WESTERN STATE COLORADO UNIVERSITY

CAREER SERVICES

Cover Letter Writing

Taylor Hall 302A 970-943-7122

www.western.edu/career

Cover Letters

Purpose:

- To entice an employer to read your résumé
- To demonstrate that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position
- A marketing tool to address the needs of the employer
- To communicate your value to the employer
- To personalize your résumé
- To demonstrate your writing abilities

Other Types of Letters:

Electronic Cover Letter

- Similar to a traditional cover letter, but sent electronically as an email
- Should be concise and simple using standard business format
- Include position you are applying for in the SUBJECT of your email

Networking Letter

- To make others aware of your job search and your career focus
- To open up additional lines of communication in the job market
- To increase your knowledge about a particular career field or industry
- To find out more about potential employers
- To discover hidden job opportunities

Thank You Letter

- An opportunity to demonstrate good manners and strategy
- A thank you letter gives you an opportunity to express your continued interest in the position

Eight Key Points to Remember When Writing a Cover Letter

1. ***Address*** your cover letter to a specific person when possible. Don't forget to double check the spelling of the name and the person's title by researching the company's website.

2. Inform the employer of the ***exact job*** that you are applying for and ***where you found out about the job.***

3. Show the employer that you ***know something about the company*** and ***how you can positively contribute to the organization.***

4. Be ***enthusiastic*** in the letter.

5. ***Relate your experiences*** to the job (this should be in addition to what appears on your résumé). This is an opportunity to explain an experience or gaps in your résumé. Do not just reiterate what you placed on your résumé, give it more substance.

6. ***Be concise in your writing****.* Your writing should flow with no spelling, typing, or grammatical errors. Be sure to use the same font and type size no smaller than 10point and no larger than 12 point.

7. Let the employer know that you will be ***following-up with the company***.

8. Do not send photocopies of your cover letter. ***Every letter should be an original*** and placed on the same paper as your résumé.

What salutation should I use?

Simple rules to follow when writing your professional correspondence:

- Whenever a name is given, use the name rather than a generic "Dear Hiring Manager."
- If you know the person holds a doctorate, use the salutation "Dr."
- If you know the person is a woman, but you don't know whether or not she holds a doctorate, use the salutation "Ms."
- Do not ever use Miss or Mrs. in business correspondence unless you know beyond a doubt that the person prefers that salutation.
- If the person is a man, but you don't know whether or not he holds a doctorate, use the salutation "Mr."
- If you don't know the gender of the person, use both the first and last names. Why? Many names such as Lynn, Kelly, Jamie, and Morgan can be used for both men and woman.
- If you have no name to address your correspondence to, and you've tried without success to find one, address the letter to a specific title such as "Dear Human Resources Director" or "Dear Internship Coordinator."
- Never use generic salutations such as "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam."

Cover Letter Format for Hard Copies and Electronic Letters

Your Address (You can also use the same heading as your résumé and reference sheet)
Telephone Number
Email Address

Date

Name
Title
Company Name
Address

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr.:

Opening Paragraph (one paragraph): ***State your reason for writing.*** Be sure to include the name of the position in which you are applying to and where you learned of the position. If you were referred by a specific person include that here. Also, indicate something personal regarding your application such as your desire to relocate.

Body of Letter (one –two paragraphs): ***This is your sales pitch!*** In this section of the letter indicate to the employer why you are interested in this type of work. This is an opportunity to relate information and experiences on your résumé to the job that you are applying for. Additionally, in this section you can explain any gaps in your résumé or employment history.

Closing Paragraph (one paragraph): ***Confirm when you will follow-up.*** Inform the employer that you would like the opportunity to interview for the position; also, indicate that you will follow up with the employer within two weeks. Express your appreciation for their consideration of your application.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)
Your typed name

Tip! If sending a hard copy of the letter, always remember to sign. Forgetting to sign can eliminate someone from

Enclosure(s): Résumé

**Do not let the letter go over one page in length. Be sure to make every letter individualized to the job you are applying for!*

Sample Cover Letter

You can also use your heading from your résumé *on*

Elizabeth Student

CPO 0000, Gunnison, CO 81231
(970) 943-5555
Elizabeth.student@western.edu

February 16, 2014

Ms. Jane Doe
Partner-In-Charge
Big Public Accounting, Inc.
123 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 12345

Dear Ms. Doe:

I was referred to you by Mr. Dave Zbecki, a Partner with your New York office, who informed me the Chicago office of Big Public Accounting is actively seeking to hire quality individuals for your Auditor Development Program. The position fits my experience and educational background.

I have more than two years of accounting experience, including interning as an Auditor last year with the New York City office of Ernst & Young. In May, I will be receiving my Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Western State Colorado University and graduating Magna Cum Laude. I am confident that my combination of practical work experience and solid educational experience has prepared me for making an immediate contribution to Big Public Accounting. Having interned with a leading firm in the public accounting field, I understand the level of professionalism and communication required for long-term success in the field. My background and professional approach to business will provide your office with a highly productive Auditor upon completion of your Development Program.

Thank you for your consideration and review of my application materials. I will follow up with you within two weeks to confirm that you have received my application materials.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Student

Enclosure: Résumé

Sample Networking Letter

Your Name
Address
Phone Number
Email Address

Date

Name, Title
Company Name
Address
City, State zip

Dear:

Enclosed is a copy of my résumé. I am networking with higher education professionals, such as you, to identify career related opportunities during the summer of 2012. I'd greatly appreciate any assistance you can give me.

During my experience as an undergraduate, I have been involved in various on campus activities. Serving as a Senator for the Student Government Association as well as holding the position of Academic Peer Advisor has led me to the conclusion that I would like to pursue a career in higher education.

After reading many examples of job opportunities in the higher education field, I have begun to take special interest in the following function areas: academic advising, disability services, and learning assistance. My ultimate goal after graduation is to secure placement in graduate school. In the meantime, I would like help in defining the kinds of co-ops, internships, or related experiences that would benefit my long term goals.

Thank you for your consideration. Within two weeks I will call you to confirm the arrival of my letter. At that time, I would like to tap your expertise to help me get an idea of how I might gain additional experience in these areas.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)
Your typed name

Enclosure: Résumé

Sample Thank You Letter

Thank you notes are also acceptable; however, if you choose to write a handwritten note, make sure your writing is legible and your spelling is

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

Date

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to me about the Senior Programmer Analyst position with XXX Company. I appreciate your time and consideration in interviewing me for this position.

After speaking with you and the group, I believe I would be a perfect candidate for this position, offering the quick learning and adaptability that is needed for a diversified position. In addition to my enthusiasm for performing well, I would bring the technical and analytical skills necessary to get the job done.

I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you once the final decisions are made regarding this position. Please feel free to contact me at anytime if further information is needed. My cell phone number is (555) 111-1111.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)
Your typed name