

Cover Letter

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

When do I include a cover letter?

In most cases, when submitting a resume, a cover letter is expected. Unless you are attending a job fair or have been directed not to provide a cover letter, it is appropriate to do so.

What about email and online resume submission?

When emailing your resume, your cover letter becomes the email message. Simply type your letter in the body of the email (do not send as an attachment). When submitting your resume online, follow the instructions provided by the employer. Some company websites and job banks provide additional space for including a cover letter or statement of introduction, or offer an option to submit additional documents.

To whom should my letter be addressed ?

Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific person by name, keeping in mind that it is a good idea to confirm the spelling and title of those you are writing to. When addressing letters to women, whose marital status is uncertain, use the title "Ms." If the recruiter or hiring manager's name is not available, your letter may be addressed to "Dear Human Resources Professional" or "Dear Hiring Manager".

FORMAT:

Keep it to one page, 3-4 paragraphs only: The first paragraph should state your purpose for writing. In the middle paragraph or two, summarize your qualifications and highlight your strengths in relation to the job. Show your interest in the position and the company. Your closing paragraph should reiterate your interest and convey your appreciation for the reader's consideration.

TIPS for SUCCESS:

- Your cover letter should compliment your resume; duplicate the header that appears on your resume and use the same font style and paper.
- Customize your cover letter to fit each job; form letters do not create a positive impression.
- Before writing, review the job posting; include those qualifications that you possess which show that you are a match to the stated requirements.
- Be factual; do not misrepresent or embellish your qualifications.
- Use first person narrative, however, avoid beginning each sentence with "I".
- Show confidence and take a proactive vs. passive stance, for example "I *look forward* to hearing from you soon" rather than, "I *hope* to hear from you soon".
- Spell check and review your letter, read the letter out loud and proofread for typographic errors. Better yet, have someone else review your letter as they are more likely to catch mistakes; a career counselor can do this for you.
- Remember to sign your letter before sending. For electronic letters, include a digital image of your signature.
- Keep a copy of your cover letter, resume and any other documents submitted to refer back to when contacted.

The cover letter shows as an introduction to your resume. A well orchestrated cover letter tells the prospective employer why you are interested in the company or position you are applying for, provides an effective summary of your skills and experience in relation to the specific position of interest, and prompts further contact.

Be aware that your letter also provides the employer with insight as to your communication abilities and attention to detail, therefore, compose your letter carefully and proofread before sending.

Career Center Services & Calendar

Check out our website for current dates, times, and locations of workshops and career events.

Located:

Crafton Center
220, Second Floor

Phone:

909-389-3399
909-389-3366

Email:

Careercenter
@craftonhills.edu

Website:

www.craftonhills.edu/
CareerServices

Tips For Success continued:

- Describe and quantify your accomplishments, not responsibilities
- Be concise, preferably keeping it to one page
- Be sure the letter is employer-focused; target your audience

Cover Letter

All well composed cover letters should include:

- Specifically, why you are interested in the potential employer
- What you have to offer that will make an employer particularly interested in you (your skills and experiences)
- When and how you will be contacting the **addressee** to follow-up on your letter

Your cover letter is at least as important as your resume, so compose each letter carefully. Business letters are designed to present information about your experience and qualifications beyond your resume, and to reflect your ability to communicate well. Therefore, your letter is a great opportunity to **explain how** you gained the skills for the job you're applying for

A cover letter signals that you have a high degree of interest in the position. When attending a Career Fair, you can consider writing a general cover letter that represents your career goals and skills. If you are applying online through a job search engine such as Indeed.com, you will not need to include a cover letter unless instructed to do so. In some cases, you may be asked to not submit a cover letter, in those cases a cover letter is not required.

Customize cover letters for each job. Form letters do not create a positive impression with employers.

MISTAKES TO AVOID:

- Misrepresenting your background, skills, qualifications and experiences
- Stating incorrect information about the employer
- Sounding desperate
- Confessing shortcomings or not giving yourself enough credit for what you have accomplished

MAIL VS. E-MAIL

Follow "how to apply" instructions on job postings precisely. Some companies will accept e-mails with MS Word attachments and will require that your cover letter and resume be cut and pasted into a template on a website. When possible, consider sending an email to the hiring manager or Human Resources recruiting address with your cover letter and resume attached, and following up with a cover letter and resume by regular mail.

