

CENTER FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

COVER LETTER GUIDE

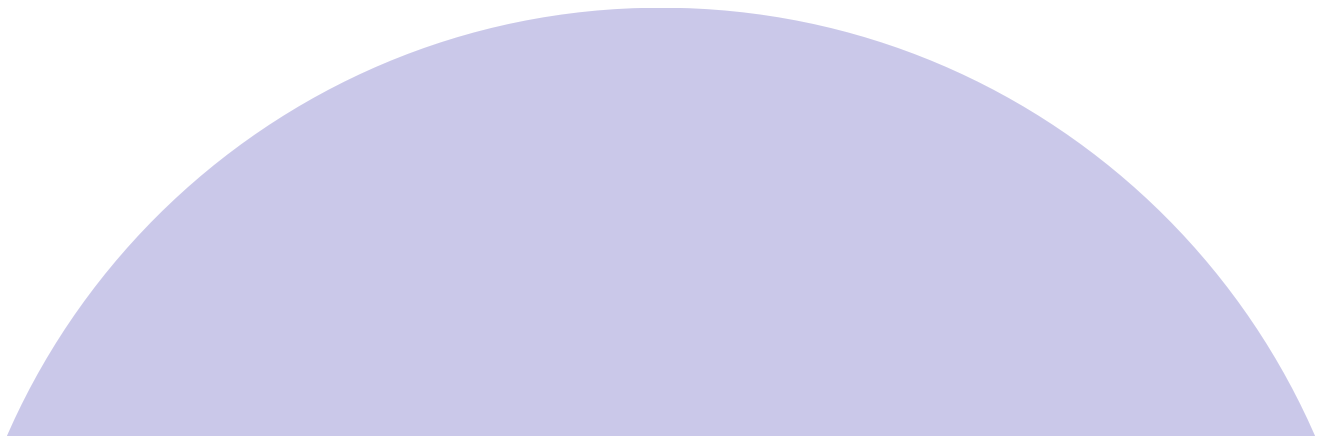


MARYMOUNT
UNIVERSITY

Center for Career Development
and Community Engagement

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WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

- 1 PAGE LETTER TO EXPAND ON YOUR EXPERIENCES & CONNECT THEM TO THE POSITION YOU ARE APPLYING FOR
- EXPLAINS THINGS THAT A RESUME CANNOT, FOR EXAMPLE:
 - EXPANDING ON YOUR FIT FOR THE ROLE
 - PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE ROLE/COMPANY
 - EMPLOYMENT GAPS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Express your interest in their position
- Highlight 2 -3 skills or experiences to connect you to their position
- Highlight what you bring to the position
- Customize every cover letter for every job

DO'S

- Use personal pronouns, full sentences
- Paragraph form
- Research the hiring manager and company you are applying to
- Always proofread before submitting
- Write on Word Document
- Submit as PDF

DON'TS

- Mass produce/reuse the cover letter for multiple positions
- Overuse adjective or filler words
- Include personal information irrelevant to the position
- Use slang, contractions or abbreviations (MU, CCDCE etc.)
- Use pictures, graphics or colors

PREPARATION

- **Before writing your cover letter**, review:
 - The job description
 - Years of experience, degrees, programs etc
 - Job duties you have performed before/are capable of performing in this role
- Your **resume**
 - Select 2-3 accomplishments/skills related to the job you are applying for
 - Connect previous experiences to the job description

FORMATTING

Letter Segments

- Heading
 - Can use the same heading as your resume
 - Name, location, email, LinkedIn link etc.
- Salutation
 - Dear Mr/Mrs/Mx/Dr
 - To whom it may concern
- Date and employer information
 - Date on the top (e.g. August 2nd, 2024)
 - Write title of the position you're applying for, name of the company, the department/office (if applicable) and company address

PARAGRAPHS

- **First paragraph (Intro)**
 - 3-4 sentences
 - Professional introduction to yourself, your background, why you're interested in the position
 - Almost like your professional summary from your resume
- **Second Paragraph (experience connection)**
 - 4-5 sentences
 - Explain and relate how your previous experiences/skills make you the best candidate for this role
 - Focus on what you bring to the table
- **Third paragraph (DIY)**
 - 4-5 sentences
 - Either a continuation of your experience from the second paragraph OR
 - Could make a personal connection as to why you want to work for this company
- **Fourth Paragraph (Closing)**
 - 3-4 sentences
 - Thank the hiring manager for their time
 - Explain your desire to interview or speak further

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

123 Saints Street
McClellan, VA 55555

May 17th, 2012

Ms. Mary Mount
Hiring Manager
Main Campus Industries
555 Ballston St.
Arlington, VA 55555

Dear Ms. Mount:

In this paragraph, write a catchy (but professional!) introduction to your letter. Let the reader know who you are (include the degree you are pursuing and school you are attending), why you are writing (cite the position title and/or number on the posting), and who you were referred by (name and title if applicable). The introduction should be relatively short.

The second paragraph should be about you. DO NOT REWRITE YOUR RESUME HERE! Instead, explain why you are excited about the position you are applying for in terms of how it relates to your previous experiences, skill sets, interests, and/or career plan. Help the employer see how your background and interests make you the perfect fit for their position and organization.

The third paragraph should be about the company you are applying to. Explain to the employer how their values, projects, activities, and/or functions appeal to you. Showing the employer you have researched the company helps them see you as a serious candidate worth speaking to further (i.e. in an interview!) Show the employers the connection you have made between their activities and your career goals. Interests and how this connection makes you ideal for the position. You may also want to add here what you would like to contribute to the company.

The final paragraph asks for the interview- POLITELY! Being boastful in a cover letter may seem arrogant. Instead of talking yourself up, simply thank the employer for their time and consideration. Follow up your "thank you" by expressing a wish to speak with them further at their convenience and refer to your contact information.

Professional Closure (i.e. "Sincerely"),

(spaces for you to sign your name)

Bernie St. Bernard

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Item	Yes	No	Needs Work	Notes
Have I included my name, email, address, phone, and mailing address?				
Have I included the date of the letter on the top right under my contact info?				
Have I used a specific person's name in my salutation?				
Have I included how I found the position in the first paragraph?				
Do I have an introduction that captures the attention of the reader?				
Have I mentioned my referral source in the first paragraph?				
Have I effectively explained how my skills/career plans make me a good choice for this position?				
Have I demonstrated to the reader that I have researched the company?				
Is my cover letter free from spelling and grammatical errors?				
Have I tailored my cover letter to the specific job and company I am applying to?				
Is my unique voice expressed through my writing?				
Have I been careful to NOT restate my resume in the letter?				
Did I politely request/express that I am available for an interview in the final paragraph?				
Have I written a professional closing?				
Is my cover letter no longer than 1 page?				
Is my name, contact info, and date of the letter on the top right of the document?				
Is the contact name, title, company name and company address on the top left of the document?				
Is there was no specific person, have I made my salutation professional (i.e. "Dear Hiring Manager")				
Do I have an intro paragraph, a body paragraph, and a closing paragraph?				
Have I left 4 spaces for me to sign my name and typed my name underneath the signature?				

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