

WHY WRITE A COVER LETTER?

Many recruiters have told us that they read the applicant's cover letter *first*, before even looking at the resume! If the applicant has offered a convincing, professionally written document explaining how they are a good fit for a job, then employers will take the time to examine the resume to ascertain your related skills and experiences.

Applicants should change a cover letter to match each employer's needs and jobs. Although this is time consuming, is expected by hiring managers and human resources professionals. Candidates who do so are more favorably considered.

Cover letters (also known as "letters of intent" or "letters of application") consist of applicant address, date, company contact information, salutations, and three or four small paragraphs explaining how the applicant: A) heard about the opening or knows about the company; B) offers skills and experiences related to the employer's needs; and C) will make him/herself available for an interview; with the closing and signature ending the document.

If you are relocating after Wilkes, moving back home or to a new geographic area, note that in a cover letter; employers want to know why you are applying to their out-of-town company. Be clear that your primary interest is the actual *job*, not the convenience of their location.

Proper Formatting

Most candidates send a cover letter as a Microsoft Word document via a computer, so it is best to left justify all margins and do not use tabs, to assure that the document will be easily readable by the receiver. Other organizations may request the cover letter as an email; write the email formally, as you would a professional letter, following the formatting guidelines suggested.

Use a plain font like Times New Roman. Do not make the font size smaller than 10 or larger than 12 point. Single or 1.5 spacing is appropriate. A cover letter should easily fit on one page.

Try to address the letter to a specific individual—research or call the company or person's office assistant for the correct spelling and his/her correct title. Address them as Ms., Mr. or Dr. (Use Mrs. or Miss, only if a woman indicates that is her preference.) Do not use first names, for, example when addressing Jordan Jones, Director:

Correct: Dear Mr. Jones:

All incorrect: Dear Jordan Jones: Dear Jordan: Jordan Jones, Director:

If the person to whom you are writing has a name (ex. Jordan, Morgan, Riley) used by both genders, to properly address the individual, look up their name and company up on LinkedIn.com. You can also call their company and say, "I am writing a letter of application to Jordan Jones. Please tell me if I should address my letter to Jordan Jones as Ms., Mr. or Dr. Jones, and exactly what their title is."

If you have tried and cannot find a contact person, address it to the entity which is going to receive it. **Examples:** To the ____ (*insert one*) Hiring Manager:, Human Resources Professional:, College Relations Department:, Search Committee:, Superintendent of Schools, etc. Do not send a letter addressed to "Dear Sir or Madam:" or to "To Whom It May Concern:" as these show little effort to personalize the letter or to send it to the proper department.

NOTE: If your resume and cover letter result in attaining an interview, do send your interviewer(s) a thank you letter or email within 48 hours; a sample "**Thank You Letter**" is in this Guide. If you are not going to accept a job offer; a sample "**No Thank You**" letter is in this Guide.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER DOCUMENT GUIDE

Your street address or box #
Your City, State Zip Code

Month Date, Year

Mr.Ms. Dr. Jane Blank
Her/his title
Name of Organization
Their Street Address or Box #
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Blank:

1st Paragraph • Tell why you are writing; name the position, field, or general career area which interests you. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization. If you have met them before, remind them about it.

2nd Paragraph • Mention the qualifications you think will be of greatest interest to the organization, relating your remarks **to *their* needs**. Tell what you have to offer them, and perhaps why you are interested in the employer or type of work. If you have related experience or specialized training, be sure to point it out. Summarize your experiences, do not re-write your resume. This is *not* the time to talk about how the job looks is interesting and attractive to you; it's a summary of related skills and experiences you have to offer the potential employer.

3rd Paragraph • Indicate your desire for an opportunity to visit the employer to discuss your qualifications. Do not automatically expect them to interview you or state that you will call to set up an interview; *they* make the choice to interview you *if* your resume rises to the top of the applicant pool. (If appropriate, state that you will follow up with a phone call about the hiring status of this position, and then do call once to check the status of the hiring process, making sure to leave your name). Add your email and phone number so that they don't have to take time to find it on your resume, if they do want to get in touch. Thank the employer for his/her consideration of your credentials.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Type Your Name

EXAMPLE #1

222 Main Street
Anytown, PA 18888

January 17, 2017

Ms. Charlotte Campbell
College Relations Coordinator
KMPP, Inc.
1122 Finance Center
Philadelphia, PA 22222

Dear Ms. Campbell:

My goal is to be a junior auditor within the prestigious firm of KMPP, enhancing my skills and implementing best practices within the profession of accounting. I have enclosed my resume for your review, and hope you will find that my background and experience are applicable to your needs. I hope to join a number of Wilkes University alums, who are enjoying successful careers with KMPP.

