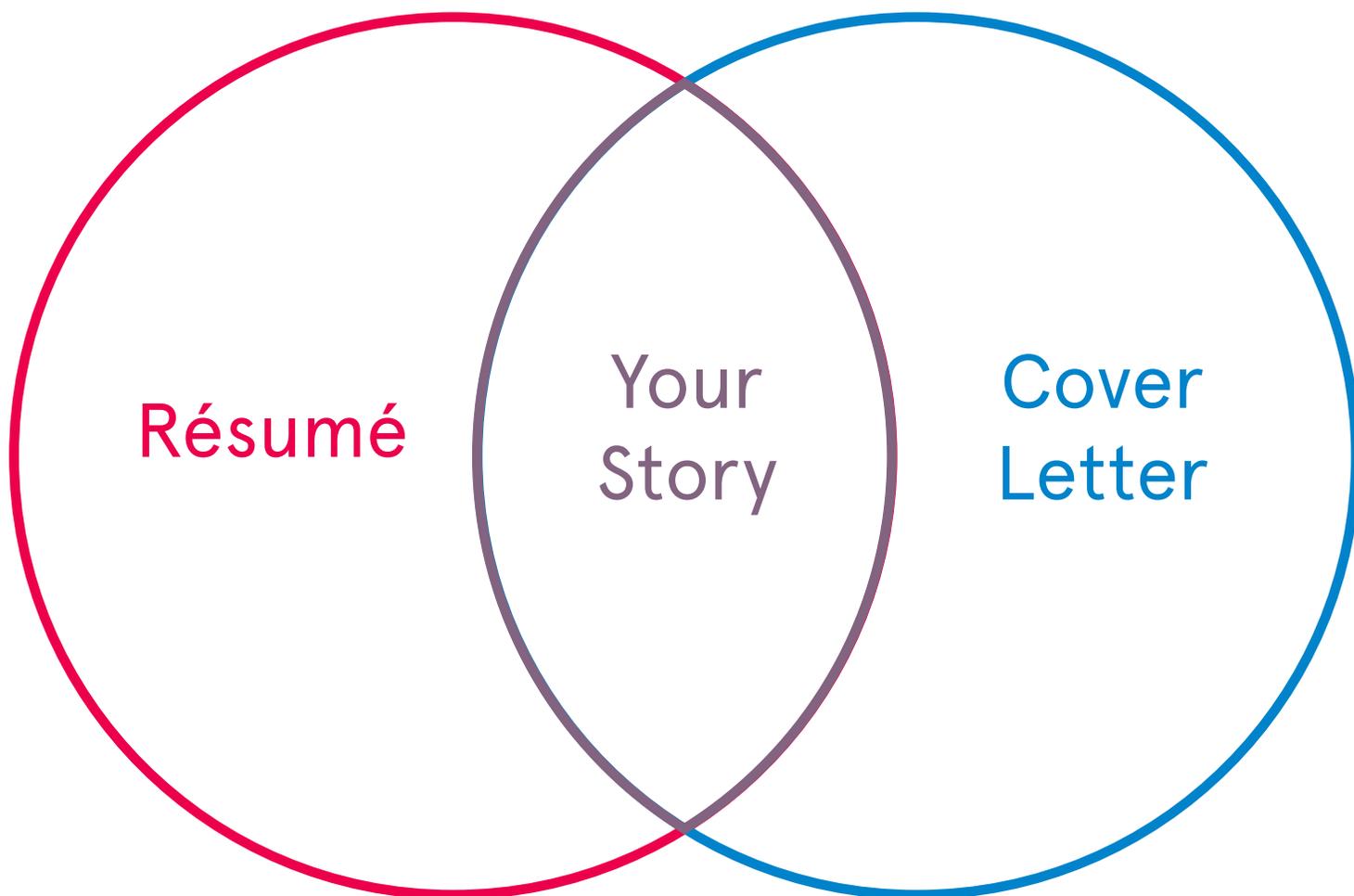


# Cover Letter Writing Guide





This guide is meant to help you develop a cover letter to help tell your story. Keep in mind, that a cover letter is only a small portion of the materials needed to present a holistic picture of who you are to a potential employer. A well-crafted résumé, and (if necessary for your chosen profession) portfolio are also necessary in developing a narrative that showcases your abilities.

