



COVER LETTER WRITING PACKET

****Cover letters should be tailored for each position, just as you tailor your resume****

PURPOSE

A cover letter is your introduction to an employer. In this letter, you should briefly describe your interest in the position and summarize your qualifications. A cover letter should not be copied word for word from your resume. A resume is a very succinct and detail-focused document – a cover letter is the opportunity to illustrate to the employer the two or three most relevant and pertinent skills and knowledge gained from past experiences that match those skills and knowledge desired from the job description and explains why you are the best candidate for the position.

GUIDELINES

- Always accompany a cover letter with a resume unless the company explicitly says not to include one
- It is advisable to send your cover letter to a specific person
 - Check job description, company website or call Human Resources for name
 - Find the specific person – use the correct prefix and spell their name right!
 - If a committee, then address the “Hiring Committee” and “Dear Hiring Committee”

BASICS

- Briefly describe your interest
- Summarize your qualifications
- Illustrate how you researched the company and how you know you would be the ideal candidate for the company and how the company would be ideal for you
 - If the company is working in a field you are passionate about – show your passion!
- Show your personality and your passions
- Use buzzwords – industry language and keywords from the job description
 - Read through the job description for stated skills desired by the employer
 - “Soft Skills” – ex: leadership skills, communication (verbal and written), teamwork, etc.
 - “Hard Skills” – ex: (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
 - For example: Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial
 - Font size should be between 10 – 12 pt.
- Headings formatted correctly and professionally; you can copy and paste the header from your resume
- Organize paragraphs
 - Logical manner
 - Easy to read
- Language and Grammar
 - Professional and polite
 - Be concise as possible
 - Stay away from slang, clichés, jargon and flowery language
 - Avoid too many “I” statements
 - Examples to avoid: “I feel like I will be a great asset.” Instead use your experiences to SHOW the company HOW you will be a great asset
 - 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 the Writing Center on campus located at the Academic Success Center

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Thomas G. Clemson
922 Tiger Drive
Clemson, SC 29634

Your Information: use your current contact information (like in the example format) or copy/paste header from resume (document cohesion)

August 28, 2014

Date: use the date that you submit the documents

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

Employer's information: it is extremely important to have the name of the person to whom you are sending your resume and cover letter. Oftentimes, the contact person will be listed on the job description. If not, check the company website or call the human resources department.

Dear Mr. Smith:

[First Paragraph, 2-3 Sentences] Tell Mr. Smith why you are writing. If you are applying for a position, A) tell him what position you are applying for; a company probably has multiple positions open – be clear about the one you are interested in, B) tell him how you learned about the position; through a personal contact, an advertisement, the company's website, the Career Center, ClemsonJobLink, etc. – companies like to know where their money is best being spent.

[Second Paragraph] This paragraph is for the nitty and gritty of the cover letter. Describe your interest in the company and knowledge of the company or organization, and show how you are qualified for the position. Elaborate on information in your resume, but do not repeat it – this is your chance to expand on your resume. Be concise and give specific examples of your skills. This is the paragraph in which you “sell yourself” – read through the job description and see what the employer is looking for in an applicant. For example: the job description states “the candidate should have good human relations and communications skills,” so be sure to talk about an experience in which you had to embody those skills.

[Third Paragraph] Use this paragraph to talk about why you are interested in this job and organization. Infuse organization-specific information (2-3 sentences) from researching the company. Things to consider: mission, vision, goals, strategic plan, organizational structure, current events, trends, best practices, etc. Use this paragraph to show why you are a good a fit for the company, not just the open position – make a connection between you and the company.

[Final Paragraph] This is the last thoughts section for the employer. Reiterate your interest and thank the employer for taking the time to read your cover letter/resume. Make sure that you include your contact information here as well – phone number and email address. Conclude with a sentence about how you would like the opportunity to meet and discuss your interest/qualifications in person.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Clemson
Enclosure

Enclosure: add “Enclosure” to notify employer that this document is part of a packet including your resume

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION AND COVER LETTER

Entry-Level Electrical Engineer

Company: Carollo Engineers
Location: Littleton, CO

Carollo Engineers, a nationally recognized engineering firm specializing in water and wastewater engineering, is seeking an Electrical Engineer ~ Entry Level to join our team in our Littleton, CO office.

