The cover letter introduces you to potential employers and should always accompany a résumé. A cover letter is an important marketing tool that clearly highlights the strengths of your candidacy. It is used to initiate contact with an employer, capture the employer’s interest, demonstrate your credentials, and ultimately to secure an interview.

**Types of Cover Letters**

**PROSPECTING/INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

This type of letter is used to inform the employer of your interest and to inquire about available opportunities.

**APPLICATION LETTER**

This type of letter is the most common and is sent to an employer in response to a specific job or internship posting.

**Cover Letter Content**

Cover letters are written in a business letter format. A cover letter should not exceed one page in length and should consist of three to five paragraphs.

**OPENING PARAGRAPH**

Use the opening paragraph to introduce yourself. State your reason for writing and how you learned about the organization and/or position. If someone referred you, include the person’s name and affiliation with that employer. Also, include two to three sentences demonstrating your level of interest and knowledge about the organization.

**MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S)**

Use the middle paragraph(s) to emphasize and elaborate on your strongest qualifications and key experiences relevant to the position for which you are applying. Address any specific qualifications the employer may have listed in the job description. Use your résumé and cover letter to convey the complete picture of what you want the employer to know about you.

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

Generally, the closing paragraph is used to thank the reader for his/her consideration, to request an opportunity to discuss the position, and to indicate how the employer can reach you. For those conducting long distance searches, let the employer know if you plan to visit their geographical area, in hopes of arranging an interview during your stay.

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**Sample Cover Letters**

Marie Hough
Slivka Hall
3322 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60201
(309) 555-2323
Mariehough@northwestern.edu

January 18, 2013

Penguin Group (USA)
Human Resources Department
Attn: Internship Coordinator
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

Dear Internship Coordinator:

I am a junior majoring in Comparative Literature with a minor in Public Health. Yet, to the librarian at home in New York, I am still the kid who bribes her friends for library cards each summer in order to evade the 30-books-per-week-limit. I was also the one who secretly hoped for rainy days in elementary school – it meant spending recess in the library.

Now that I am at Northwestern University, I have had the ability to branch out in my passion for reading. I have become interested in the legal processes of the literary world, and I began to see how a publishing company responds to changes such as the rise in e-books. Since publishing is a field closed off to most students, I am eager to explore each Penguin Group department in both the Young Readers and Adult divisions, and was excited to find the posting on CareerCat.

I would like to be considered a candidate for your summer internships in the following areas: contracts, editorial and subsidiary rights.

My interest in the publishing process began with forays in journalism. During my freshman year, I joined the copy desk of The Daily Northwestern and studied investigative reporting by editing articles. The following year, I used what I learned and began working on short clips, an activity culminating in The Daily Northwestern winning about late-night dining options in Evanston. I then contacted the editor of Newsday newspaper and he invited me to join their copy desk that summer as their first undergraduate intern. Although the newspaper would walk out of the office each night with my nose stuck happily in a copy of the next morning’s paper.

An internship with Penguin Group would introduce me to a new area of the publishing industry – one without which, story pitching and writing would be void. Writing the newspaper has given me a wider view of research and writing than any class could have offered. Furthermore, it has given me an irreplaceable set of time-management skills. I hope to use the skills I have accrued in the long, but rewarding journey that goes into introducing a new novel to the bookshelf.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in more detail. I will be returning to New York for my Spring Break mid-March and would be available for an on-site interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Marie Hough
Mariehough@northwestern.edu

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**Cover Letter Tips**

- Address your cover letter to a specific person.
- Customize your cover letter for each employer.
- Solicit feedback on your cover letter.
- Proofread before submitting your application materials.
Research and writing experience, along with time-management skills are highly desirable qualities we look for in candidates.

The internship program consists of three 10-week long sessions. During the spring and fall, interns work 14 hours per week. During the summer, interns work 28 hours per week.

A series of lunch events are planned for summer interns. Brown Bag lunches give interns the opportunity to learn about different departments, and group lunches are designed to allow interns to network with each other as well as employees across the company.
University Career Services (UCS) provides comprehensive and centralized services to Northwestern undergraduate students, graduate students and alumni. We offer an array of services and programs to assist with your career-related needs:

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