



COVER LETTER WRITING PACKET

A cover letter is your introduction to an employer by briefly describing your interest and summarizing your relevant qualifications. A cover letter should not be copied word for word from your resume. Unlike a resume, which lists details succinctly, a cover letter allows you to showcase two or three key skills or experiences that align with the job description and demonstrate why you're the ideal candidate. Like your resume, each cover letter should be tailored to the specific position.

GUIDELINES

- Always send a cover letter with a resume unless the company explicitly says not to include one
- Send your cover letter to a specific person
 - Check job description, company website or call Human Resources for a name – use the correct prefix and double check for spelling!
 - Address the “Hiring Committee” and “Dear Hiring Committee”
 - Address the “Hiring Manager” or “Dear Hiring Manager” if you can't identify an individual

BASICS

- Briefly describe your interest
- Summarize your qualifications
- Demonstrate that you've researched the company and how you are the ideal candidate for the company and how the company is ideal for you
- Show your personality and passion for the field or position
- Use buzzwords – industry language and keywords from the job description
 - Read through the job description for stated skills desired by the employer
 - “Competencies/Soft Skills” – leadership skills, communication (verbal and written), teamwork, etc.
 - “Hard Skills” – (specific to field), ex: AutoCAD, C++, MS office

FORMAT

- Mirror the format from your resume – maintain consistency across documents
 - Margins should be no smaller than .5” and no larger than 1”
 - Font style should be a standard style, something that is easy to read
 - Font size should be between 10-12 pt.
- Language and Grammar
 - Professional and concise as possible
 - Stay away from slang, cliches, and flowery language
 - Avoid too many “I” statements

- Use action verbs, not passive – for example: instead of “I believe I would be a good fit”, say “I am a good fit for this position based on my education, experiences, and technical skills”
- Be sure to proofread your cover letter yourself or find someone you trust to proofread for you!
 - Take advantage of Career Center Drop-in Hours
 - Monday-Friday 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM, third floor of Cooper Library
 - The Writing Lab can also review cover letters for grammar, punctuation and spelling, 301 Cooper Library

LIST OF USEFUL COVER LETTER PHRASES

Introduction (1 paragraph)

- Please accept this letter and resume as my application...
- Please accept this letter as my application for the position of...
- Please accept this letter as my enthusiastic application for the position.
- I learned of this opportunity from...
- I am very interested in pursuing this exceptional opportunity because...

Body (1-2 paragraphs)

- My professional experience is solid and well-rounded.
- The combination of my education and experiences have prepared me for...
- My primary focus involves...
- My area of interest is...
- This position represents a tremendous opportunity to continue my clear and committed career path...
- As indicated by my resume...
- Beyond my enthusiasm for this opening, I offer all the essential elements it requires.
- I firmly believe my experience, education and background will make a significant contribution.
- ...helps to ensure optimum effectiveness.
- My interest and knowledge in this area was further enhanced by...
- Although I have found my current position to be professionally rewarding...
- My professional experiences are supplemented by...
- My goal is...
- ...provides the opportunity to accomplish this goal.

Conclusion (1 paragraph)

- Thank you in advance for your consideration.
- Thank you for considering me for this position.
- Thank you for your time and consideration of my resume and qualifications.
- I look forward to an opportunity for an interview.
- Sincerely,

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

****Tailor cover letters to each position/company & format consistently for your resume****

Fast Facts:

- Font – Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial
- Font size – 10-12 point
- Margins – 0.5" or all 1" all the way around
- Use the same header and font as your resume

Thomas G. Clemson
922 Tiger Drive
Clemson, SC 29634

Your current contact info. Should match your resume info/format

February 5, 20XX

Date you submit the documents

Mr. Tom Smith
Director of Human Resources
First National Bank
2001 Tiger Boulevard
Clemson, SC 29633

Employer's information. It is extremely important to have your name of whom you're sending your letter; check job description, company website, or call the HR department

Dear Mr. Smith,

(First paragraph, approx. 2-3 sentences) Why you are writing. Be clear what position you are applying for and mention how you heard about it (personal contact, LinkedIn, Clemson JobLink, etc.).

(Second paragraph 3-4 sentences) Briefly describe your interest and knowledge of the company and why you are qualified for the position. Elaborate on your resume, but do not repeat it – this is your chance to expand upon your resume. Use specific examples proving you have the skills the employer is looking for. Be concise and sell yourself without restating what is already on your resume with no further detail.

(Third paragraph, 2-3 sentences) Use this paragraph to show why you are a good fit for the company. Infuse organization-specific information such as a mission statement, buzzwords, vision statement, current trends, etc. Your goal is to show why you are a good fit for the company, not just the position. Make a connection between you and the company.

(Final paragraph, 2-3 sentences) This is your last thoughts section for the employer. Reiterate your interest and thank the employer for their time. Include your contact information and a sentence about how you would like the opportunity to meet and discuss your interest/qualifications further.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Clemson

Add signature here

Thomas G. Clemson

Enclosure

Include "Enclosure" to notify employer that this letter is part of a packet including your resume

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION #1

Entry Level Electrical Engineer

Company: Carollo Engineers

Location: Littleton, CO

Carollo Engineers, a national recognized engineering firm specializing in water and wastewater engineering, is seeking an entry level electrical engineer to join our team in our Littleton, CO office.