As an Accounting senior student due to graduate in May, 2017, I have completed internships and summer employment in the accounting departments of a small business, a non-profit organization and within a CPA firm. During those experiences, I developed an efficient accounting information system for a small manufacturer, performed a cost analysis, and assisted in all aspects of a major audit under extremely short deadlines while utilizing a variety of accounting software programs. While gaining evaluations of "Outstanding" from internship supervisors during summers and the academic year, I also worked within a law office, guided first year students as an orientation mentor, and was a student coordinator of our VITA program.

I look forward to contributing to the mission of KMPP and to pursuing opportunities for professional development and advancement within the firm. Thank you for your kind consideration of my qualifications. I can be reached at allysa.accountant@wilkes.edu or 570-222-2222, should you desire to further discuss my background.

Sincerely,

Allysa Accountant

Allysa Accountant

EXAMPLE #2

1600 Sherman Avenue
Apartment #301
Anytown, PA 11111

January 16, 2017

Mr. Robert Ihire
Director of College Relations
Innovations Holdings Corporations
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Ihire:

After learning about Innovations Holding Corporations on the Wilkes University's College Central.com program, I researched your company and found that you have strong market position, a reputation for outstanding customer service and a professionally challenging management training program. I hope you find that my business experience and my drive to excel, as attested to by employer references and my university's faculty mentors, make me a strong candidate for your Executive Leadership Trainee Program.

Your job description indicates that you desire candidates with strong communication, teamwork and leadership abilities. I will receive my B.A. degree in Communication Studies in May, 2017. This major has allowed me to enhance marketing and public relations techniques critical to providing outstanding customer service, while attaining experience as a results-driven executive in training. My summer employment, retail internships and student activities positions also provided growth opportunities for my leadership and project management abilities.

I shall call your office during the week of February 1 to ascertain the status of recruiting for your leadership training program. I will also be in Chicago to work on my relocation plans during the week of March 8-12, and can meet at your convenience to discuss my qualifications then, if you desire. If you would like to contact me, my cell number is 847-555-5555 and my email is bernard.businessman@anytown.edu. I hope to hear from you so we may discuss how I can contribute to the operations and growth of Innovations Holdings Corporations.

Sincerely,

Bernard Businessman

Bernard Businessman

EXAMPLE #3

222 Appletree Lane
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

March 1, 2017

Mr. John Jackson
Project Management Supervisor
Skyline Industries, Inc.
222 Main Street
Northview, VA 288888

Dear Mr. Jackson:

While researching construction companies, I was pleased to find that Skyline Industries is seeking resumes of recent mechanical engineering graduates. I will be a May, 2017 honors graduate of Wilkes University's ABET accredited ME program. I hope you find that my technical abilities and experiences will allow me to be an asset to your operations.

During my two cooperative education experiences, I conducted survey and mapping assignments, participated in mechanics and foundation formation, and performed preliminary structural analysis and design projects. I was given the responsibility of producing a general layout for a production area, and because of my abilities, was asked to stay on in a part-time position with my co-op employer. I also possess the statistical and mathematical skills you seek, providing employers and fellow student engineering project team members with data which was critical for highly effective project management.

I would greatly value the opportunity to contribute to Skyline Industries' endeavors, especially after reading online about your company's plans to build three major bridges within the eastern U.S within the next five years. I will be relocating to northern VA after graduation, and am enthused about traveling nationwide if it means I can work on large and challenging construction projects. I'll be calling your organization in ten business days to inquire about the status of the hiring process for engineers. I can be reached at 730-555-5555 or emile.engineer@wilkes.edu. Thank you for your consideration of my credentials.

Sincerely,

Emile Engineer

Emile Engineer

EXAMPLE # 4

222 Main Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

October 20, 2016

Ms. Jane Doe
College Relations Recruiter
Devereux Agency
1547 Mill Creek Road
Newfoundland, PA 18445

Dear Ms. Doe:

It was a pleasure meeting you at Wilkes University's Career Day on October 18th. I enjoyed discussing your agency's utilization of cutting edge research for creating behavioral programs for children with autism and varied intellectual challenges. As per your recommendation regarding part-time work opportunities in a Youth Care Professional position, I am enthusiastically submitting my resume in application.