Cover Letter Sample #1—None/Low Experience

The following is intended as a guide only. Cover letters should be unique and original.

① Iwanna Work
11711 Sand Canyon Road
Yucaipa, CA 92399
909-389-3366
iwork@craftonhills.edu

April 14, 20xx ②

[2-4 returns]

Mr. Big Shot ③
Recruiting Manager
ACME Company
123 Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90028

[2 returns]

Dear Mr. Big Shot: ④

⑤ Upon viewing your job posting on at Crafton Hills College, I became highly interested in the Assistant Financial Analyst position within your firm.

⑥ As my enclosed resume reflects, I will graduate from Crafton Hills College in Yucaipa, CA with an Associate of Science Degree in Business Administration this May. Through my studies and academic projects I have learned basic managing principles and accounting functions as well as how to work best with a team. In my recent internship with Wells Fargo Financial Services, I gained exposure to income statement preparation, cost analysis and budgeting. I am highly analytical and detail oriented with the ability to consistently meet objectives within prescribed deadlines.

⑦ I believe my education and experience is an excellent match to your needs. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to speaking with you regarding this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely, ⑧

Iwanna Work

[4 returns for your signature]

Iwanna Work ⑨

Enclosure: Resume ⑩

① Your name, address and telephone number should be included in the heading and should match in style and format to the header used on your resume.

② Remember the date. Tip: Keep copies of your cover letter, resume and the job announcement for quick reference and easy follow-up.

③ Employer information needs to be as thorough as possible, including a name and title.

④ **Salutation:** Identifies whom you are writing to. If you are unable to obtain the receiver's name, address your letter to "Dear Human Resources Professional" or "Dear Hiring Manager".

⑤ **Opening:** Identify the purpose for writing and reference how you learned of the opportunity.

⑥ **Body:** Summarize your qualifications in relation to the job announcement, including your education, work experience and applicable skills. Show your interest in the position and the company.

⑦ **Closing Paragraph:** Thank the reader for their time and consideration.

⑧ **Closing:** Always use a closing such as "Sincerely", "Best Regards", "Yours Truly", or, "Enthusiastically".

⑨ Type your name as it appears on your resume.

⑩ Identify enclosures (i.e. resume, salary history, references, etc.). Note: Letters of recommendation may be provided should you choose, however, other attachments should only be provided when requested. Also, when emailing, the correct term to use is "attachment".

Cover Letter Sample #2—Med/High Experience

The following is intended as a guide only. Cover letters should be unique and original.

Your Name
Your street address
City, State, Zip Code
Email address
(Area Code) Phone Number

Current Date

Employer's Name
Position of Title
Company Name
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Sir or Madam (or use name if available)

First Paragraph—State the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying and the source of awareness/contact with the company (Career Center, new media, friend, official website, career fair).

Second Paragraph—This paragraph is *where you show our interest in the position and organization*. Indicate why you are interested in the position, the organization, and its products or services, refer to research you have conducted on the position and employer. Try to stimulate interest in you as a possible employee/intern.

Third Paragraph—The third paragraph *is where you demonstrate your qualifications and create interest in you as the ideal candidate for the position*. Communicate to them what you can do for the organization as an employee/intern and why they should hire you. You may want to highlight particularly relevant aspects of your resume, experience and/or educational preparation. You can also include relevant skills or qualifications that you did not include in your resume.

Last Paragraph—In the final paragraph, *you ask for action*. Indicate your desire for an interview and flexibility as to the time and place. You may want to indicate that you will follow-up with a phone contact on a particular day or week to arrange an interview. Be positive in your attitude. Expect an appointment.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

Your typed name here

Enclosure: Resume

Or use the heading from your resume

If you are unable to find the name of the addressee, adopt a general salutation such as "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Human Resources Representative".

Keep your cover letter to one page!