

► Cover Letter Template

Cover letters serve as an introduction to accompany your résumé. Always send a cover letter along with your résumé when responding to a job opening or requesting information about a job possibility. In many cases, the cover letter can be sent along with your résumé via email. However, cover letters are not necessary for Career Fairs, on I-Link Business or, in many cases, if your

résumé is submitted online, unless specifically requested. A well-written cover letter is often the first opportunity you have to communicate with a potential employer and is sometimes used as a screening device. Take time to carefully prepare and proofread your cover letter and customize it for the job you are applying to. A general outline of a cover letter is provided below.



Your street address
City, State ZIP

Date

First and Last Name of Person
Title
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr./Mrs. Last Name:

First Paragraph. In your initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying and indicate from which resource you learned of the opening.

Second Paragraph. Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you had some practical work experience (i.e. internships, class projects), point out the specific achievements or unique qualifications. Be specific.

Final Paragraph. In the closing paragraph, refer the reader to the enclosed résumé or application form, which summarizes your qualification, training, and experiences. Further, indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number and e-mail address in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement that will encourage a response.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name
Enclosure (1)

Cover Letter Tips

Customize: Make sure your cover letter is tailored to the position you are applying for.

Be positive: Tell the employer about the experiences you have had that match the requirements of the position, don't highlight the qualifications you don't have.

Be concise: Limit the cover letter to one page.

Be honest: Don't embellish the accomplishments, skills or qualifications you have.

Proofread: Many employers consider the cover letter to be a writing sample. Make sure you review your cover letter for spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

Email: The cover letter should be the body of the message. Attach a résumé, in pdf format.

► Sample Cover Letter (Intern or Full-time)

Mr. John Doe
Hiring Manager
ABC Consulting Firm
123 Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 61601

September 3, 2011

Dear Mr. Doe,

I am very interested in obtaining a Business Associate position within ABC Consulting. My interactions with ABC Consulting employees both at the University of Illinois Career Fair, and during the Consulting Employer Forum held yesterday have convinced me that ABC Consulting would be an outstanding place to work, and would provide me with opportunities to utilize my skills in the consulting industry. I thrive on challenge and look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with top business leaders.

Strong self-motivation has driven me to seek a wide variety of experiences throughout my college career. By participating in the Walt Disney World College Program and studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain, I have had the opportunity to hone my communication skills and enhance my ability to work with a diverse group of people. I feel that these skills are integral to consulting because of the importance of teamwork and strong client relationships. Furthermore, through my internships I have developed tactics to analyze business issues by researching and reviewing data. I will continue to strengthen these skills as a student consultant with Illinois Business Consulting this semester. With my analytical background and strong communication skills, I feel that I would be a great candidate for your Business Associate program.

I have enclosed my résumé for your review. Thank you for considering me for the Business Associate position. Please contact me at joe@illinois.edu or 847.123.4567 if you have any questions or to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

Joe Consultant

Joe Consultant

► E-mail Cover Letter Etiquette

Applicants who create a professional e-mail cover letter have an advantage over an applicant with a less formal note. Since e-mail tends to be conversational and quickly written, there is a tendency to just type off a few lines and attach a file. However, e-mail cover letters should contain the same information as written letters, but they should be shorter – only two to three paragraphs. Here are a few other tips:

- Don't fill in the 'to' field with the recipient's address until you finish writing and editing the cover letter and attached résumé. This prevents you from accidentally sending the message before it is ready.
- If responding to an ad or job posting, put the job title and/or reference number in the subject line.
- Blind copy yourself on what you send. This will allow you to resend the message if a problem arises or you want to follow-up.
- Mention the attached résumé in your cover letter.
- Open the attachment before you send the message, to be sure it is the correct résumé, and it is error-free.
- To bring your application to the recruiter's attention, follow-up an e-mail message with a hard copy sent in the mail. Be sure to mention that this is a duplicate of your recent e-mail message.