

## COVER LETTER

---

The cover letter is a marketing tool used to capture the interest of a prospective employer. It is an opportunity to mention an experience that is not listed on your resume, highlight particular skills in relation to the job that you are applying for and mention your interest in the job.

- Cover letters are tailored to the specific position and should always be 1 page in length.
- The tone used in describing your experience must be persuasive and confident.
- Highlight selective aspects of your background which best match the employer's needs.
- Properly addressed and formatted, with no spelling or grammatical errors.

### **When & How Do You Submit a Cover Letter?**

- Always follow the "how to apply directions" in a job description.
- Even if not specifically instructed, write a brief cover letter.
- Write the letter in a Word document and save it to track where you applied and use as a guide for future cover letters.
- Many organizations use software to organize application materials. Follow the directions to apply to those organizations.

### **Opening Paragraph** (*Why you are writing?*)

State immediately and concisely the position you wish to be considered for and what makes you the best candidate for that position. When responding to a job ad, reference where you found the job posting. If an individual referred you to a specific position, be sure to include his or her name.

*Example:* I am writing to apply for the Research Trainee position in your Economics Research Department which I located on your website. Having majored in Mathematics at Salem State University, where I worked as a Research Assistant, I am confident that I would be a positive addition to **Company Name**.

### **Middle Paragraph(s)** (*Skills – What do you have to offer?*)

Detail what you could contribute to this company, and show how your qualifications will benefit this firm. Specifically discuss how your skills relate to the job's requirements.

*Example:* In addition to my strong background in mathematics, I also offer significant business experience having worked in a data processing firm, a bookstore, and a restaurant. My courses in statistics and computer programming will prove particularly useful in the position of Research Trainee.

### **Final Paragraph** (*Company Knowledge/Closing/Next Steps*)

Describe your interest in the organization. Subtly emphasize your knowledge about this firm (the result of your research effort) and your familiarity with the industry. Show enthusiasm for the company and your interest in working in this type of role.

*Example:* Your recent rapid growth and the superior reputation of your Economic Research Department attracted me to City Bank. After studying different commercial banks, I have concluded that City Bank will be in a strong competitive position to benefit from upcoming changes in the industry.

I appreciate your time and hope to be considered. I look forward to hearing from you soon about the Research Trainee position and welcome the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications.

### **TIPS**

- Use active, not passive verbs (see Action Verbs handout).
- Avoid overuse of "I" in the body of the letter.
- Research the organization before writing the letter.

**SAMPLE LETTER****Use Same Heading as Your Resume**

Date (i.e. January 1, 20XX)

Barbara Butler  
Blue Hilltop Center  
123 Maine Dr.  
Bethel, ME 04217

Dear Ms. Butler:

I am applying for the position of Health Management Assistant recently advertised on your web site. As my resume indicates, I am presently enrolled in the Sport and Movement Science Program at Salem State University. I have completed many courses related to my major, including Anatomy and Design and Evaluation of Fitness/Wellness Programs.

Your advertisement specified a need for someone with experience working with the elderly. For the past two summers, I have worked as a Residential Care Assistant at the Devereaux House in Marblehead, MA. My primary responsibilities included programming, as well as providing support and advocacy for residents. The position required patience, strong organizational skills, and an understanding of issues facing the elderly. I will be able to use these skills in working with the elderly at the Blue Hilltop Center.

Upon reviewing your website, I enjoyed reading the patients' experiences describing the professionalism of the staff. Your ability to expand and update equipment and technology proves to me that you are dedicated to providing high quality care. I appreciate your time and look forward to talking with you further about the position of Health Management Assistant. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Salem State Student

Enc: resume

**SAMPLE PHRASES**

*Opening:* I am writing to express an interest in a staff accountant position with your company. I believe you will find my background and career goals an asset to your organization.

*Writing as a result of a referral:* Our mutual colleague, John Miller, suggested I contact you as he believes my skills and abilities would be valuable to your company.

*Closing:* I would like an opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**REMEMBER**

- Your letter will be more effective when addressed to a specific person within an organization. If you don't know the person's name, title or gender, call the organization and ask for the correct information. If you are unable to get a specific name, then use "Dear Hiring Manager" to address the reader.
- Always use spell check and have your cover letter reviewed for grammatical and spelling errors.