



Creating a Winning Cover Letter

The main purpose of a cover letter is to match your experience directly to the job description. Look at the description and be sure the words relate directly to those in your cover letter and resume. If, for example, the employer is looking for team player, highlight a team experience in your resume and be sure to include a team-related accomplishment in your cover letter.

A Cover Letter Should Be:

- 1) **CONCISE:** It should be no more than three to four paragraphs; longer letters might lose the interest of the reader.
We suggest the following format:
 - ✓ **OPENING PARAGRAPH:** Four or five sentences maximum. Mention the position for which you are applying, briefly introduce yourself and indicate where you learned of the opportunity.
 - ✓ **BODY OF LETTER:** Usually one or two paragraphs. Share detailed examples of your qualifications for the position's specific requirements. Some job candidates choose to use one paragraph to discuss previous work experiences and another one to discuss academic experiences or leadership experience. Choose the combination that communicates your most relevant qualifications most effectively.
 - ✓ **CLOSING:** Three to four sentences maximum. Summarize your qualifications, restate your enthusiasm for the position and include your preferred contact information so the employer can follow up with you.
- 2) **CLEAR:** Articulate your qualifications in words that mirror what the employer provided in the job description. Do not try to impress with a long list of accomplishments. This is the executive summary of your resume, not the resume itself.
- 3) **CONVINCING:** An employer will make a decision on your candidacy based on the combined letter and resume package. You must articulate the connection to the job description and sell your skills. This is a competition. Why should the employer hire you?

Cover Letter Checklist

- ✓ The words and action verbs in your cover letter should be reflective of the job description
- ✓ Always be professional
- ✓ Use proper grammar
- ✓ Check for spelling, capitalization and punctuation errors
- ✓ Reading the letter out loud may help you catch these mistakes
- ✓ Know to whom the resume/cover letter package is going. Do not use "To Whom It May Concern." If you do not have a person's name and title, address the letter to the Recruiter or Hiring Manager
- ✓ Use paragraph form - not bullet points
- ✓ **When emailing a recruiter/hiring manager - do not copy and paste your resume or cover letter directly into the email. Use the body of the email to write two to three sentences introducing yourself. Include your cover letter and resume as attachments...**

Example on next page

Month Day, Year

Student Name

Student Address

City, State Zip

Cell Phone Number

Email Address

Dear Hiring Manager:

The intent of this letter is to express a genuine interest in interviewing for the job of _____ for _____ that I found on _____ . I am confident that I can contribute to your facility's success with my strong work ethic and hands-on experience performing basic clinical tasks.

I recently graduated from the _____ program at Palmetto School of Career Development and passed my _____ certification with the _____. During my training I successfully mastered the following skills: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____.

I became interested in this new career because _____. That experience truly shaped my passion for the field. I am a compassionate person with a genuine interest in helping people. I am confident that this passion paired with a positive and flexible attitude would be an asset to this role.

I have enclosed my resume for your review. I would like to set a meeting with you so that we can further discuss your exciting opportunity and my related qualifications. You can reach me at the number above or email address. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Student Name