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# Guidelines for Cover Letter Writing

Cover letters are key in introducing yourself to a prospective employer. Consider it as additional real estate to your résumé and a chance to expand on your summary section. Cover letters share what value you can offer the company and interest them in granting you an interview so they can learn more.

## A cover letter should demonstrate:

- Why you are writing and which job you are seeking.
- Your qualifications and why you are a good candidate through the use of concrete examples (beyond “I think I would make a good candidate”).
- What you know about the company, the position, and/or the industry.
- How you hope to continue the conversation.

## Things to keep in mind:

1. **Type each cover letter individually.** It is best to get a contact name and the title of the person to whom you are sending your letter.
2. **Connect your experience and interest to the company** or person to whom you are writing.
3. Keep it **brief and to the point.** Include examples and accomplishments while keeping it less than one page.
4. **Proofread carefully** for spelling and grammatical errors. Ask others to check for clarity, grammar, typos, and spelling.
5. It’s about **what is right for the company** you’re applying to. Some companies are cheeky, some companies are corporate, some are in-between and your cover letter should speak to who they are.

# Sample Cover Letter Format

Include a letterhead that matches your résumé

YOUR NAME  
CITY, STATE, PHONE, EMAIL, WEBSITE

Date

Name of person you're writing to  
Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State, and Zip

Re: or Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_: (If you can't find a name, Hello, is better than a generic alternative).

**First Paragraph:** Introduce yourself, let the employer know your intentions and what interests you about this specific position/company. If you've got a name to drop or somebody recommended you, mention it in the opening. Avoid starting with "I am applying to" instead start with something that defines who you are in relation to the job (e.g. "As an avid fantasy reader...").

**Second/Third Paragraph:** Elaborate on your specific experience, abilities, or skills that apply to this job. Back these examples with specific accomplishments. Connect it back to what the company needs and how you fill that need. You might go more in depth about something on your résumé or describe your approach as it relates to their culture. Avoid laundry lists of skills and be brief and to the point (remember this is a supplement to your résumé).

**Final Paragraph:** Potentially bring it back to your interest in the company. Keep your closing simple and fairly neutral. Thank them for considering your application, possibly direct them to your portfolio or the best way to reach you, and suggest that you get together to discuss your credentials further.

Sincerely,  
Your Name

# Cover Letter Worksheet

## **FIRST PARAGRAPH**

Why are you writing?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you know about this company?

## **SECOND/THIRD PARAGRAPH**

What skills are necessary for this position? What have you done that demonstrates these skills?

What can you offer the company? (Expand on what's in your résumé, consider particular approaches or values that brought you to previous experiences and fit what they need.)

## **FINAL PARAGRAPH**

Is there anything else you want them to know?

