

Cover Letters Worksheet

Did you find this worksheet helpful? Check out the Career Guide for more info:

<https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/CCPD-professional-handbook.pdf> or access CCPD's Canvas Career Collection, located on your WCU Canvas Dashboard.

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter, typically no more than 1 page in length, is a supplemental application document which details the person's interest in the position/ employer and discusses qualifications the applicant possesses as listed in the job ad. Cover letters should be tailored to each job/ employer.

How to format your cover letter:

- Use **single-space and block formatting**. Just like on a resume, space on a cover letter is limited. Check out examples in the Career Guide!
- **Copy/paste your heading from your resume into your cover letter**. Make your documents match each other to reduce confusion and show that you pay attention to detail.
- **Research to whom you should address the letter**. Never start the letter with "To Whom it May Concern." When in doubt, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Selection Committee."
- **Include the employer's address**. It is standard practice to include the employer's address.
- **Optional: Include Re: Name of Position, Position #**. Re: stands for "regarding." Think of it as a subject line in an email.

What you should include in each paragraph:

- **Opening paragraph:** Begin by stating the purpose of the letter; state the position for which you are applying, identify the employer or the department and include where you learned of the position. If you have previously met this employer, use the first few sentences to remind them of your interaction. You should state your enthusiasm for the position or organization. You can also include the degree(s) you have earned and educational qualifications you have that match the employer's needs.
- **Middle paragraphs:** Use the next few paragraphs to connect yourself to not only the specific position but to the company or organization as a whole. It is important to highlight specific experiences that relate to the needs of the position but be careful not to restate your whole resume. Show the employer that you are educated about the position. The body of your cover letter should illustrate why you want to work for the organization and how you are qualified for the position. If you do not have a lot of experience, highlight class projects that you may have completed, and the transferable skill sets you gained from those projects as they relate to the position. Your cover letter should only be one page, so make sure you articulate your skill sets and examples of application concisely.
- **Closing paragraph:** Close your cover letter by summarizing your qualifications for the specific position. Reaffirm your interest in the company/organization and end this paragraph by requesting a formal interview. Be sure to include your email and phone number in your closing paragraph if it is not included in your heading. Thank them for taking the time to review your application materials as well.

Preparing to write your cover letter:

1. **Research the company and position.** Research the company's website, social media feeds, and employee LinkedIn profiles to identify the culture within the company and any challenges they

may be facing. This can help you decide how your experiences/ skills fit into the organization and allow you to explain how your role within the company could address current challenges.

2. **Identify what strengths, experiences, and/or transferable skills you would like to promote.** Include a short description of an experience that speaks to your qualifications and gives the reader a distinct idea about who you are as an employee and how your skills and work experience can add value to their company. If you have limited professional experience, try thinking about some strengths and skills from previous internship, volunteer, or work experiences that could be emphasized and transferred.
3. **Write a draft.** Using your research on the company and job listing, plus the list of skill sets you have identified, write a draft using a standard business letter block format.
4. **Proofread your cover letter.** Before submitting your application, you should review your cover letter and resume for any grammatical or mechanical errors.

Now you try:

Use these questions below to help you get organized before writing a cover letter. For practice, conduct a quick online search for a position in your field or one that you might be interested in applying.

Employer/ Company: _____

Employer/ Company Vision or Mission: _____

Required or Preferred Qualifications and Skill Sets: _____

Your Qualifications/ Skill Sets:

Ex: Written Communication using MS Word

Experiences (jobs, internships, student organizations, volunteer work, class projects, etc.):

Ex: Student Office Assistant in tutoring center

Based on your research on the company and job description, why are you interested in applying for this position? _____

What can you bring to the position, employer, or surrounding community? _____

