



## Cover Letter

### How to Start

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- Cover letters should be ONE PAGE ONLY with margins size .7" - 1" all the way around
- Use the same formatting and styling (including your header) as your resume except the font should be 10-12 pt
- Do your research before writing so you can make a personal connection to the company and position
- The letter should both demonstrate your qualifications and written communication skills

### What to Include: Content

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- Target your cover letter for each position and company to make your letter stronger
- Whenever possible, address the letter to a specific person or hiring manager
- Avoid starting each sentence with "I" and vary your sentence structure
- Use related work and academic experiences as evidence of your qualifications
- Proof reading is a must; simple errors or typos may cost you the job opportunity
- Save and upload your letter as a PDF to prevent any changes in formatting

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## Top 5 Dos and Don'ts for Cover Letters

### Do

1. Share specific examples from a variety of experiences (academics, employment, extracurricular activities, etc)
2. Mention transferable skills gained from experiences
3. Find a way to emphasize you want **this** job, not just a job
4. Be a sincere applicant
5. Take your time and ask for help with editing

### Don't

1. Rush the letter and make spelling or grammatical mistakes
2. List skills without sharing examples of where you learned them or used them
3. Directly quote what is listed on your resume; instead, expand on your resume
4. Expect an interview just because you applied
5. Wait until the last minute to write the letter

# *Pistol Pete*

101 Campus Drive • Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078 • pistol.pete@okstate.edu • (405) 123-4567

Today's date, year

Specific person  
Title, company name  
Street address  
City, state zip

Dear Specific Person:

The opening paragraph should include information about which position you are applying and where you discovered the job posting. Include 1-3 sentences describing why you are interested in this company/position and how it is a good fit for you. Demonstrate your company research and summarize how their opening fits your skills, education and career goals.

The body paragraph(s) should be one or two paragraphs in length and will make direct connections between the job description and your background. Using the job posting make a clear emphasis from the skills and job tasks outlined in the position description to your education or experiences. Each cover letter should be unique because you will be writing about the specific ways you fit each job. By providing specific examples from your own classes, projects, previous jobs, internships, campus involvement or volunteering will show how you would be a good match for the job. You should include several examples, but you don't need to cover everything listed on your resume. Focus on the most related positions and experiences and make sure to discuss transferable skills from unrelated positions. How do you envision yourself contributing to the organization in the job?

Vary your sentence structure; every sentence should not start with "I." Include specific examples to show the value of what you have to offer. Don't write a long list of skills; instead share one or two, and then discuss about how you learned those skills or where you were able to demonstrate using them. You shouldn't directly quote the job description; the company already knows what they are looking for in a candidate. Instead elaborate on how you fulfill their requirements with details from your experience. Each paragraph should have good flow and include a wrap up sentence that summarizes, without being repetitive, why you want this job. Proof reading is a must, try reading your draft out loud to yourself to catch errors or find better ways to word sentences.

In the closing paragraph you should thank them for their time and/or consideration of your application materials. Your letter should show you are qualified for an interview, but you are not entitled to one just because you applied. You can stress how interested you are in the position and emphasis how you would be an asset.

Sincerely,

Pistol Pete

# PISTOL PETE

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101 Campus Drive • Stillwater, OK 74078 • (405) 123-4567 • pistol.pete@okstate.edu

Mr. John Doe  
Sr. Associate Athletic Director  
External Affairs  
213 Life Sciences East  
Stillwater, OK 74078

January 28, 2018

Dear Mr. Doe,

With a background in external relations, communications, event planning and relationship building in a collaborative, fundraising environment, as well as a passion for creativity in all aspects of life, I am a great fit for the Stewardship and External Relations Coordinator. After consideration of the qualifications and requirements, I am pleased to submit my application for this position. As an upcoming graduate of the university with a degree in Strategic Communications and someone who is passionate about OSU athletics, I am excited about the opportunity to build upon the foundation of loyalty and excellence that has been laid.

Experience in donor relations, fundraising, event planning and membership engagement gained through on-campus leadership, has provided me with a unique set of skills that I can bring to the position. As a passionate future alumnus, it is my goal to promote and enhance the organization by engaging its membership through coordinating innovative events and highlighting both the organizations success and the success of the student athletes. I will strive to create value by increasing donor fundraising at all levels and promote the OSU spirit. In addition, I am confident in my ability to communicate with all audiences including donors, alumni, the media, members of the community, athletics leadership, as well as university leadership, faculty, staff and students.

I possess a strong ability to cultivate and develop relationships, effective communication skills, the ability to engage the membership base, as well as create and plan events to attract new donors, the lifeblood of the organization. My attached resume outlines my educational and work experience. I look forward to discussing this opportunity further and how my experience can bring value to the organization. Thank you for your consideration.