	Start Over	Needs Editing	Ready to Go
<b>Applicant Contact</b> <small>(name, address, email, phone, date)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 or more pieces of information are missing</li> <li>• Professional email is not provided or inappropriate (ex. cutebutterfly97@gmail.com)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 piece of information is missing</li> <li>• Professional email is provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All appropriate info is included</li> <li>• Professional email is provided</li> </ul>
<b>The Addressee</b> <small>(Name, organization, organization address)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 or more pieces of info are missing</li> <li>• Salutation is missing or improper salutation is used (ex. Dear Sir or Dear Mike, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 piece of appropriate info is missing</li> <li>• General but appropriate salutation is used (ex. To whom it may concern)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All appropriate info is included</li> <li>• Specific and appropriate salutation is used (ex. Dear Ms. Smith.; etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize why they want the position rather than how they can benefit the organization!</li> <li>• Does NOT demonstrate knowledge of position description AND relates qualifications in a general, non-compelling way.</li> <li>• Does NOT or only generally articulates who they are AND does NOT show what makes them stand out and/or how they connect with the position &amp; organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the applicant's knowledge of the position description AND relates their skills &amp; qualifications to the position in a general, non-compelling way.</li> <li>• Applicant clearly and professionally articulates who they are but does NOT show what makes them stand out and/or how they connect with position &amp; organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The letter demonstrates the applicant's knowledge of the position description AND relates their skills &amp; qualifications to the position AND organization of interest.</li> <li>• Applicant clearly and professionally articulates who they are, what makes them stand out, how they connect with position &amp; organization.</li> </ul>
<b>Content: Introduction</b> <small>(Intro info: How applicant learned of position, name of org applying for, name of position applying for)</small> <small>(Applicant info: name, school, years of experience, etc.)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 or more intro info is missing</li> <li>• Some introductory applicant information is provided AND relation to position is NOT clear and NOT compelling.</li> <li>• Description of applicant interest AND how they can add value is NOT clear and NOT targeted. (Could any company)</li> <li>• The description has one or more platitudes or clichés such as always, never, etc. (Ex. I always deliver on promises)</li> <li>• Conditional: Did not include a personal contact or recommender the hiring manager would know (if a connection exists)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All appropriate intro info is included.</li> <li>• Some introductory applicant information is provided AND relation to position is clear yet NOT compelling.</li> <li>• Description of why the applicant is interested AND how they can add value is clear yet NOT targeted.</li> <li>• The description has a platitudes or clichés such as always, never, etc. (Ex. I always deliver on my promises)</li> <li>• Conditional: Included a personal contact or recommender the hiring manager would know (if a connection exists)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All appropriate intro info is included.</li> <li>• Introductory applicant information is provided AND relation to position is clear and compelling.</li> <li>• Description of why the applicant is interested AND how they can add value is clear and targeted.</li> <li>• The description is free of platitudes and clichés (such: as always, never, etc)</li> <li>• Conditional: Included a personal contact or recommender the hiring manager would know (if a connection exists)</li> </ul>
<b>Content: Body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does NOT describe an experience that illustrates relevant skills or qualifications; instead they describe their attributes (ex. Hard working, detail oriented, etc.)</li> <li>• TELLS how they added value to previous project, company, etc. by generally describing what they did at previous work experiences while lacking in specific detail (ex. While at this position I made sure I saw a project through with diligence and focus, etc.)</li> <li>• The description uses of platitudes and clichés such as always, never, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes at least 1 experience that illustrates relevant qualifications AND connects them to the position.</li> <li>• SHOWS rather than TELLS how they added value to previous project, company, etc. by concisely describing the project/duty, their contribution(s), the outcome, and follow up (if there was any) AND then links this experience to how they could contribute to current organization and position.</li> <li>• The description is mostly free of platitudes and clichés (such as: always, never, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes at least 2 experiences that illustrate relevant qualifications AND connects them to the position.</li> <li>• SHOWS rather than TELLS how they added value to previous project, company, etc. by concisely describing the project/duty, their contribution(s), the outcome, and follow up (if there was any) AND then links this experience to how they could contribute to intended organization and position.</li> <li>• The description is free of platitudes and clichés (such as: always, never, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Content: Closing &amp; Signature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not thank the reader.</li> <li>• Wraps up letter without enthusiasm and/or professionalism.</li> <li>• No mention of follow up.</li> <li>• The description has some platitudes and clichés such as always, never, etc.</li> <li>• Ends without a formal &amp; professional closing (i.e. Sincerely, etc.)</li> <li>• Ends with applicants first name only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks the reader.</li> <li>• Concisely wraps up letter with enthusiasm and professionalism.</li> <li>• No mention of follow up.</li> <li>• The description is mostly free of platitudes and clichés such as always, never, etc.</li> <li>• Ends with formal &amp; professional closing (i.e. Sincerely, etc.)</li> <li>• Ends with applicants full name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks the reader.</li> <li>• Concisely wraps up with enthusiasm and professionalism.</li> <li>• May indicate follow up plan &amp; time-frame</li> <li>• Closing is free of platitudes and clichés such as always, never, etc.</li> <li>• Ends with formal &amp; professional closing (i.e. Sincerely, etc.)</li> <li>• Ends with applicants full name</li> </ul>

# Cover Letter Examples:

[Redacted]  
 A: [Redacted]  
 T: [Redacted] E: [Redacted]  
 Re: Photographer Position as Advertised on Monster

## NOTES:

Is specific in the first sentence about how they can support the department and spends the rest of the cover letter backing up that claim with their experience.

Dear Ms. Hart:

After reviewing the product photographer job posting on Monster, I am confident I can support your creative department in producing high-quality product shots for marketing and social media.

