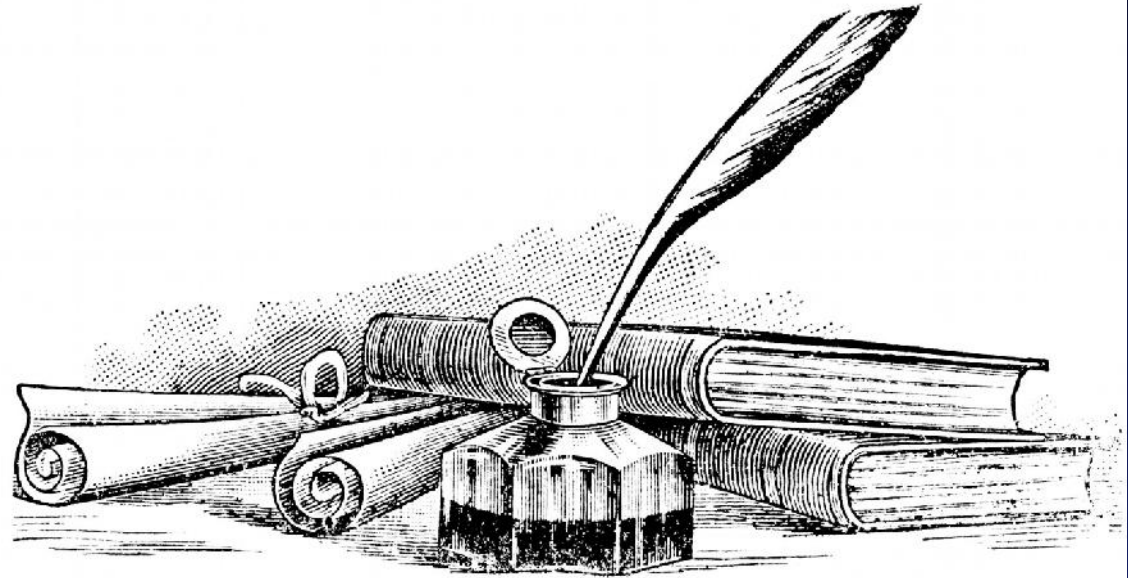
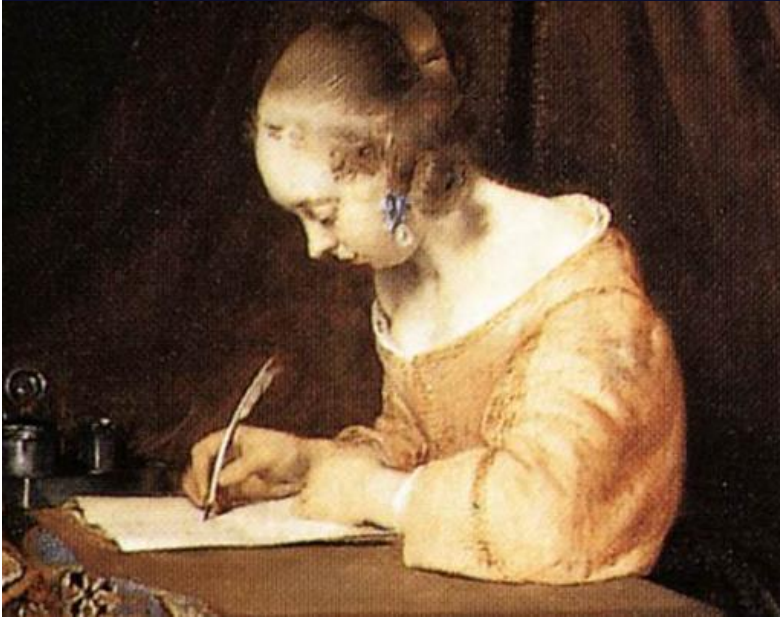




# The Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures

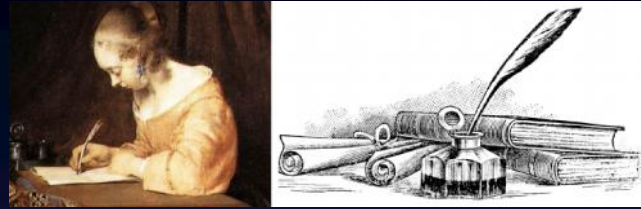


## Cover Letters for International Students

October 30, 2014



# Cover Letters for International Students

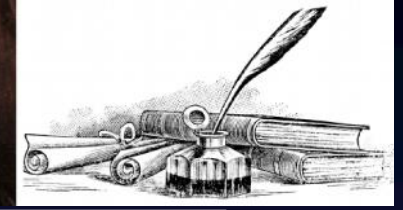


1. Overview: What and Why?
2. Nuts and Bolts: How to Write a Cover Letter
3. Tips for International Students
4. Activity: Good and Bad Examples



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 1. Overview: What and Why?

