



Oregon State University
Cascades

Cover Letters

OSU-Cascades Career Development Center

A cover letter or letter of application is a one page professional letter that emphasizes your interest in the position, specifically relates your skills and experience to the job, and displays your written communication skills.

Cover Letter Guidelines

- Format your cover letter similarly to your resume, with the same header, margins, and font size
- A cover letter **MUST** be no longer than one page, no exceptions
- Each cover letter should be tailored to the exact job that you are applying for - employers can easily identify a generic letter that you have used for multiple applications but just changed the company name
- Summarize certain experiences and skills from your resume, **DO NOT** copy what is already on your resume
- Be concise and avoid run-on sentences
- Watch your “I”s, do not start every sentence with “I”
- Proofread to make sure that your cover letters are error free – you cannot always trust spellchecker!

Who Should I Address My Letter To?

If the job posting does not list a contact person for the position, **DO NOT** address your letter “To Whom it May Concern:”. You have a couple of additional options:

1. As long as the posting does not say “no calls please” you have the ability to call the Human Resources department of the company, introduce yourself, let them know what position you are applying for and ask if they would be able to let you know who you should address your letter to. Sometimes you will get a name, sometimes you won’t. But if you do, the hiring manager will know that you did something extra to find out who they are.
2. If the posting asks you not to call or if Human Resources won’t give you a contact name, you can choose to address your letter to “Dear Hiring Manager:”, “Dear Recruiter:”, or “Dear Internship Coordinator:”. Whichever you feel makes the most sense for the position that you are applying for.

How Should I Submit My Cover Letters?

Electronic Applications

When submitting your application onto an online system or uploading it electronically, you can now upload either as a PDF of Word document. The applicant tracking systems that you upload your resume and cover letter into are computer programs that will scan your application for keywords that relate to the job that you are applying for. These systems can scan both Word and PDF files. It is recommended to upload as a PDF.

Email

If you are emailing your application to an employer, include your cover letter in the body of the email and attach your resume to the email as a PDF file. This way your resume will look the same no matter who opens it and on what device. You can also attach your cover letter as a PDF so that it is easy for the employer to print. Label your attachments as “Last Name Resume, Title of Position” and “Last Name Cover Letter, Title of Position” so that your application is easy for the employer to find later on.

Hard Copy

If you are planning to print out your resume and cover letter to drop off copies in person at companies, or to hand to recruiters during career fairs and interviews, it is best to print your resume and cover letter on resume paper. You can purchase resume paper at OfficeMax, Staples, or any other office supply store.

Cover Letter Outline

Benny Cascades

2600 NW College Way, Bend, OR, 97701
benny.cascades@onid.oregonstate.edu, 541-322-3157

Date of Writing

Recruiter's Full Name

Recruiter's Job Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, State & Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. (Recruiter's Last Name Only):

First Paragraph: Start with an interesting sentence to help you stand out from other applicants. Continue to explain what position you are applying for and how you heard about the position. It is important to state specifically why you are interested in working for the company. Show that you have done your research by including two to three sentences on what you like about the company and how what they do aligns with your goals and values.

Second/Third Paragraph: The body of your letter is probably the most difficult part to get together. This is where you want to make clear connections between the experiences and skills that you have, and the desired qualification for the position. You DO NOT want to restate your résumé here, but give details of experiences that support your qualifications for the position. Tell them how and why you will be a productive member of their organization. Sometimes two paragraphs are used so you can list work and internship related experiences in one paragraph, and related academic and co-curricular experiences in a second paragraph.

Closing Paragraph: In the final paragraph you should refer the employer to your enclosed résumé that further outlines your qualifications for the position, state your desire to meet with them in person to further discuss the position and your candidacy. Also indicate that you can be contacted for questions or to set up an interview and include both your email address and phone number. Last but not least, thank them for their time and consideration of your application and state that you look forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

** YOUR SIGNATURE **

Your Name (Typed)

Cover Letter Reviews

Once you have completed a rough draft of your cover letter, print a copy and drop-in or schedule an appointment with the Career Development Center for a review and suggestions on how to best market your skills and experience.

Contact Us:

Career Development Center, Tykeson Hall 106, career@osucascades.edu, www.osucascades.edu/cdc