Responsibilities:

performing basic engineering tasks and calculations for water and wastewater treatment facilities under the direction of a Lead Electrical Engineer; lighting and receptacle designs, including panel schedule load and phase balancing; conduit layout and fill calculations; wire sizing; submittal review; performs specification research; reviews work for discrepancies or inconsistencies; develops and improves technical knowledge and skills; maintains professionalism in relationships with other office and team members; 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 when requested; makes site visits to observe projects during construction.

Required knowledge, skills, and abilities:

basic and advanced course work in AC machinery, electrical measurements, basic understanding of the 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 supervisor to effectively complete routine tasks; capable of breaking a task into one or more component parts and sequencing those parts effectively; general awareness of need for practicality and constructability of design solutions; general awareness of the scope, schedule and budget assigned for engineering tasks; 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; logically organizes work; ability to listen to others and ask clarifying questions; willingness to accept suggestions and corrections on organization and planning issues; seeks help to understand and productively work through conflict to keep tasks moving ahead; strong verbal and written communications skills that are well organized and persuasive; proficient in MS Word and Excel.

Required education and experience:

Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering and zero to three years' experience; course work in power engineering; EIT or FE license - or the ability to obtain within one year after employment.

Preferred education and experience:

Master's degree in electrical engineering with a Power specialty; public speaking experience.

Thomas G. Clemson
922 Tiger Drive
Clemson, SC 29634

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

Mr. Calhoun,

Tell Mr. Calhoun what position you are applying for, where you found the position (website, career fair, etc.).

Based upon the job 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 that had to effectively communicate (both verbal and written) for students. Or you were president of your professional organization on campus. Talk about a specific examples from that position/experience in which you demonstrated these skills. Additionally, the job description is looking for course work in power engineering – highlight your work in the classroom related.

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

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Clemson
Enclosure

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION AND COVER LETTER

<p>Anna Marie Calhoun 1850 Fort Hill Ct Clemson, SC 29634</p> <p>Connie Carlin Staffing Specialist Mayo Clinic 200 First Street SW Rochester, MN 55905</p> <p>Ms. Carlin,</p> <p>Tell Ms. Haley the position you are applying for (Regional Sales Representative, Northeastern US) and where you found the information (directly from Mayo Clinic's website).</p> <p>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 to also illustrate these skills that you possess and examples of experiences in which you displayed them. For instance, if you had experience with the New Student and Family Programs and displayed customer service skills and/or good human relations and communications skills discuss those experiences. The resume can only show so much. The cover letter is your opportunity to showcase your skills and experience take advantage of it.</p> <p>Conclusion: Wrap up your cover letter by reiterating your interest in the position and company and close with your contact information and the offer for Ms. Haley to reach out to you about the position.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Anna Marie Calhoun Enclosure</p>	<p>Regional Service Representative, Northeastern U.S. Massachusetts/Maine Job</p> <p>Company: Mayo Clinic Location: Northeastern US Massachusetts/Maine</p> <p>Job Description: MML Regional Service Representatives are responsible for executing the delivery of MML support for community based laboratories unique to each client's needs as characterized during the sales process. 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. Monitors and maintains existing client satisfaction and communicates opportunities for new growth. Conducts client educational sessions on MML service tools and Infectious Handling Training. Responsible for ensuring the efficiency of client training and determine future need. Facilitates customer service and visiting faculty programs. Communicates with clients on new test information, setting pricing and locking in fees, as needed. 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 fulfillment of these responsibilities allows the Regional Manager to focus on new sales initiatives. 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 assess 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. The RSR should coordinate the deployment of Mayo resources in an efficient and effective manner and document the nature of communications and the services that are delivered such that this information can be retained and easily shared.</p> <p>Basic Qualifications: Requires a bachelor's degree in medical technology or sciences. Five years of clinical experience in hospital settings is required.</p> <p>Other Qualifications: Outreach experience desired. <u>Good human relations and communications skills.</u> High level of technical competence and confidence. <u>Comfortable with computer operation. Must be adaptable, flexible, creative, dependable, responsible and able to perform well within multifunctional environments.</u> <u>Customer focused.</u> Ability to manage several projects or tasks simultaneously and to exercise appropriate judgment when prioritizing projects. <u>Decision making and problem-solving ability.</u> <u>Adherence to MML policies and procedures.</u> Ability to function and work in a diverse work environment while offering assistance and providing direction to clients in a concise, sensitive, informative and professional manner, keeping a positive and courteous tone. Stay abreast of regulatory issues, reimbursement issues. 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.</p> <p>Benefit Eligible: Yes Exemption Status: Exempt Hours/Pay Period: 80 Schedule Details: Monday - Friday, Days Weekend Schedule:</p> <p>Compensation Detail: Salaried - Education, experience, and tenure may be considered along with internal equity when job offers are extended. *The minimum salary every 2 weeks is approx \$2,404.00, based on a full-time position.</p> <p>Staffing Specialist: <u>Connie Carlin</u></p>
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LIST OF USEFUL COVER LETTER PHRASES