Warm regards,

Pistol Pete

# Pistol Pete

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213 Life Sciences East | Stillwater, OK 74078 | (405) 123-4567 | pistol.pete@okstate.edu

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Sandia National Labs  
1515 Eubank Blvd SE # 831  
Albuquerque, NM 87123

Dear Selection Committee,

The work of Sandia National Labs to promote national security through technology development greatly interests me. I was introduced to the company at a career fair this past spring by John Doe. Learning from him that at Sandia, my passions for computer science and math can be a career has led me to apply for the available year-round undergraduate internship for High Performance Computing Support R&D. Not only does this position fit the skills and experiences I have already developed as a sophomore, it would be a great opportunity to gain first-hand experience with a company with which I am interested in a life-long career.

For over a year, I have been leading a research project that uses High Performance Computing to model the quantum behavior of melanin molecules. My contributions to this project have developed my blend of skills in applying computer science, software engineering practices, and mathematics across physics and chemistry disciplines. The presentation experience I have gained through oral and poster presentation on this project have led to a familiarity with communicating with other scientists. Two poster presentation examples are enclosed in this application. My publication record as a sophomore also demonstrates my ability to contribute to research and development.

This internship would be a unique opportunity for me to demonstrate early on in my academic career the ability to contribute to your work. By the time I graduate from Oklahoma State University in December 2019, I hope to have enough experience working with groups at Sandia National Labs to be considered for full-time employment. Thank you for taking the time to review and consider my application.

Sincerely,

Pistol Pete

Enclosed:  
Resume  
Unofficial Academic Transcript  
Portfolio of Completed Projects

# PISTOL PETE

213 LIFE SCIENCES EAST • STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078 • 405-744-5658  
PISTOL.PETE@OKSTATE.EDU

Dr. Jane Doe  
Co-Director, Orange University Summer Science Academy  
Office of Biomedical Research Education and Training

Dear Summer Science Academy Selection Committee,

Dr. Jane Doe recommended me to apply for the Summer Science Academy Intern position. I learned about Orange's Interdisciplinary Graduate Program through GradSchoolMatch, where Dr. Doe and I began interacting via email. After researching the program website, I felt drawn to the Microbiology and Immunology and Pathology departments, which aligns with my passion and interest for those specific disciplines. Due to my extensive research experience and laboratory skill set, I believe that I would be an excellent fit for the Orange University Summer Science Academy. As such, please consider me for the Summer Science Academy Intern position.

Through my research opportunities, lab intensive coursework, and applicable lectures, I have had the opportunity to gain invaluable skills and knowledge that have helped strengthen my love for research and prepare me for my future goals. The coursework I have taken at Oklahoma State University has allowed me to expand my knowledge over a broad array of disciplines within the microbiology field, such as Pathogenic Microbiology Lecture and Lab, Brewing Microbiology, Immunology, and Microbial Genomics and Bioinformatics. At Oklahoma State University's Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Department, I have worked on a singular project since September 2016. My project involves the effect of elevated calcium levels on the virulence factor, rhamnolipid production, in the bacterial pathogen, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, by testing the promoter activity of a gene essential to rhamnolipid production. Through this project, I have gained experience in plasmid purification, heat-shock transformations, electroporation, and measuring promoter activity using a BioTek scanner. Through this experience, I have mastered the importance of optimizing an experimental protocol, properly analyzing obtained data, and how to collaborate with fellow lab mates while using my protocol to test a series of their transposon mutants that could play a role in calcium's role in rhamnolipid production. I have also acquired communication skills that have allowed me to properly convey my own research to an audience by participating in a series of conferences such as Oklahoma Center for Respiratory and Infectious Diseases conferences and Oklahoma Academy of Science technical meetings.

Another experience I have been lucky to have was participating in an REU program with Texas A&M's Biochemistry department the summer of 2017. My project at Texas A&M was vastly different from my research at Oklahoma State University, giving me a whole new skill set within research. This project revolved around studies to understand the mechanism of regulation of the *HIS3* gene by the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* histone methyltransferase, SET1. Over the summer, I gained experience in placing epitope tags on genes, performing PCR verification and gel electrophoresis, performing Western blots, and using Chromatin immunoprecipitation to analyze protein-DNA interactions in vivo. Through this REU program, I also attained exposure to scientific writing by creating a full-length thesis over my work and strengthened my oral presentation skills through a symposium at the end of the summer.

Thanks to all of the research experiences I have had the privilege to acquire during my college career, I am confident in my decision to apply for graduate school in the Fall of 2018 and pursue a PhD. Through my education I am hoping for the opportunity to one day research and explore the pathogenicity behind infectious diseases and potential bioterrorism agents. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the Orange University Summer Science Academy Intern position. If you have any questions concerning my application, please do not hesitate to contact me at 281-685-1881 or [pistol.pete@okstate.edu](mailto:pistol.pete@okstate.edu). Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Go Oranges!

Pistol Pete