Responsibilities:

- Performs basic engineering tasks and calculations for water and wastewater treatment facilities under the direction of a Lead Electrical Engineer
- Designs lighting and receptables, including a panel schedule sizing
- Reviews work for discrepancies or inconsistencies
- Plans what needs to be communicated and how to present the information effectively
- Seeks out company and client technical standards and implements them on projects
- Constructively builds and maintains relationships with others on the project design team
- Travel required for site visits to observe project during construction

Required knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Basic and advanced course work in AC
- Machinery, electrical measurements, basic understanding of National Electrical Code
- Ability to read and understand One-Line Diagrams and Control Schematics
- Working knowledge of symmetrical components, fault current calculations, and machine theory
- Ability to work with more experienced electrical engineers to apply standard textbook electrical design and analysis approach
- Follows selected design approach through completion of analysis and detailing
- Ability to listen to others and ask clarifying questions
- Strong verbal and written communication skills that are well organized and persuasive

Required Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and zero to three years of experience
- EIT or FE license – or the ability to obtain one within one year after employment

Preferred Education and Experience

- Master's degree in electrical engineering with a power specialty
- Public speaking experience

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

Thomas G. Clemson
922 Tiger Drive
Clemson, SC 29634

August 28, 20XX

John C. Calhoun
Sr. Electrical Engineer
Carollo Engineers
10822 West Toller Drive, Suite 200
Littleton, CO 80127

Dear Mr. Calhoun,

Tell Mr. Calhoun what position you're applying for (Entry Level Electrical Engineer) and where you found the position (website, career fair, etc.).

Based on the position description and your experience, use the second paragraph to highlight your skills and qualifications. For example, from the job description, Carollo Engineers is looking for "strong verbal and written communication skills" – discuss a time that you exemplified those skills in an experience. Maybe you were a teaching assistant who had to communicate (both verbal and written) with students effectively. Or you were president of your professional organizations on campus. Talk about a specific example from the position/experience in which you demonstrated these skills. Additionally, the job description is looking for power engineering – highlight your related work in the classroom.

Information such as mission and values may not be provided in the job description. You want to find this information on their website and make a connection to it. For example, Carollo Engineers' website emphasizes that they do not work *for* their clients; they work *with* clients to find the best ways to meet their challenges. Maybe you speak about an experience in your part-time job where you collaborated with a customer, and how you hope to continue this practice with the company.

Finally, the fourth paragraph is for closing. Reiterate your interest in the position and conclude with your contact information and the offer to discuss your qualifications in an interview.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Clemson

Thomas G. Clemson

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION #2

Regional Service Representative, Northeastern US

Company: Mayo Clinic

Location: Northeastern US Massachusetts/Maine

Mayo Clinic is seeking an MML Regional Service Representatives that is responsible for executing the delivery of MML support for the community laboratories unique to each client's needs as characterized during the sales processes. The RSR plays a lead role to ensure client retention by driving the cross departmental MML Support Staff to analyze client concerns and prioritize opportunities to improve delivery of service.

Responsibilities:

- Monitors and maintains existing client satisfaction and communicates opportunities for new growth
- Conducts client educational sessions on MML service tools and Infectious Handling Training
- Implements Mayo resources for pre and post analytical phases of testing
- Develops an intensive understanding of each client by establishing long standing relationships and identifying key decision makers
- The RSR has the primary responsibility of identifying client concerns and involving appropriate MML support members for value-added solutions
- The RSR should proactively address client expectations and routinely access client needs through on-site visits by telephone and by written and electronic correspondence with client staff
- Accessibility to clients and Mayo staff and timely response to client inquiries is essential

Basic Qualifications:

- Requires a bachelor's degree in medical technology or sciences
- Five years in a hospital setting is required

Other Qualifications:

- Outreach experience desired
- Good human relations and communication skills
- Must be adaptable, flexible, creative, dependable, responsible, and able to perform within multifunctional environments
- Customer focused
- Several projects or tasks simultaneously and to exercise appropriate judgement when prioritizing projects
- Decision-making and problem-solving ability
- A valid driver's license and a good driving record are required, along with the ability to travel extensively on all forms of major public transportation
- 80% travel is required

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2

Anna Marie Calhoun
1850 Fort Hill Ct
Clemson, SC 29634

August 28, 20XX

Connie Carlin
Staffing Specialist
Mayo Clinic
200 First Street
Rochester, MN 55905

Dear Ms. Carlin,

Tell Ms. Carlin the position you're applying for (Regional Sales Representative, Northeastern US) and where you found the information (website, career fair, etc.)

From the job description, you know that Mayo Clinic is looking for "good human relations and communication skills", "Customer-focused", and decision-making and problem-solving ability. This second paragraph is your opportunity to talk about yourself and what makes you a good candidate, but also to illustrate the skills you possess and examples of experiences in which you displayed them. For instance, if you have experience with the New Student and Family Programs and have displayed customer service skills and/or good human relations and communication skills, discuss those experiences.

Information such as mission and values may not be provided in the position description. You want to find this information on their website and make a connection to it. For example, the Mayo Clinic's website states that one of its values is innovation. Maybe you speak about an experience in a student organization or a part-time job when you piloted a new program or initiative. Perhaps you talk about an innovative research topic or a Creative Inquiry you completed through your coursework.

Finally, the fourth paragraph is for closing. Reiterate your interest in the position and conclude with your contact information and the offer to discuss your qualifications in an interview.

Sincerely,

Anna Marie Calhoun

Anna Marie Calhoun