



# Guide to Cover Letter Writing



Career Services  
304-214-8817  
[careerplaninfo@wncc.edu](mailto:careerplaninfo@wncc.edu)

## Purpose of Cover Letter

- To introduce yourself to an employer and to formally apply for a position
- To demonstrate you meet the requirements for a position
- Used as a marketing tool to address the specific needs of the employer
- Used to personalize your resume and explain any employment gaps
- Often your first form of communication with an employer—use it to showcase your writing skills

## Key Points to Remember When Writing a Cover Letter

- Always address your cover letter to a specific person or position.
- Inform the employer of the exact job that you are applying for and where you found out about the job.
- Show the employer that you know something about the company and how you can contribute to the organization.
- Relate your experiences to the job (this should be in addition to what appears on your resume).
- This is an opportunity to explain an experience or gaps in your resume.
- Be concise in your writing. Your writing should flow with no spelling, typing, or grammatical errors.
- Be sure to use the same font and in a type no smaller than 10pt. and no larger than 12pt.
- Let the employer know that you will be following-up with the company.
- Do not send photocopies of your cover letter. Every letter should be an original and placed on the same paper as your resume.

## What salutation should I use?

Simple rules to follow when writing your professional correspondence:

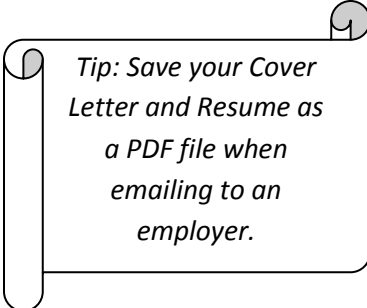
- Whenever a name is given, use the name rather than a generic “Dear Hiring Manager.”
- If you know the person holds a doctorate, use the salutation “Dr.”
- If you know the person is a woman, but you don’t know whether or not she holds a doctorate, use the salutation “Ms.”
- Do not ever use Miss or Mrs. in business correspondence unless you know beyond a doubt that the person prefers that salutation.
- If you 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  
Telephone Number  
Email Address

Date

Name  
Title  
Company Name  
Address



*Tip: Save your Cover Letter and Resume as a PDF file when emailing to an employer.*

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 (or Career Services) include that here. Also, indicate something personal regarding your application such you just completed your degree.

**Body of Letter (one –two paragraphs):** This is your sales pitch! Be original—employers know when someone has copied and pasted a generic cover letter. Take this opportunity to connect your experiences to the position. Use words from the employment add in describing your work. Additionally, in this section you can explain any gaps in your resume or employment history.

**Closing Paragraph (one paragraph):** Confirm when you'll 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—Always remember to sign if sending a hard copy!)

Your typed name

Enclosure(s)

\*Do not let the letter go over one page in length. And be sure to make every letter individualized to the job!

## Sample Cover Letter #1

1704 Market Street  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
304-123-8888  
patty.paralegal@mail.wvncc.edu

October 21, 2011

Mr. Larry Lawyer, ABCD Law Office  
123 Main Street  
Wheeling, WV 26003

Dear Mr. Lawyer:

This letter is in reference to the paralegal proof-reader position that was listed through West Virginia Northern Community College's Career Services Office. I am excited about ABCD Law Office's recent growth and I am confident that my skills and qualifications will benefit your organization.

I recently graduated from West Virginia Northern Community College with an Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal Studies. The position of paralegal proof-reader will allow me to utilize my research and writing skills. I have a tremendous capacity to undertake research and report findings in clear and concise manner. I work well under the pressure of deadlines, and I have been involved in many group projects. My work experiences have taught me that one must be prepared to work beyond the typical forty-hour week to achieve success. I am willing and able to do so for ABCD Law Offices.

Your consideration of my credentials would be greatly appreciated. I will call you next week to confirm your receipt of this letter and enclosed resume. Please feel free to contact me if you require additional information to support my candidacy.

Sincerely,

Patty Paralegal

Enclosure(s)

## Sample Cover Letter #2

532 City of Oaks Ave.  
Weirton, WV 26062

August 12, 2011

Ms. Rita Restaurant  
Regional Manager, Restaurant World  
111 Chef Avenue  
Weirton, WV 26062

Dear Ms. Restaurant:

Upon learning of the expansion of Restaurant World, I submit my resume for your consideration. A mutual acquaintance, Caring Chef, indicated to me that you are interested in hiring managers with proven organizational abilities, a willingness to learn, and a high level of commitment to the company's goals. I have these qualifications and am excited about the prospect of working a dynamic and growing restaurant franchise.

With five years experience working in restaurant management and a recent Associate of Applied Science degree in Culinary Arts, I have obtained the skills and knowledge required to succeed at Restaurant World. My business management experience coupled with my culinary knowledge makes me uniquely qualified candidate. In my previous position, I led our team in winning "Restaurant of the Year" for two consecutive years. We also maintained the lowest employee turnover rate and increased sales by 25%.

I look forward to meeting you, learning more about your expansion in this area, and discussing my qualifications with you at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at 555-3456.

Sincerely,

Mike Manager

Enclosure