



**Cover
Letter
Guide**

Asnuntuck Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, marital status, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, political belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or genetic information in its programs and activities. In addition, the College does not discriminate in employment on the additional basis of veteran status or criminal record. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Yhara Zelinka, Title IX Coordinator yzelinka@asnuntuck.edu (860) 253-3092 and Cheryl Cyr ccyr@asnuntuck.edu Human Resources (860) 253-3045 Asnuntuck Community College, 170 Elm Street, Enfield, CT. 06082.

A cover letter accompanies your résumé and serves as **a targeted introduction** to an employer. Although your résumé sticks to the facts of what you've done, a cover letter gives you the opportunity to elaborate on your specific skills and experiences as they **directly relate to each position for which you are applying**. It highlights relevant information, allows you to showcase your writing style, and (most importantly) demonstrates transferable skills.

Remember, you only get one chance to make a first impression, so take the time to craft a letter that focuses on what the employer is specifically looking for. **Generic cover letters are not effective** and employers can spot them very quickly. Sending the same cover letter to multiple companies/hiring managers/etc. is a sure way to land your application at the bottom of the pile.

Formatting the Letter

Your letter should be written in a business letter format which includes your return address, phone number, and e-mail address on the top, as well as the employer's address and date. You may also include your LinkedIn account. If you create a personal letterhead or header for your résumé, be sure to use the same one at the top of your cover letter.

Your letter should be **addressed to a specific person in the organization**. Write to a person who has the ability to hire you (this may or may not be someone in Human Resources). In order to avoid using the generic "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Human Resources" or even "Dear Internship Coordinator," please consider utilizing LinkedIn. Although many large corporations withhold the names of individuals hiring, LinkedIn provides a multitude of opportunities to locate a name at an organization to which you are applying.

Use the same high-quality paper you use for your résumé for any letter you send. Cover letters should be brief and concise – **no more than one page** and three to four paragraphs.

The Basics

An effective cover letter states:

- who you are
- why you are writing
- why you are the best candidate for the job or internship

A cover letter does not convey your entire life story; it demonstrates your relevant skills and abilities.

The key to crafting a cover letter that gets you noticed is to **make it all about the company**. Why would you be an asset to them? How do/would you work toward achieving their mission or goals? If you are unsure of where to start, *refer to the job description!* **Companies tell you exactly what they are looking for in an employee.**

Remember, the purpose of a cover letter and resume is to land an interview, not the job. The purpose of the interview is to land the job.

Think of the job description (generally includes a list of responsibilities/roles/duties) as a checklist companies use to determine who they would like to interview. From the posting, **identify the most important 2-3 responsibilities** and structure each paragraph around one responsibility demonstrating your skills and experiences.

Cover Letter Contents

Cover letters consist of three parts: an introduction, one to two body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Introduction (First Paragraph)

The goal of the first paragraph is to state who you are and why you are writing. Identify the position for which you are applying, how you heard of the opening, and what it is about the organization motivating you to write. In your introduction, refer to any contact you have had with the organization, providing the names of people with whom you have spoken. You can then lead into the body paragraph by emphasizing how your background is a good fit for **their specific needs**.

Body of the Letter (Second and/or Third Paragraphs)

The body of the letter is the place to highlight your relevant qualifications for the position and company to which you are applying. Here is where you sell yourself and your abilities, explaining how your skills and experience can be **valuable to the employer**. Do not apologize for lack of experience. Instead, keep the focus on what you have to offer. Highlight your most related accomplishments and experiences, demonstrating **why you are a good match for the job**.

The body may be one or two paragraphs, depending on your writing style and amount of related experience. For example, some cover letters include one paragraph highlighting education and another showcasing work/internship experience. Emphasize your key qualifications by expanding on **relevant information** (refer to the job description!) in your résumé, and provide **concrete examples** that demonstrate what you have learned and the skills you have developed. Give the employer reasons to interview you for the position, whether it is a full-time job or internship.

Conclusion (Final Paragraph)

The final paragraph expresses your thanks to the reader and reaffirms your interest in the position. *It also states your ultimate goal – to meet with the hiring manager in order to discuss your background in a personal interview.*

This is a good place to personalize the letter to the specific company, although you can also do this in the second paragraph of the body or the introduction. *Any information you know about the employer can go a long way in showing that you did your homework and are interested in working for them.*

Be sure to **research the company's website** and learn about their major projects, mission, programming, articles, clients, etc. You can reference anything of interest that has impressed you and has affirmed your interest in wanting to work at that company.