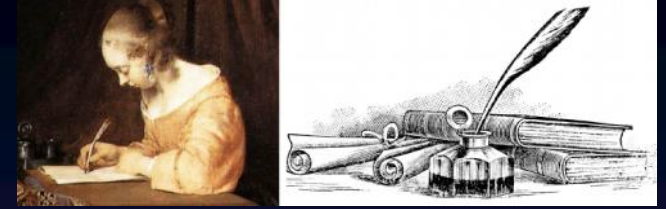


A *cover letter*, sent with your c.v. or resume, is a persuasive document that provides potential employers with a brief explanation of your interest in employment and of your skills and experience.



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 1. Overview: What and Why?



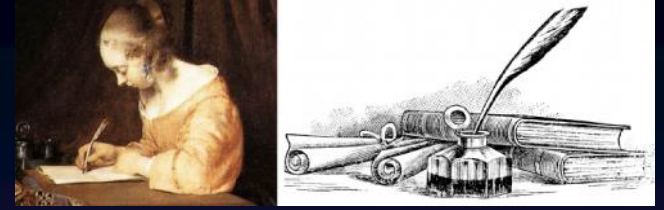
### **An opportunity to communicate...**

- enthusiasm for the job
- your knowledge and interest in the institution to which you are applying
- your uniqueness / personality / voice
- your intellectual ability
- detailed examples of your experience and skills
- that you are “job ready”



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 1. Overview: What and Why?



Do people in your country of origin use cover letters in your field?

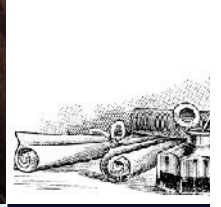
What do cover letters in your country look like?

What do they contain?



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 2. Nuts and Bolts: How to Write a Cover Letter



- Bridge between your resume the specific job
- KEY: No “one size fits all”
- Content
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph** (Who I am/What I want)
    - Who are You?
    - Why are you writing?
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph** (What I bring)
    - What are your qualifications?
    - Highlight relevant experiences
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph** (What’s next)
    - What are you seeking/asking?
    - Reference enclosures
    - Next steps in process

# Anatomy of a Cover Letter



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

College of Arts & Letters  
Department of Political Science

Print your letter on University letterhead.

State where you heard about the position.

Offer a brief description of your dissertation project.

Identify the position by rank and sub-field.

Dear Search Committee Members,

Offer a reasonable and optimistic estimate of your timetable for completion.

I am writing to apply for the assistant professor position in American politics as advertised on the American Political Science Association's e-jobs website. I am currently a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Notre Dame and expect to complete my dissertation entitled "Political Inequality in the American States" and graduate in May (2010).

I enjoy the challenge and commitment required to be an engaging teacher and feel these beliefs connect well with \_\_\_\_\_'s dedication to excellence in undergraduate education. During my time as a graduate student at Notre Dame, I have had the opportunity to teach two of my own undergraduate courses. In the fall of 2008, I taught a course called "Campaigns, Elections, and \_\_\_\_\_" which covered topics including the history of American elections, campaigns at the local level, candidate emergence, voting behavior, and political representation. I also taught a course called "The Politics of Poverty and Social Welfare," which analyzed trends in poverty (who tends to be poor, how poverty is measured), competing theories about why poverty persists in the United States, public and private efforts to combat poverty and inequality, and culminated with a final project where students were asked to develop and present their own plan to reduce poverty in this nation. I have included the syllabus for both courses in this application packet along with copies of my instructor evaluations and student comments.

Research Paragraphs

government responsiveness to public opinion and we know even less about how and why these inequalities arise. My dissertation systematically tests different mechanisms that explain unequal policy responsiveness and directly speaks to the quality of American democracy. I find that opinions are weighed more equally in states with more competitive party systems and more professionalized legislatures, while policy tends to be more biased toward the opinions of the rich in states that have fewer restrictions and disclosure requirements for campaign donations and hold their state elections in congressional or odd numbered years (elections where the upper class bias in the electorate is the highest). As my adviser Rodney Hero can attest, I am on track to complete my dissertation next spring. Of the four planned empirical chapters of my dissertation, three are fully completed and the data analysis for the fourth is finished and I am in the process of crafting the text that explains the results.

I am also interested in the way in which government policies and elected officials affect citizens' political attitudes and behaviors. In a recent article I coauthored in the *Journal of Politics* entitled "Policy, Preferences, and Participation: Government's Impact on Democratic Citizenship," we found that when the government makes a major policy decision, both those who strongly agree and those who strongly disagree with the decision are spurred to increased political involvement, but for different reasons. From the standpoint of political inequality, a planned extension of this study will investigate whether one reason disadvantaged citizens participate at lower levels in politics is simply because they are accustomed to not being represented by their government.

