



COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

The Cover Letter Should Be...

1. CONSISTENT WITH RESUME

- Font size, type, and letter layout should match your resume
- 10-12 point font size
- Standard fonts (Arial, Times New Roman)
- Adequate Margins– Top/Bottom, Left/Right (1/2"-1")
- Printed on quality white or ivory paper

2. EASY TO READ

- Well-organized
- No typos
- Simple block format with left flush margins
- One page– 3-5 paragraphs

3. RELEVANT TO EMPLOYER NEED

- Addressed to a specific individual
- Differentiate yourself from other candidates
- Be concise and highlight what is most important
- Unique and customized for each specific position

AVOID...

- Irrelevant details
- Starting every sentence with "I" or "my"
- Unnecessary personal information
- Abbreviations or acronyms unfamiliar to the employer
- Copying and pasting the same letter for each position

Guidelines for Writing Cover Letters

Cover letters are an essential part of your marketing package. A good cover letter will get your resume read and generate interviews. It adds a personal touch to your application. When accompanied with your resume, cover letters demonstrate that you are a serious and prepared candidate who is sincerely interested in the position available.

Employers use cover letters to evaluate and compare candidates. An effective cover letter will serve as an introduction and sample of your writing. A poorly written letter can eliminate you from consideration.

RULE # 1

CUSTOMIZE:

- Each letter should be customized to each position you are applying for and match the employers requirements.
- Before you start writing, review criteria and make a list of skills the employer is looking for.
- Demonstrate the keywords and skills the employer is looking for by highlighting specific examples of your achievements and responsibilities.
- Direct your letter to a specific individual (not generic).

RULE # 2

MEET THE EMPLOYERS NEEDS:

- Write the letter with the employers' needs in mind, not your own.
- Explain what you will do for the employer, not what you want.
- Highlight the relevant information, don't assume the employer will extrapolate this information.
- Be assertive, not arrogant in describing how you will meet their needs- this will get their attention.

RULE # 3

ACTIVELY MARKET YOURSELF

- Tell them WHY they should hire you.
- Be assertive without being egotistical.
- The tone should be professional, but conversational and natural– not too pretentious or formal.
- Read your letter out loud to get an idea of how it comes across.

RULE # 4

KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Use a simple block format with left flush margins.
- Limit it to one page, preferably 3-5 paragraphs.
- Use the same font type and set up as on your resume—be consistent.

Outline of a Cover Letter

Option: You may display your address in traditional block format. Example, left block:
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

MARCIA MARKETING
11 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02110
(617) 123-4567 • mmarketing@babson.edu

Date

(Mr. / Ms.) Employer Full Name
Employer Title
Company Name
Company Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Cut & paste the header from your resume onto the letter to create the look and feel of stationery.

Mr./Ms. Employer Last Name,

Opening Paragraph:

- Demonstrate your passion for the industry, company, and/or position.
- Identify your purpose for writing the letter, the position you are applying for & disclose the source where you found the position (ex. name of referral, Web site, contact, etc.).
 - ⇒ "My professor, Dr. Alish Nolan, informed me about the opening..."
- Emphasize what you have to offer to meet their needs by highlighting your qualifications in a clear, concise manner.
 - ⇒ "My qualifications and experience include..."

Middle Paragraph(s):

- Demonstrate how your skills and experience match the needs of the employer and requirements of the position.
 - ⇒ "The experience I have gained working on...demonstrates my ability to..."
- Be specific, select examples from academic and work experience. Be direct when describing your skills and accomplishments, it will help them remember you.
- Don't just repeat everything that is on your resume- use examples to describe why you are a good "fit" for the position/organization.
 - ⇒ "Recognizing the need for..."
 - ⇒ "(company name) interests me because..."

Final Paragraph:

- Thank the employer
- Reiterate your enthusiasm & interest in the position
- Reinforce your knowledge and interest in the company- why this company?
- Articulate next steps- Let them know you will follow up
 - ⇒ "I will be contacting you..."
 - ⇒ "I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how..."

Sincerely,

Your name typed (sign above)

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

FORMAT:

- ✓ Is my cover letter 1 page?
- ✓ Did I use professional font type, size 10-12?
- ✓ Did I leave adequate margins and spacing?
- ✓ Did I use a simple block format?
- ✓ Are my font type, size, and margins consistent with my resume?

CONTENT:

- ✓ Is the mailing address correct?
- ✓ Did I address the letter to a specific individual?
- ✓ Did I provide contact information?
- ✓ Did I review the criteria for the position and articulate why I am qualified?
- ✓ Did I demonstrate my skills and qualifications by highlighting examples?
- ✓ Is the letter written using vocabulary I am accustomed to using?
- ✓ Did I highlight what is most important in a clear and concise way?
- ✓ Did I write this letter with the employers' needs in mind?
- ✓ Is my cover letter memorable?

WRAPPING UP:

- ✓ Did I proofread?
- ✓ Is my letter easy to read?
- ✓ Is the tone of the letter natural and conversational, yet professional?
- ✓ Did I visit CCD for feedback?
- ✓ Did I read my letter out loud for the tone?
- ✓ Did I keep a record of the letter so that I can follow up with the employer?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

On-campus Cover Letter Critique:
UG Center for Career Development- Visit Hollister 220
The Writing Center- Visit Babson Hall 205

View additional sample cover letters & additional tips on the *Vault Online Career Library*