These lists of phrases will help you write an effective cover letter.

Introduction:

- 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...
- My keen interest in this position stems from...
- My professional experience is solid and well-rounded.

Body:

- I believe the combination of my education and experiences have prepared me...
- My primary focus involved...
- This position represents a tremendous opportunity to continue my clear and committed career path...
- As you can see from my resume...
- 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 would enable me to make a significant contribution.
- It is a challenging position for which I believe I am well qualified.
- ... help to ensure optimum effectiveness.
- My interest and knowledge in this area was further enhanced by...
- My particular area of effectiveness is...
- 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:

- Let me thank you in advance for your consideration.
- Thank you for considering me for this very important position.
- Thank you for your time and consideration of my resume and qualifications.
- I look forward with enthusiasm to an opportunity for an interview.
- Sincerely

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

APPEARANCE

- Is my cover letter laid out and formatted correctly?
- Is my information presented in a professional manner?
- Did I organize my cover letter in a logical order?
- Is my cover letter pleasing to the eye and easy to read?

YES NO

FORMATTING/STRUCTURE

- Are my headings formatted correctly and formally?
- Are my margins .5 or 1" all the way around?
- Is my font size between 10 and 12?
- Are my headings, dates, titles, and fonts consistent?
- Are your paragraphs formatted correctly?
- Are my paragraphs organized well?

LANGUAGE/GRAMMAR

- Is my tone professional and polite?
- Does my cover letter contain too many 'I' statements?
- Does my cover letter contain action verbs and the correct tense (past or present)?
- Did I double-check my grammar and spelling?
- Did I use key words and phrases related to my field whenever possible?

OVERALL

- Is my cover letter tailored to a specific job/graduate school?
- Does my cover letter expand/elaborate my resume, not just repeat?
- Have you had someone review your cover letter for edits and feedback?
- Does your cover letter reflect the competencies addressed in the job description?



COMPETENCIES & YOUR COVER LETTER

How can your cover letter reflect competencies outlined in a position description?

Competency & Definition		Give specific examples & quantify where possible
<i>Print a position description & circle the below words and synonyms that appear in it. Repeated competencies indicate ones to focus on in the cover letter.</i>		<i>Club / organization, internship, co-op, part or full-time job, assistantship, Creative Inquiry, research, study abroad, volunteering, special project, etc...</i>
Engagement	Communication	Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating one's self to individuals within and outside of one's industry or area of expertise.
	Collaboration	Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one's role within a team.
	Leadership	Being able to recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.
Innovation	Adaptability	Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure, and resilience in an ever-changing world.
	Analytical Skills	Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing, and synthesizing information.
	Technology	Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.
Professionalism	Self-Awareness	Understanding one's strengths, limitations, emotions, and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one's interests, skills, and values align with educational and professional goals.
	Integrity & Ethics	Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.
	Brand	Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one's intended and perceived reputation.