Final Tips

- ✓ Be clear, concise, and organized.
- ✓ Make sure your letter is sent to the appropriate person with his/her name and title spelled correctly.
- ✓ Double-check the company name, especially if you are doing a lot of cut and paste.
- ✓ Use the active voice, keeping your tone neutral, positive, and professional. Vary your sentence structure, avoiding beginning all sentences with "I."
- ✓ If you are e-mailing a résumé and cover letter, it is best to send a cover letter as a PDF attachment along with the résumé. NEVER copy and paste a cover letter into the body of an e-mail, rather, send a short note referencing the attached application.
- ✓ Print on quality bond paper (8.5 x 11) which should match your résumé and your envelope, if you are mailing it.
- ✓ Communicate your potential contributions *to the organization* and demonstrate your skills.
- ✓ Proofread and edit again and again! Spell check does not catch all errors, so show your letter to as many people as possible. Watch out for misspellings, as well as typing, grammatical, or factual errors.
- ✓ Make your letter as *specific* as possible. Gearing your letter toward each employer is your way to distinguish it from the others that will pass across the hiring manager's desk. This can be accomplished by breaking down each job description and highlighting how your skills and experience match what they are looking for.
- ✓ Be sure to sign your letter if you are mailing or faxing.

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Sample Job Description

Associate Product Photographer

Internal, global marketing department is seeking a full-time, entry/mid-level Associate Product Photographer to produce product and application imagery for internal and external marketing needs.

Working with the Product Photographer, the Associate Product Photographer will produce product imagery by shooting in studio, as well as post processing imagery so it fits within the company's creative strategic vision.

Job responsibilities:

- Ability to manage duties in all stages of photography, from capture to retouching
- Successfully make technical decisions regarding lighting, shooting angle, lens selection
- Produce photography by shooting in-studio
- Execute post-capture retouching, including creative editing, color correction, and file formatting
- Facilitate internal and external image requests, formatting as needed
- Execute projects with minimal supervision

Qualifications:

- Possess a high attention to detail
- Ability to work within a fast-paced, team environment
- Experience with professional DSLR cameras, lenses, lighting, and image editing equipment
- Possess strong calibration skills, self-motivated with strong communication skills
- Proficient in Adobe Creative Suite
- Able to effectively handle competing/changing priorities
- Able to provide portfolio of original work showcasing photography and retouching skills

Skills:

Excellent visual aesthetic

Experience with Adobe CS/CC (Photoshop, Light room)

Skilled with image retouching, color correcting, formatting

Strong work ethic with the desire to learn

Highly organized, process focused, desire for continuous improvement

Education/Experience:

Bachelor's degree (B.A./B.F.A.) and minimum of 1 to 2 years working experience in the Digital Imaging field.

Computer Skills:

To perform this job successfully, an individual must have advanced knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite/Creative Cloud (including, Photoshop, Lightroom) and MS Office Suite. Excellent skills in Mac OS are also critical.

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Sample Cover Letter

LOVANDA R. SIMON

203 Glendale Avenue • South Preston, CT 06123
(860) 555-5555 • lovandasimon@gmail.com • [LinkedIn](#)

May 14, 2016

Jean Hutchins
Director of Marketing
Applewood Hardware, Inc.
125 Elm Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Ms. Hutchins,

As a digital photographer with six and a half years of full-time experience, I have produced exceptional work in a wealth of photographic disciplines and appreciate that world-class still images are essential to Applewood Hardware's marketing materials. With an eye toward furthering those efforts and creative strategic vision, I submit my application for Associate Product Photographer.

With both domestic and global experience, I am well-versed in creating images for internal and external needs. My work has been published in Newsweek, Fortune and BusinessWeek, and I have spent most of my career working in fast-paced, high-stress environments. I will bring a keen eye, dedication to quality and an understanding of visual communication to Applewood Hardware that other candidates cannot offer. Samples of my work may be viewed here: www.lovandasimonphoto.com.

I can also efficiently manage all stages of photography including post-capture retouching, creative editing, color correction, and file formatting. For example, I recently led a 5-person project team that completed photography production two days ahead of schedule and surpassed the desired 2.5% increase in product sales. Our success can undoubtedly be attributed to our strong communication skills and team-oriented task management style.

Thank you very much for your time in reviewing my application for Associate Product Photographer. I may be reached at (860) 555-5555 or lovandasimon@gmail.com. I appreciate your consideration of me as a potential member of your team and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Lovanda Simon