Indicate future directions for research.

In addition, I am interested in how politics impacts citizens' quality of life. Political scientists have devoted enormous attention to the inputs of the public policymaking process, but much less attention has been paid to the "output" side of public policies – their eventual consequences. I am particularly interested in how variation in political factors and public policies lead to different quality of life outcomes. For example, in an article I recently coauthored in *Social Indicators Research* entitled "Public Policies and Suicide Rates in the American States," we found that states with more generous spending on social services such as public assistance and subsidized medical benefits tend to have demonstrably lower suicide rates even after controlling for traditional predictors of suicide. I plan to continue this research program by exploring additional ways in which "politics matters" by producing normatively better or worse social outcomes. More detailed information about my research interests and agenda is available in my "Research Statement" included in this application packet.

Teaching Paragraphs

Teaching these two courses has provided valuable experience in developing and scheduling the content for a class, assessing which methods most effectively convey information to students, and managing class discussion and evaluation of assignments. In addition to these two classes and potentially related topics, my graduate training has also prepared me to teach courses in research design/methods, general American politics (introductory course), public opinion and polling, the U.S. Presidency and Congress, political parties and interest groups, American state and local politics, political participation/voting behavior, the public policy process, and race/ethnicity in American politics. For more information about the specific methods I employ as an instructor, please see my "Teaching Philosophy" included in this application packet. In regards to my specific experience with teaching quantitative research methods, I was employed as our department's graduate student methods consultant for the 2007-2008 academic year where I aided fellow graduate students in gathering and formatting data, setting up a research design, and then analyzing the data and interpreting the results. As a faculty member, I can draw on this experience when encouraging research collaboration with undergraduate students both as part of the courses I teach and as an advisor to students doing independent study.

My research agenda aligns with my teaching interests. I am principally concerned with political representation in the United States – the link between citizens and their government. Using large public opinion surveys and a wide range of policy data, my dissertation examines inequalities in representation by explaining why the political opinions of the poor are less reflected in state public policies than the opinions of the affluent. While political scientists have warned for decades that wealth and political power are closely tied in American politics, little research has actually assessed inequalities in

Note enclosures.

Sincerely,

*Patrick Flavin*

Patrick Flavin

Ph.D. Candidate  
University of Notre Dame

Provide a general description of your research interests.

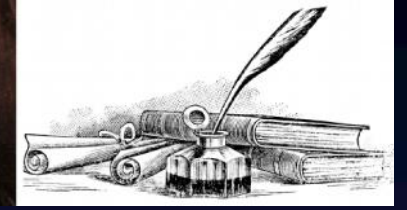
University Writing Center

(574) 631-5390 writing@nd.edu <http://writingcenter.nd.edu>



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students



- **Avoid internet templates**



Dear **Mr Jeffers**

Your advertisement for a ..... caught my eye, and as I appear to be a perfect match for this position I am eagerly applying for the vacancy. As an accomplished ..... with over ..... **years** experience in the field of ....., I am well positioned to join your company and make an immediate positive impression. My key areas of expertise include, but are not limited to the following;

A solid background in....., and .....

Possessing a convincing track record of .....

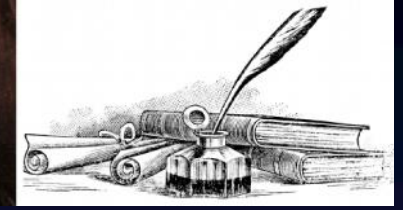
Having a **well deserved** reputation for..... and .....

I believe that my skills, experience, and reputation for excellence can greatly enhance your company's already impressive performance. I have a proven track record of responsibility, integrity and commitment to company objectives. I am comfortable working independently or as part of a team, and I firmly believe that your needs and my skills are an excellent match. In addition to all of this I possess impeccable personal and work references which I can present to you when we meet. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application. I look forward to calling you in a few **days time** to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time. Yours sincerely



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students

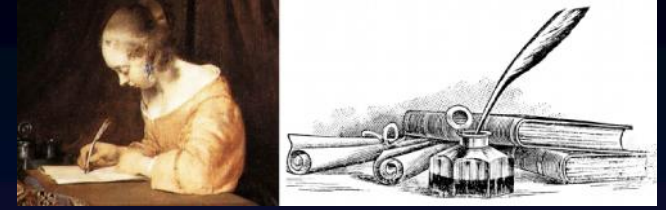


- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students



- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**

“I had been working as an intern at a bank.”

