

Cover Letter Guidebook



The Owen Center
for Academic & Career Support

The Owen Academic and Career Support Center
Heidelberg University
319 Campus Center
419.448.2194

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

- A professional document
- A sample of your writing ability and style
- An opportunity for you to spell out the qualifications that make you the best candidate for a position
- An opportunity for you to provide additional information that does not fit into your resume

BASIC RULES FOR WRITING A COVER LETTER:

- Address your letter to a person rather than a title.
- Send the letter to someone who is in a position to make a hiring decision.
- Proofread and put the letter on quality paper that matches your resume.
- Each letter should be individually typed and signed.
- Keep the letter direct and brief. Try to limit yourself to three paragraphs.
- Complement and expand on your resume. Reference those experiences that are specifically relevant to the requirements of the position. Try to give examples of relevancy.

PREPARING TO WRITE YOUR COVER LETTER:

A cover letter **ALWAYS ACCOMPANIES A RESUME**. As with the resume, your cover letter must be ***MISTAKE FREE***. Always sign each letter, using a good ballpoint pen with blue ink. If your signature comes out smudged, incomplete, or overly sloppy, print a new letter and sign it again. Use the same paper you use for your resume.

You will need to do some homework before you put anything on paper. First, you need to know who should receive the letter. If you respond to a job posting, the contact person's name is usually indicated. If it is not, do some research to find out that person's name. Make sure you get the proper spelling of their name, plus their correct title and department.

TARGETING YOUR COVER LETTER:

General letters generally get glossed over. You need to provide a special reason why *THIS* company / organization should look more closely at *YOU*. A letter that implies “You’re the company I really want to work for” will appeal to the employer’s loyalty to her or his organization. Also, a letter that shows a connection between a particular employer and your background will gather more attention.

LET’S GET TO THE POINT:

Don’t go into a long, rambling history of your life. Long letters bore people. **KEEP IT TO ONE PAGE.** Employers have very little time to devote to reading job search documentation – make the most of their time. They scan looking for something that might catch their eye and motivate them to take a closer look. A long letter may be overwhelming. Be concise. Keep it to between three and five paragraphs. **UNLIKE A RESUME, MAKE SURE YOU USE CORRECT GRAMMAR AND FULL SENTENCES.** The techniques you used in constructing your resume are helpful with your cover letter also. You want to show “accomplishments.” Strong statements of accomplishment can illustrate important subjective factors that normally turn up in an interview. Using them in a cover letter encourages the employer to follow up with an interview. When deciding about what to put in the letter, ask yourself this, “Will this factor help the employer decide to interview me?” If so, then include it.

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Your name
Mailing Address
City, state, zip
Telephone number(s)
Email address
Today's date

(4 spaces)

Your addressee's name
Professional title
Organization name
Mailing Address
City, state, zip

(1 space)

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) addressee's last name,

Start your letter with an attention grabber. Briefly say what job you're applying for.

Next, write one or two paragraphs discussing relevant points about how terrific you are for the job. Don't summarize your resume, but do use tangible details here!

In your final paragraph show some motivation by telling the potential employer what you're doing next (calling to set up an interview). Close by saying thank you.

Sincerely (yours),

Your lovely handwritten signature **(3 spaces)**

Your name (typed)

(1 space)

Ivanna Career
100 Greenfield Street, Box Number 000
Heidelberg University
Tiffin, OH 44883
419.448.1234
icareer@heidelberg.edu
May 15, 2009

EXAMPLE

Ms. Sandra Breuer
Mercy Hospital of Tiffin
Physical and Occupational Therapy
485 W. Market Street
Tiffin, OH 44883

Dear Ms. Breuer,

I recently inquired about an internship position within your organization. I spoke with Mrs. Smith, who was very enthusiastic while speaking about your program, which sparked my interest even further. I have a particular interest in your facility because of the geographic location and some prior experience with Mercy Hospital.

I am currently enrolled at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. While at Heidelberg, I have had many practical opportunities, which have enhanced my classroom experiences. These opportunities include the study of human anatomy including coursework in anatomy / physiology, anatomy / kinesiology, and therapeutic modalities.

I feel that my extensive knowledge in biology and the use of machinery, such as electric stem and ultrasound, qualifies me for a position at Mercy Hospital. As I plan my final semester at Heidelberg University, I would like to incorporate an internship at your facility. I will contact you in seven to ten days to discuss the possibility of doing this. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ivanna Career

NOLA DALANS

57639 Lexington Circle
Chico, CA 95926

January 17, 2007

Betty Bolo, Director
County Health Department
1000 Far Street
Chico, CA 95926

EXAMPLE

Dear Ms. Bolo:

Being able to teach individuals and groups about effective health practices and procedures has been my goal since beginning my college career. To ensure that I acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to become a health educator, I have volunteered to work in numerous agencies, putting my academic theory and principles into practice.

I am equally comfortable working independently or as part of a team and am highly motivated to provide an excellent product on time and under budget. I have extensive experience with the needs of diverse clientele and can communicate in Spanish although I am not completely fluent. Other skills I can bring to your organization include:

- Knowledge of health disorders and their prevention.
- Knowledge of counseling and teaching principles.
- Ability to serve as a liaison and referral specialist between clients and supportive agencies.
- Understanding of health rules and regulations.

For more detailed information please refer to my enclosed resume. I would appreciate a personal interview at your earliest convenience. I am eager to further discuss my qualifications and view your facility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nola Dalans

Lana Sullivan

318 East Partridge Way
Anytown, OH 44444

419.444.4444
l.sullivan@hotmail.com

January 17, 2007

Stockton City Chamber of Commerce
Ruth Manning, Director
1122 Rodney Avenue
Stockton, CA 95443

EXAMPLE

Dear Ms. Manning:

I am in the process of canvassing the community for a position that will allow me to provide customer service and develop informational materials for the general public. If your agency is currently looking for an individual well versed in public contact who has a solid track record for compiling promotional information, please review the enclosed resume.

Over the past 5 years, I have been giving public speeches, designing flyers and brochures for agencies, and interacting with the general public. My skills in customer service are excellent and I can handle customer problems in a tactful manner. You'll find my communication skills well above average and I have had the opportunity to interact with very diverse populations and individuals of all ages. I can interview with business clients to gather facts and put these facts into written materials; interpret rules, regulations and policies; plus function positively as part of a team. You can trust me to work unsupervised, meet deadlines, and develop creative ideas that will make a difference in services rendered to the general public.

Working with the general public is my goal and your organization will provide me with just the opportunity. I would like to request a personal interview to further discuss my qualifications and your organization and the services it provides. I can be reached at the address and phone below.

Sincerely,

Lana Sullivan
12445 Mountain Ridge Drive
Mountain Ridge, CA 95446
(916) 545-3998