I deeply desire to assist children with emotional and developmental challenges. My advanced courses in developmental psychology, applied behavioral science and neuropsychology have enabled me to attain knowledge of cognitive development and behavior modification techniques needed to provide quality therapeutic experiences for your agency's youth. Both supervisors of my volunteer experiences have offered letters of recommendation attesting to my skills of supporting children in educational and nurturing environments.

I hope to meet with you to discuss how I may contribute to the services of Devereux's Developmental Disabilities programs. I will call your office within ten business days to inquire about the status of the hiring process for Youth Care Professionals. Thank you for considering my qualifications.

Best wishes,

Susan Psychology

Susan Psychology

Sample “**thank you letter,**” to be sent after interviews when you desire the job!
It should be typed and mailed, or emailed in a professional format, within 48 hours of the interview.

118 Random Avenue
Anytown, PA 19830

April 19, 2017

Ms. Linda Randolph
Clinical Care Coordinator
Anytown Memorial Hospital
1600 South Avenue
Anytown, PA 19832

Dear Ms. Randolph:

Thank you for the generous amount of time you and the clinical service staff spent with me discussing Anytown Memorial Hospital and the position of Therapeutic Assistant in your Children’s Unit.

I was very impressed with the staff and the variety of services for children at Anytown Memorial Hospital. It is a facility with which I would be proud to be associated. I would be inspired to provide outstanding care to your young patients during their rehabilitation.

I hope that you will give my application your further consideration. If you would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 570-222-2222 or at susan.psych@wilkes.edu.

Yours truly,

Susan Psychology (handwritten)

Susan Psychology

Always send a **“letter of rejection” as soon as possible** to an employer if decide that you are not interested in pursuing a career within their organization. If you had a numerous interviews with them and have been told that you are a top candidate, or have been offered a position, they should be informed of your decision not to work for them, immediately.

EXAMPLE

9802 Main Street
Roselle, NJ 07203

May 22, 2017

Mr. John Sergeant
Production Manager
Super Express Distribution
901 Industrial Park Road
Corporate Village, PA 19020

Dear Mr. Sergeant:

After considerable thought, I have decided not to accept the offer (*if you they made you a job offer*) of employment as the Logistics Coordinator in your Procurement Department.

OR

After considerable thought, I have decided not to continue to pursue the position of Logistics Coordinator in your Procurement Department and would like to withdraw my application.

Though your organization appears to offer challenging opportunities, I (have accepted, *OR* I am considering) a position that more closely matches my career objective. Thank you for your time and consideration of my qualifications. Your confidence in me is genuinely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Nellie Nothanks

Nellie Nothanks

Cover Letter Rubric (some content courtesy of NACE-National Association of Colleges & Employers)

CRITERIA & POINTS	EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	MINIMUM
Format	-Visually appealing -Uses correct business letter format -Businesslike font (10-12 pt.) -Signature at bottom	-Clean and neat -Business letter format -Business like font	-Clean and neat -Inappropriate font type/size -Signature at bottom -Acceptable in content but likely will not convince employer to call	-Business letter format not used -Inappropriate font and point size -Address and/or date missing from top -Letter not signed -Content does not make sense to reader
	10	8	6	4
Introduction	-Includes proper salutation -Opening paragraph establishes purpose and details position applying for	-Includes proper salutation -Opening paragraph establishes a purpose and states position applying for	-Includes salutation -States position applying for	-Salutation missing or improper -Does not state position applying for
	12	10	8	6
Main body of letter	-Elaborates on skills for position -Explains how he/she will be asset company -Highlights qualifications: education, experience and training	-Skills relate to position -Explains how he/she will be asset to company -Mentions education, experience and training	-Skills relate to position -Mentions education, experience and training	-Skills do not relate to position -Does not mention education, experience or training
	12	10	8	6
Closing	-Includes well written statement of appreciation -Request for interview with specific contact details	-Includes statement of appreciation -Request for interview	-Includes statement of appreciation -Request for interview	-No statement of appreciation -Closure does not include request for interview -No contact details
	10	8	6	4
Spelling, Grammar	No spelling errors No grammar errors	1 spelling errors 1 grammar errors	2 spelling errors 2 grammar errors	3 or more spelling errors 3 or more grammar errors
	6	5	4	2