HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

A cover letter is a business style letter that accompanies each resume you send to prospective employers. It serves as an introduction, telling the employer who you are and why you are sending a resume. Your letter allows you to provide a more detailed account of skills and experiences in your background that relate directly to the position you are seeking. Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining a job interview and having your resume ignored, so it makes sense to devote the necessary time and effort to writing an effective letter.

Be Sure To:
- Address your letter to a specific individual within the organization.
- Research the organization so you can make a case for your interest.
- Target your letter to match each position being sought.
- Emphasize ways you can meet the organization's needs.
- Support your claims with evidence.
- Communicate interest, motivation, and confidence.
- Ask for an interview.
- Keep it to one page.
- Pay attention to grammar and spelling.

Sending Cover Letters
- Send your cover letter (and resume) through the means indicated in the job posting.
- Sending as email attachments:
  - Create your resume and cover letter in a common word processing program such as Microsoft Word, or in RTF (Rich Text Format), or as a PDF. (Increasingly, employers are specifying format.)
  - Make the resume and cover letter separate attachments. Give them names the employer will associate with you once they are downloaded, for example: AustinJaneCvrLtr.doc, not CoverLetter.doc
  - Send your documents electronically to yourself and to a friend to make sure they are easy to open and that the formatting stays correct.
  - In the subject line, put the name of the position for which you are applying. In your email message, briefly say why you are writing.
- Sending in the body of the email:
  - Paste your cover letter a couple of spaces below your brief introduction. Set it up in Business (Block) Style, with everything justified to the left.
  - A couple of spaces below the cover letter, paste in your resume.
  - Your resume needs to be reformatted to send it in the body of an email message. Justify everything to the left; do not try to center text. Do not use bold, italics, underlining, bullets, fancy fonts, colored text, or columns. To highlight text, use spacing, all capital letters (for headings), asterisks (*), plus signs (+), dashes.
  - To check for problems, send the email to yourself and to a friend, before sending to an employer.

Get your cover letter reviewed at the Career and Personal Development Office
- By appointment: 610-358-4595
- Walk-in Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 2 to 4 during academic year

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

Your Name
Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email

Today's Date

First Name Last Name, Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Be direct. Tell why you are writing the letter (be clear about the position or type of position you are seeking). Is this an inquiry or are you formally applying for a specific job? How did you find out about the organization/position? You may wish to add a brief statement demonstrating the reason for your interest in the company or organization.

Your middle paragraph(s) should **communicate precisely what you have to offer** the employer. Select details and skills from past experiences that you feel directly relate to the organization and position at hand. Avoid vague statements; back up your claims with specific examples.

Use as much space as is necessary to convince the employer to consider your candidacy further, but state your case concisely, and get to the point quickly. Cover letters should be no longer than one page in length. Try to connect your background as closely as possible to the particular job for which you are applying.

Indicate your desire for a personal interview and offer information about how you may be contacted. Another approach is to indicate that you hope they agree that you are a good match and that you will follow up as of a certain date. Thanking your reader for the time and consideration given to your application is also a good idea. If you do not receive a reply within a reasonable period of time (2 to 4 weeks, depending upon the position), send a follow-up letter or email to see if your materials have been received.

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Your Full Name typed

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1 (job application)

Alexandra Reed
226 South Pine Street
Drums, PA 18222
215-555-1212
atreed5@gmail.com

March 6, 20XX

Fred Jones, Manager
Executive Recruitment
XYZ Systems Development Corporation
200 Race Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the Systems Analyst position that I saw posted on your company's website. This position interests me because it affords the opportunity to combine my programming skills with the knowledge of information technology gained through coursework.

As the enclosed resume indicates, I will receive a degree in business administration from Any University in May. My major concentration is in management information systems. My coursework has provided me with a foundation in Enterprise Resource Planning Systems and an understanding of the role of workflow management. Through summer work experience at Siemens Medical, I have gained a solid background in various applications, languages, and operating systems including Microsoft 2003 server, Windows scripting, SAP, Java, and XML. I am confident that my coursework, combined with my previous work experience, would allow me to make a strong contribution to XYZ Systems Development Corporation.

I would appreciate having an opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss my qualifications and your professional needs in detail. I can be reached at 215-555-1212 or by email at atreed5@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Reed

Alexandra Reed

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2 (email internship application)

Subject line of email message: Lab Tech Internship–Luke Santone

Dear Mr. Saunders:

I am writing in reference to the Lab Tech Internship position listed recently on Neumann University's online job board. This position appeals to me because of my strong interest in a pharmaceutical laboratory, as well as the opportunity it presents to use the knowledge I've gained through my science classes in college.

I am currently a junior at Neumann University in Aston, PA working on my Bachelor of Science degree in biology. As a biology student, I am often required to work independently on my own laboratory projects requiring me to be accurate, consistent and self-motivated. In addition, I am able to successfully maintain a good grade point average while working part-time to earn money for my college tuition and also remaining involved as a campus leader. These skills, combined with my educational background in biology, make me an ideal candidate for this internship position.

Attached please find a current copy of my resume. Thank you for considering me for this position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Luke Santone

Luke Santone
10 South Street
Philadelphia, PA 19111
215.222.5555
lj_santone@neumann.edu