I offer 12 years of commercial studio and on-location experience, producing photos from idea conception to end production. My work has been featured in leading publications (e.g., DEF Publication, GHI Magazine and JKL Home & Garden) as well as global campaigns for MNO Co., PQR Co. and STU Co.

Currently a photographer for an online marketing and communications firm, I produce images for catalog, website and social media marketing. I plan, prepare, light, compose and edit 100+ images each day for a range of products, from jewelry, fashion and food to restaurant, hotel and other on-location shots.

Skilled at creating images that capture attention on social media, thousands of my images have appeared on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter and Tumblr. I play a key role in the visual storytelling and branding of leading consumer product companies and contribute to successful marketing campaigns.

Previously, I traveled throughout the U.S. to capture nature, landscape and architectural photography for print magazines and websites as a staff photographer for XYZ Publication Company.

I have comprehensive knowledge of Photoshop, InDesign, Lightroom, Bridge, Illustrator and Capture One Pro; studio and lighting setups; and photography equipment including Canon cameras (I currently shoot with an EOS 5D Mark IV). You can say I'm obsessed with learning about and applying the latest advances in photography tools, services and equipment to improve image quality and automate work-flows.

Let's discuss how I can translate strategic vision into high-quality, memorable images for your brand. Please review my portfolio at [someportfolio.com](http://someportfolio.com) and call me at (555) 555-5555 to set up an interview. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
 Chris Jones

\*Sourced from Monster.com

Dear Dr. Smith:

Ever since I started teaching at the elementary school level, I have been passionate in my commitment to three things: maximizing individual student performance, inspiring students' interest in technology and instilling a sense of self-worth among all students. I have dedicated my career to each of these pursuits, as my enclosed resume will attest.

That's why I was excited to see the advertisement on Monster for an elementary teacher in your district. ABC Public Schools has earned a positive reputation for celebrating diversity, achieving academic excellence and using technology as a learning tool. It would be an honor to teach your students and serve a district that maintains high educational standards and provides students with opportunities for personal growth.

My qualifications include 12 years of elementary teaching experience, MEd and BS degrees in elementary education, and a current senior professional educator (middle childhood) license in the state of Ohio.

In my most recent position as elementary educator for DEF Public School District, I developed and taught 4th and 5th grade curricula. For more than 10 years, I provided effective classroom management, creative lesson plans, detailed student evaluations and highly praised instructional delivery. As an enthusiastic volunteer, I founded and grew the school's after-school technology club, an innovative program that covered diverse technology areas -- from Internet security best practices to Power Point tutorials. The program became so popular that it was the school's only after-school program that was consistently filled to capacity.

Although I enjoyed my tenure at DEF Public School District, my position was eliminated last May following a round of layoffs. I am eager to resume my teaching career and would be delighted to interview for this opportunity. Please feel free to contact me at 216-555-5555 or email winifred@somedomain.com to set up a meeting.

Thank you for your interest and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Winifred Thompson

**NOTES:**  
Their first paragraph outlines their values and the second paragraph aligns those values with the potential employer.

\* Sourced from Monster.com



Dear Hiring Manager,

I'm excited to be applying for the Architect position at Cloud Clearwater. With a background in project management and a passion for design, I deliver a unique combination of artistic talent and technical expertise. I'm thrilled at the opportunity to bring more than 10 years of experience as an Architect to Cloud Clearwater's industry-leading team.

During my previous role at River Tech, I was responsible for preparing a full complement of construction documents for high- and mid-rise commercial, residential, and mixed-use properties. I have specialized training in sustainability techniques and extensive real-world experience in identifying project risks and advising client stakeholders on mitigation strategies. This expertise allowed me to save River Tech clients more than \$15 million in unnecessary costs in 2017 alone.

**NOTES:**

Names the software they use in the third paragraph, but then says how they've been innovative in using it. This shows a much deeper understanding of the system than just mentioning knowing it.

In addition to my expertise in design, I'm also proficient with the major CAD software systems, including AutoCAD, Revit, ArchiCAD and SketchUp. In 2013, I spearheaded an initiative to use these systems to integrate 360-degree panoramic renderings into our client presentations, which resulted in a 150% growth in sales. These renderings have also resulted in improved client communication during project construction and have been praised by clients for providing "incomparable clarity and direction" during all stages of development.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm looking forward to learning more details about the Architect position and about Cloud Clearwater. I'm eager to combine my artistic talents with my technical skills to create award-winning designs for Cloud Clearwater's portfolio of clients.

