

COVER LETTER GUIDE

A cover letter is a **one-page document** that complements your resume. The cover letter gives you space to show the employer **how your experiences and skills relate to the position** you're applying for. Customize your letter for the employer and position to stand out from the competition! While not always required, you can strengthen your application by writing a cover letter whenever you have the opportunity to submit one.

FIRST STEPS



Research the employer

- Get into the employer's mindset. What is their organization's culture? What are they looking for in an applicant?
- Review the organization's website, mission, recent news articles, and social media.
- Do you know anyone who works there? Ask them about the organization.



Research the job

- Deconstruct the job description for the key qualifications and responsibilities.
- What themes do you notice in the posting? Repeated verbs, keywords, and tasks may show what the hiring manager may look for in your letter.



Reflect on yourself

- Are there specific experiences you want to describe in more detail than your resume will allow? Which experiences or skills are most relevant (or transferable) to this position?

WRITING TIPS

Draft your letter using your self-reflection and research on the employer and position to address these key points:

Why are you interested in the position?

Why are you interested in the employer?

Why are you a strong applicant and how have your past experiences prepared you for this role?

Don't have directly relevant experience? No problem! Identify how your skills and experiences are transferable to the job you're applying for and use a few examples from courses, jobs, volunteer or student organization roles to show you're prepared for the new role's responsibilities.

FINAL CHECKS

- Before you submit your application, let it sit! Then, reread and edit.
- Ask someone else (like a career coach!) to read your letter, and always proofread. Save your file as: Last Name, First Name, Cover Letter



COVER LETTER FORMAT



Address the cover letter using the Hiring Manager's first and last names. If you can't find a name, Dear Hiring Manager or Dear Hiring Team work well. Avoid using Dear Sir or Madam or To Whom it May Concern.

- 10-12 pt font
- One page
- Single spaced
- 0.5-1" margins
- Left align paragraphs

- Blank line between paragraphs
- Match font and heading format with resume

Name
Phone | Email | Street Address, City, State (optional)

Month Day, Year

Hiring Manager's First Name Last Name
Hiring Manager's Title
Company/Organization Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear _____,

Introduction Paragraph: Which position are you applying for? How did you learn about the position (especially if you have an employee referral)? Why are you interested in the employer and position? Summarize why you're a strong applicant.

Second & Third Paragraphs: Connect your skills and experiences to the position you're applying for. Complement the content of your resume, rather than restating the information on your resume. Include 2-3 examples of accomplishments or transferable skills from past experiences. Mirror the job posting's language, using the keywords you identified before writing. You can go into more detail than on your resume.

Closing Paragraph: Summarize why you're a strong applicant and reiterate your interest in the position. Include logistical details, if necessary (Are you relocating? When are you available to begin after graduating?). Thank them for their time.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

SUPPORT + RESOURCES

Looking for a cover letter review?

Contact UMC Career Services Office to make an appointment or for more information.

UMC Career Services | umccareer@umn.edu | 218-281-8557

