

Checklist for effective resumes and cover letters



Before submitting your resume or cover letter:

Avoid abbreviations or acronyms- spell out ASU as Arizona State University.

Check that your resume and cover letter are visually easy to read (free of major underlining, italics or odd symbols). Conduct research on the employer- view their mission, values and services.

Emphasize your education, relevant work experience, community involvement, skills and affiliations.

Ensure that both documents are formatted in professional business format. See examples here.

Focus on your achievements, particularly those directly related to the job.

Prioritize and demonstrate the skills that the employer is seeking in a candidate.

Review each document for typos, spelling and grammatical errors.

Tailor and customize each resume and cover letter to the job posting.

Use appropriate action verbs and work specific nouns.

Review your resume:

Avoid the use of “I” statements (i.e. “I assisted...”, “I developed”).

Ensure your resume is clear and organized so employers can quickly scan your resume and view your qualifications. Review the job description and ensure that keywords and skills are included in your resume.

Tailor each resume that you submit to the specific job posting.

Use a variety of action verbs.

Review your cover letter:

Avoid copying statements from your resume. Expand on your experiences and qualifications.

Demonstrate the research you conducted about the company and position.

Ensure your contact information is accurate and is identical to the contact information on your resume.

Highlight your qualifications and expand on the experiences you included in your resume. Maintain professional language throughout - avoid abbreviations and contractions.

Tailor each cover letter to the job posting - include the name of the position and company name throughout. Thank the employer for their time and consideration. End on an enthusiastic tone.

Cover letters

A cover letter is a formal letter that introduces you to an employer. It highlights your specific accomplishments, provides context for your achievements and explains your interest in joining the company. Your cover letter should elaborate on the information in your resume.

Before you start writing, consider:

The audience - who will view your cover letter?

The skills and experiences the employer is seeking in an applicant. Are those highlighted throughout your cover letter?

Introduction/first paragraph:

Start the cover letter by greeting the hiring manager - if you do not know their name, use "Dear Hiring Manager".

State the title of job you are applying for, where you found the posting, and why you are a strong candidate for the position.

Demonstrate enthusiasm for the position and explain why you want to work for that organization.

Body 1-2 paragraphs:

Describe your experience and qualifications using examples that relate directly to the job posting. Consider two-three specific examples.

Explain how your qualifications and previous experiences will benefit the employer.

Highlight the research you conducted. Demonstrate why you want to work with the organization and why you would be an asset to the company.

Share in detail why your professional experiences, achievements, skills, and education are relevant and important to the position.

Closing:

End with a brief summary of your interest and qualifications.

Close your letter with a call to action. You want the employer to contact you to learn more about you, "I would be grateful for the opportunity to interview for this position."

Thank the employer for reviewing your application.

Jane Candidate

jacandidate613@gmail.com

602-863-0725

www.linkedin.com/in/janecandidate

Date

Name/Title (or Hiring Manager)
Business Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear (name or Hiring Manager),

I am writing to express my interest in the position of part-time Customer Service Associate posted on your careers page. This position seems like a great match for my interests and skills. A customer service role which requires clear communication skills and a passion for making a positive impact on others would be an exciting opportunity to apply the knowledge I'm gaining in my Bachelor's of Communication.

I have experience through my student club with communicating with diverse groups about a variety of topics. As the activities coordinator, it was my responsibility to determine how to best accomplish our goals with limited resources. While I was ultimately responsible for the activities, collaboration with other members was critical to our success. There were also several administrative responsibilities in the role, which taught me the importance of accurate record keeping and helped me develop strong organization skills.

Your organization's mission to positively impact the lives of every customer you serve is one that I feel passionately about supporting. I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about how I could add value to your team. Please feel free to contact me at 602-863-0725 or jacandidate613@gmail.com. Thank you for taking the time to review my application materials.

Sincerely,

[Sign here]

Jane Candidate

ASU Career and Professional
Development Services
Arizona State University