Sincerely,  
Ivy Haddington

\* Sourced from Indeed

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Brooklyn, NY, 11230  
C: [REDACTED]  
E: [REDACTED]

Dear David:

I am writing in response to the opening for xxxx, which I believe may report to you.

I can offer you seven years of experience managing communications for top-tier xxxx firms, excellent project-management skills, and a great eye for detail, all of which should make me an ideal candidate for this opening.

I have attached my résumé for your review and would welcome the chance to speak with you sometime.

Best regards,  
Xxxx Xxxx

**NOTES:**

**A cover letter like this is most effective if you have a strong résumé and a few years experience to back it up.**

Quick and to the point offering a really quick glimpse into their experience and accomplishments.

\* Sourced from Harvard Business Review



HubSpot:

**NOTES:**

They start out a bit tongue-and-cheek about having applied here before. This works with the brand of the company. They then go on to show what they have done in the past and are currently doing as it relates to this company which helps share their insight on HubSpot's goals.

My résumé will tell you I'm Content Marketing Certified. Your records will tell you I've interviewed for a few different HubSpot positions in the past. What neither one will tell you is that I've been working with your customer success team to build a new campaign strategy for my company – one of your latest (and largest) clients.

After freelance writing for two marketing agencies, I spent three years at \_\_\_\_\_, where more than five household names became thought leaders under my editorial management. And between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, I authored content strategies for clients that loathed fluff and expected organic growth every month. I applied that sense of urgency to \_\_\_\_\_, where we're applying numerous topic clusters to several ancient service pages, validating all the mega-technical blog content I've written for these pages over the last year.

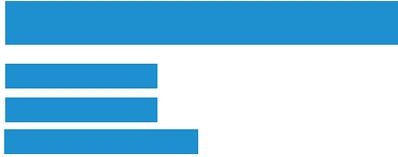
I want to help great content perform better, and you want to help great brands rethink search for content they created years ago. Let's do both, with me as your SEO & Content Optimization Manager.

My résumé is attached, including links to my work. I can't wait to talk further!

Regards,

Xxxxx Xxxxx

\* Sourced from HubSpot



Dear Andrea Hampton:

I am a senior at Pratt Institute majoring in arts and cultural management. I was extremely impressed with Live Nation Entertainment's approach to management after speaking with Yelena Shkovskaya. Live Nation Entertainment is unique in having the ability to form diverse teams to tackle all the problems a client may have. In particular, I like the amount of attention and dedication that Live Nation Entertainment puts into working with its clients, not only by devising effective strategies to address the clients' problems, but also by often implementing the recommendations on-site. Therefore, I am writing to request an invitation to interview for an Artist Manager Assistantship with Live Nation Entertainment.

In the past two years, I have been involved in strategy, consulting, entertainment, and travel booking for a non-profit arts organization. This summer, I worked in strategy for NYFA. My 6-member team evaluated the marketing efforts for a major city-wide arts event. Through my management of recruitment and interviews with 98 artists, I obtained primary research and analyzed it on national and regional levels to recommend and help implement improvements in the marketing plan. I learned how to work in a deadline-oriented environment, held responsibility for large segments of a team project, and enhanced my quantitative skills through analysis of primary and secondary research data. In addition, I conducted independent research to form recommendations when launching an event that follows a related product, and I presented these key considerations to all NYFA employees.

I have been a volunteer in public policy for 7 years with Free Arts NYC. I lobbied Senators at the New York Capitol, as well as on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Lobbying has taught me negotiation skills, the need for contingency plans, and the ability to make quick yet innovative decisions. Two years ago, I was appointed Director of New York Youth Public Affairs and asked to be a member of the state's Public Affairs Council where I developed, organized, and implemented the Foundation's annual public policy objectives in an ultimately results-driven environment.

Through my experience with NYFA and Free Arts NYC, along with my modeling work at Pratt, I used my management skills to negotiate and consult with others, analytically design a successful plan, and execute my ideas. I am confident that I can bring my strong diverse technical and business background to best fit the current needs and future ventures of Live Nation Entertainment.

