

# Cover Letter Guide

SMCM Career Development Center  
211 Glendening | [www.smcm.edu/careercenter](http://www.smcm.edu/careercenter) | 240-895-4203 | [careercenter@smcm.edu](mailto:careercenter@smcm.edu)

Updated: 8/2013

## **Purpose**

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**To tell** the employer what type of position you are seeking and provide your resume objective

**To entice** the employer to learn more about you by reading your resume

**To impress** the employer by showcasing your knowledge about the company and/or its goals

**To show** the employer how well you can express yourself

## **Getting Started**

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### **Address the letter to a specific individual**

Try to find the name and title of the person responsible for hiring, if you cannot find the name of the specific individual, then address the cover letter regarding the position title. That way the reader will know that you want to apply to that specific job and you are not sending your letters out in mass quantities.

### **Write an attention-getting introduction**

Remember, you are trying to entice the reader to want to get to know you better, and ultimately hire you.

### **State the position for which you are applying and point out your relevant qualifications**

Do not merely repeat the contents of your resume. Select specific experiences relevant to the job and discuss them. Fill in the blanks your resume leaves open. Tell the employer why *you* are uniquely suited for the job. Avoid using “I” to start every sentence.

### **Tailor your letters to the needs of the company and requirements of the position**

How will *the employer* benefit by hiring you? What is the information that you have researched that you want to stress about the organization? Research about the workings of your chosen industry and let them know that you are aware of — and possess — exactly what it is that they are looking for.

## **Thank You Letter**

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Following an interview, promptly write the interviewer(s) a letter expressing appreciation and thanks for the interview. The purpose of this letter is to:

- Show appreciation for the employer's interest in you.
- Reiterate your interest in the position and in the organization.
- Review or remind the employer about your qualifications for the position. If you thought of something you forgot to mention in the interview, mention it in your follow-up / thank-you letter.
- Follow up with any information the employer may have asked you to provide after the interview.
- Thank-you letters can be hard copy typed, handwritten or e-mailed depending on the situation.

Remember: Send a Thank You Letter to each person you meet with. Asking for business cards during the interview makes it easy to keep track of everyone's contact information.

**Don't forget to sound positive and confident!**

## The Structure of the Cover Letter

Date

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

*(Space down four spaces)*

Mr./Ms. Recruiter's Full Name  
Recruiter's Title  
Department Name  
Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

If you cannot find the name of the hiring contact, then make sure to place some type of address of the organization to which you are applying.

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name Only or RE: Position Title:

Remember if you do not know the hiring contacts name then state the specific position title to which

The opening paragraph should state **why you are writing** and why you are interested in the organization. If you are writing a letter of application, you should name the specific position for which you are applying. Also, tell the employer how you became aware of the vacancy. If a former employer or someone else referred you to the employer, this is the best place to drop that person's name and mention that he or she suggested you write. A letter of inquiry should provide evidence of your career-mindedness; it helps to refer to specific job functions, if not titles, when trying to determine if a vacancy exists.

The second paragraph is where you draw attention to your resume and highlight specific skills relevant to the potential employer. This paragraph is devoted to explaining **how you are qualified**. Cite achievements and qualifications related to the position desired. If you have qualifications that are not noted on your resume, this is your opportunity to discuss them.

The third paragraph states **why you are right for this job**. Use this paragraph to demonstrate your knowledge of the employer and their goals. Tell them why you should be considered for the position you are applying for. A little bit of homework on the company or the industry can really pay off by showing the employer that you are serious about your application, and informed about the type of work and experience that it requires.

The **closing** paragraph ends the cover letter with appreciation. In your closing, thank the employer/hiring contact/or a miscellaneous person for their time. Restate your phone number and e-mail address in case this becomes separated from your resume.

Sincerely,

Your Name Typed

## Cover Letter Sample

April 9, 2010

9781 College Drive  
Columbia, Maryland 21044

Mr. Jake Ryder  
Managing Editor  
Amazon.com  
P.O. Box 6898  
Seattle, Washington 98961

Dear Mr. Ryder,

While researching publishing companies online, I discovered an opening on Amazon's website in the editorial department as a category writer. I would like to be considered for this position at the company headquarters in Seattle. This May, I will graduate from the St. Mary's College of Maryland with a degree in English, and I would like to use the knowledge, skills and experience that I have gained to pioneer Internet businesses like yours.

I have had extensive experience in feature writing at newspapers and magazines, along with writing creatively in the corporate world. However, my true interest lies in new media and how to merge innovative writing with cutting-edge technology. For the past year, I have been a producer for Hawk Radio, the radio station at St. Mary's. In addition to my radio experience, I have worked as a reporter for the health, science and environment beat for the *Point News*, our student newspaper, and as a features editor for *Vox* magazine. I have also had experience as a copyeditor for *Vox* magazine. I am confident that I could bring creativity, professionalism, and style to the job.

I understand that Amazon.com has been on the forefront of technology since its beginning in 1995. With my flair for the creative and my ability to reach a rainbow of readers, I believe that I am well-suited to help your company expand well into the millennium. Your mission to transform internet buying into the fastest, easiest, and most enjoyable experience possible is one that I could aid substantially with not only my writing experience, but also my dream for the same.

I know that my qualifications and background make me an excellent candidate for this position. Please feel free to contact me at [harper@harper.com](mailto:harper@harper.com) or (123) 456-7890. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Harper Scott

## Thank You Letter Sample

April 9, 2010

9781 College Drive  
Columbia, Maryland 21044

Mr. Jake Ryder  
Managing Editor  
Amazon.com  
P.O. Box 6898  
Seattle, Washington 98961

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to me about the Project Coordinator position with Booz Allen Hamilton. I appreciate your time and consideration in interviewing me for this position.

After speaking with you and your team, I believe that I would be a perfect candidate. I enjoyed learning about the aspects of your organization and the new initiatives that I would be working with and creating.

In addition to my enthusiasm for performing well, I know that my qualifications, combined with my character, make me an excellent candidate for this position I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you once the final decisions are made regarding this position.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature  
(and/or)  
Your Typed Name

### Printed & Mailed:

If you are printing and mailing a thank you letter it should be in standard business letter format including date, senders address and inside address

### E-mailed:

When e-mailing a thank you letter you only need to include: salutation, body and typed signature.

### Hand Written:

If you intend to send a hand written thank you it should be in a thank you card.