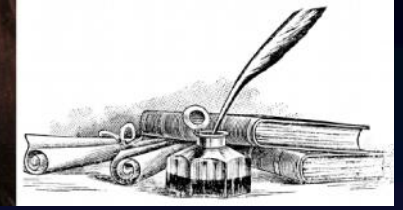
(vs.)

“I worked as an intern at a bank.”



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students

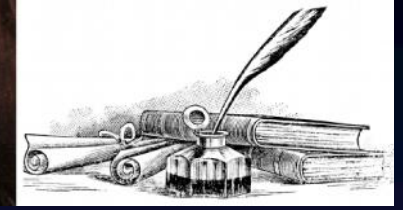


- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**
- **Tone:**



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students

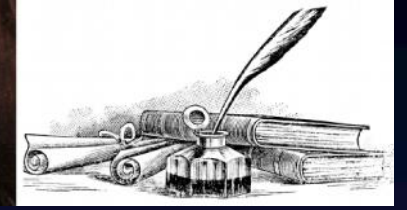


- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**
- **Tone:**
  - **Honest about but not prideful/boastful**



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students



“I am the best graduate teacher in my department. I continually succeed where my peers struggle.”

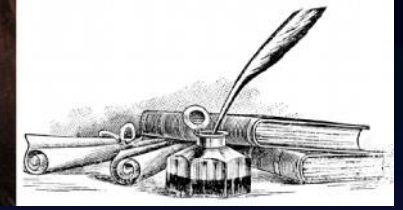
(vs.)

“My department honored me with a teaching award for my excellence as a graduate teacher.”



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students

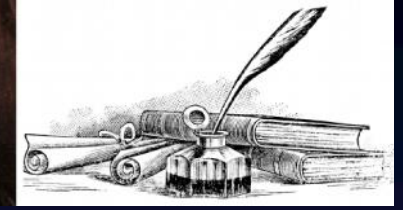


- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**
- **Tone:**
  - **Honest about but not prideful/boastful**
  - **Confident but not arrogant**



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students



“Your company will immediately benefit from my impressive leadership skills.”

(vs.)

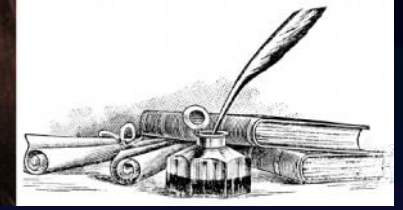
“I am confident that my leadership experience will be an asset to your company.”





# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students

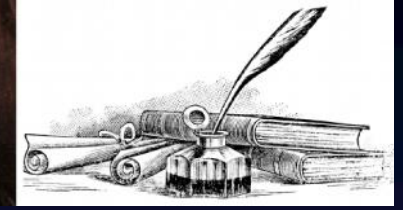


- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**
- **Tone:**
  - **Honest about but not prideful/boastful**
  - **Confident but not arrogant**
  - **Interested but not desperate**



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students



“Please consider me; I must absolutely have this dream job.”

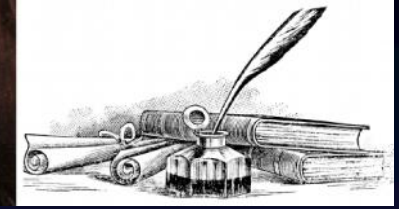
(vs.)

“I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of working for your company.”



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students

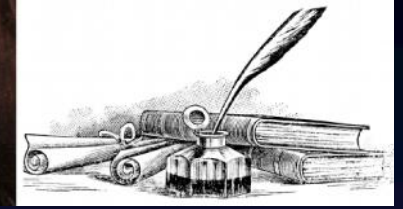


- **Avoid internet templates**
- **Use formal language**
- **Tone:**
  - **Honest about but not prideful/boastful**
  - **Confident but not arrogant**
  - **Interested but not desperate**
  - **Never sound demanding**



# Cover Letters for International Students

## 3. Tips for International Students



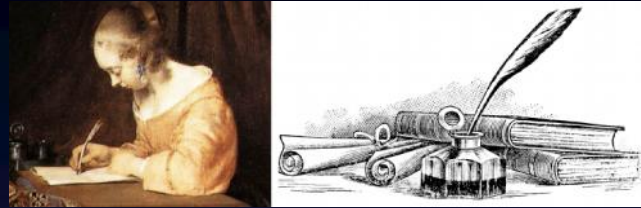
“Call me with any further questions.”

(vs.)

“If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.”



# Cover Letters for International Students



## **More Resources:**

**Graduate School Notre Dame: Cover Letters**

[http://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional\\_development/career/cover-letter/](http://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development/career/cover-letter/)

**Cal Berkeley: Cover Letters for International students**

<https://career.berkeley.edu/IntnlStudents/IS-coverletter.stm>

**Purdue: Job Search for International Students  
(Cover Letters)**

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/640/01/>