive in a team environment. May I call you next week to discuss employment opportunities? My number is (718) 555-5555 and my email address is beth.tisch@nyu.edu, if you want to reach me beforehand.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Tisch

Beth Tisch

Be proactive. By stating that you will follow up, you leave the next steps in your hands instead of a busy executive. Just be sure to follow through!

[PROSPECTING LETTER W/REFERENCE SAMPLE]

45 Flatbush Avenue, Apt. 8-B
Brooklyn, NY 22344
(718) 555-5555
November 25, 2016

Ms. Amy Greenburg
Vice President
Global Entertainment, Inc.
17 Sunset Boulevard, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 89904

If you have a connection, reference them immediately.
This will likely increase your response rate.

Dear Ms. Greenburg:

Austin Powers from Triangle Studios suggested that I contact you. I served as his assistant last summer. Now that I am graduating from New York University and making arrangements to move to Los Angeles, he thought that you might be willing to recommend a few organizations that could use my skills.

My plan is to break into film distribution, an aspect of the entertainment industry that has always interested me. As a Tisch Film major, I gained an extensive understanding of production, which is important when setting up a distribution schedule. I also have a Producing minor, which gave me a solid education in the business aspects of film. Outside of the classroom, my experience as a line producer on numerous student films taught me how to negotiate with vendors and motivate a staff in order to have projects accomplished on time. These skills are combined with a love of California and a “don’t quit” attitude that I believe qualifies me to make a solid contribution to any film company.

My resume is attached for your perusal. I will arrive in Los Angeles by the end of this month, and will call you then to see if you have any suggestions. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

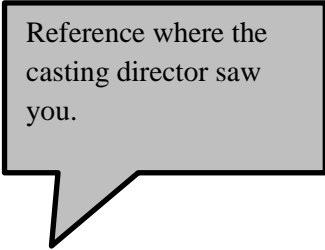
Andrew Tisch

Andrew Tisch

[PROSPECTING LETTER SAMPLE FOR ACTORS]

50 Park Terrace West
New York, NY 10001
(917) 111-0099
February 20, 2015

Stephanie Klapper Casting
123 Broadway
New York, NY 10003



Reference where the casting director saw you.

Dear Ms. Klapper,

Thank you so much for attending the Tisch Stageworks production of *Carrie*. My name's Towanda Tisch and I played the role of Sue.

I am graduating from Tisch this May and am currently attending meetings I acquired via my performance in *Carrie*. I've amassed several indie film credits during the last year and will have the lead in *Ticket to Ride* at the NY Fringe in August.

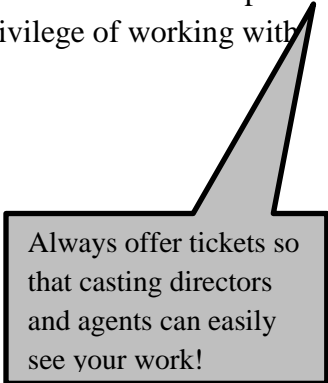
It would be a delight to meet with and/or audition for you, if you are interested. I am enclosing my headshot and resume. Please also let me know if I can help arrange *Ticket to Ride* comps for you this summer. I hope this letter finds you well and that I have the privilege of working with you in near future!

Sincerely,

Towanda Tisch

Towanda Tisch

Enc. Headshot and Resume



Always offer tickets so that casting directors and agents can easily see your work!

[SCRIPT SUBMISSION INQUIRY SAMPLE]

726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003
212-555-5555
February 1, 2015

Ms. Kendra Huang-Smythe
Director of Programming
Village Theatre
250 W. 49th Street, Ste. 601
Issaquah, WA 98019

Dear Ms. Huang-Smythe,

I am interested in submitting my musical drama, *Daughters Three*, for the Village Theatre's Festival of New Musicals.

Loosely based on *King Lear*, this pop rock opera examines the twisted family dynamics of an aging Florida tycoon and his children. *Daughters Three* was originally created as my thesis production at the Tisch Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where its initial development was supervised by faculty advisor Sybille Pearson. It also received a reading in the 2010 New Directions Showcase at the Abingdon Theatre, and selected portions of the score were performed in a November concert at Joe's Pub.

Enclosed please find the show's synopsis, character and scene breakdowns, a demo CD. If you would like to review the complete script or any other additional materials, please contact me at 212-555-5555 or claire.tisch@nyu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Claire Tisch

Claire Tisch