



*Compiled by the Career Development & Counseling Center • Founders Hall, Room 121
100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT 06457 • Ph: (860) 343-5826*

The Cover Letter

The cover letter is often a forgotten protocol. Many people when submitting their resumes skip over this because employers do not ask for it directly, since many advertisements often just state, “send resume.” Making it more confusing, a cover letter may also be called by other names, including letter of interest, letter of application, and letter of intent. A well-written cover letter accompanied by a well-crafted resume enables you to explain why you are applying for the position and to share your experience, education and strengths. Moreover, the cover letter gives you the opportunity to state how your particular profile relates to the job specifications and the contributions you will make as an employee. A potential employer, when reading your cover letter, will also get a sense of your writing ability, your sincerity, your personality, and your overall desire for the position.

A cover letter need not be long—three to four paragraphs on one page will do. Typically, the format is as follows:

- The first paragraph, after a salutation, briefly explains why you are writing, the position for which you are applying, and how you learned about the opening. It refers the reader to your enclosed resume that summarizes your skills and qualifications.
- The second and (maybe) third paragraph more specifically states how your skills relate to the job and/or how your skills can benefit the organization.
- In the last paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview. Finish the letter with a complimentary closing.

The cover letter can be arranged in many styles, such as the block and semi-block. The most preferred is the block-style, where all typing begins at the left margin with no indentation and is single-spaced with a double space between paragraphs (such as this document is set up).

You should also include your return address, which is placed before the date of the letter. When possible, the cover letter should be addressed to a specific person in the company; if not, you may use “To Whom It May Concern” or “Sir/Madam.” A complimentary closing with “Sincerely” or Sincerely Yours” should be used followed by your signature and printed name at the end of the letter, which indicates other accompanying documents, i.e., resume, application, and letters of references.

(Over)

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Street address

City, state zip

Date

Contact person name

Address/company name

City, state zip

Dear Sir/Madam:

1st paragraph: State why you are writing, the position or type of work for which you are applying. Mention how you heard of the vacancy.

2nd paragraph: Discuss why you are interested in this position, the company, and its products. Describe your background (skills, accomplishments, and abilities). Mention your training and experiences as they directly relate to the position for which you are applying. (Refer to the enclosed resume.)

3rd paragraph: Refer the reader to the enclosed resume. (3rd paragraph is optional. The material may be incorporated into the 2nd paragraph unless it will then become too lengthy.)

4th paragraph: Indicate your sincere interest in the position. Discuss your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the date and place. Offer a willingness to forward additional information. State the telephone number at which you may be reached, even if it is already on your resume. Sometimes resumes get misplaced! Close your letter with a statement that will encourage a speedy response. This may be done by requesting more specific information on the position or company if none is available in your area

Sincerely,

(your handwritten signature)

Jill Student

Enclosure(s)