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you about my qualifications and ways that I can contribute to Live Nation Entertainment. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Jane Doe

**NOTES:**

First paragraph goes into really specific details about what this person likes and understands about the company. The following two paragraphs pull from direct experiences to show the skills this person has been able to gain that they will bring to this new position.

# Artist Cover Letter (Teaching)

Dear Jane,

I am writing to apply for the faculty position of Part-time Instructor of Social Practice in Printmaking posted on the Pratt website. I find Pratt's particular interest in diversity and interdisciplinary approaches incredibly exciting and believe my teaching experience and artistic practice fits well with your mission and goal. I am currently completing a keyholder residency at the Lower East Side Printshop where I have also had the opportunity to teach 3 classes during the last semester. Last year I completed my MFA from Mass Art during which time I held a teaching assistantship with Fred Liang.

My teaching philosophy is experiential and reflectively based. I take a progressive approach challenging my students to experiment and try new things in order to get them out of their comfort zone. One of the most important parts of the educational process is having the space to fail and learn from that failure. In working with students, I encourage them to take risks that may not pan out in the end. For example, in my classes at Mass Art, I worked with junior printmaking majors interested in sustainability. While the subject of their work was clear, I challenged them to integrate the same philosophy into the materials they used. This led them to experiment with creating natural inks and using found materials to create their mark. While many of the natural inks did not create the desired effect, the students were able to learn the dimensions and framework of the materials, both palette and elasticity. One student's piece is now part of the school's collection.

My own exhibitions, research, and artistic exploration have focused on the effects of political and environmental decisions on the current social climate on a global scale. These narrative works take a cross-disciplinary approach to social issues using traditional printmaking, sculpture, and performance. My most recent piece "Desert" is part of a group exhibition at the International Print Center New York. This piece focuses on the phenomenon of food deserts within urban areas and the ways in which taxes, laws, and social biases created these deserts and the ways in which they are currently being addressed.

Both my artistic practice and through my teaching philosophy I hope to bring a lens of inquiry and questioning to my students encouraging them to make bold choices and ask larger questions. I look forward to speaking to you more about this opportunity.

Regards,

Xxxxx Xxxxx

## NOTES:

For a position that involves teaching, include your teaching philosophy. Give them an idea of what you would be like in a classroom setting.

Include information on your research and work that highlights your accomplishments and interests.

# Artist Letter of Interest (Residency, Grant, etc.)

A letter of interest (sometimes called request for qualifications) introduces your work and intentions for a committee to review. It clearly states why this opportunity would further your artistic practice.

## NOTES:

Begin by addressing your interest in the project (use the information they provided to demonstrate an understanding of what they are looking for).

Elaborate on your vision and direction by drawing connections to other projects you've done to show you can achieve your goals.

Sum up your qualifications and what makes you the best candidate for this opportunity.

Dear Selection Committee,

I am incredibly excited to submit my letter of interest for the Summer MFA Residency at Ox-Bow this summer. As a current MFA candidate at Pratt Institute, the opportunity to work with the community of visiting artists, faculty, and students throughout the three-week program would be an incredible asset in developing my thesis project and create connection with a larger creative community. The wide variety of programs and classes offered at Ox-bow makes it the perfect place to take a critical look at my own work and find new processes and pathways to develop ideas.

My main objective throughout the residency program is to develop direction for my upcoming thesis project. Currently, my work is focused on interpersonal relationships – how they're formed, change over time, and exist outside of our own perspectives. In my most recent show "Beyond and Below" I combined photography with more formal painting techniques to create images to emphasize the different between reality and perception. This body of work was my first time integrating other materials and disciplines into my paintings. I am hoping to use this summer to increase my understanding of photography and other disciplines that I can integrate into my work. A residency at Ox-Bow would not only provide me the space to accomplish this goal, but would also allow me access to other artists to learn from their knowledge of these processes and discuss their own use of interdisciplinary techniques.

I believe that my interest in interdisciplinary exploration, growing artistic community, and dedication to learn make me an excellent candidate for this program. Thank you for taking the time to look over my materials, I hope to speak to you more about this opportunity soon.

Regards,

Xxxxx Xxxxx