

COVER LETTERS

Definition: A professional letter introducing another document. A letter of application summarizes qualifications for employment and introduces a resume.

COVER LETTER ESSENTIALS

- Focus

Well-written professional document created for a specific company and addressed to a specific person/department/company

- Balance

Document must look good on a page

1 page - Font size: 10-12 pt.

Font styles: Calibri, New Times Roman, Arial

- Error-free – no exceptions

- Address position requirements or minimum qualifications

Identify skills, core attributes, experiences, etc., that show your value to the reader – what you can do for the employer.

- Strong closing

Express an interest in participating in an interview to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.

COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

Use the same heading as your resume or:

Street Address

City, State

Month, Day, Year

Name of Recruiter

Title of Recruiter

Employer's Name

Employer's Street Address

City, State, Zip

SALUTATION

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. (recruiter's last name followed with a colon):

OPENING PARAGRAPH (*why you are writing*)

- Identify the position for which you are applying, how you learned of the opening and/or the intent of your letter. If you are not targeting a specific position, but have an interest in the company and its mission then include that in this paragraph.
- Use a transitional sentence to introduce the second paragraph.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S) (*qualifications*)

- Identify two or three ways you could successfully contribute to the overall functioning or growth of the company.
- Mention why you are excited about the position and the organization.
- Explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position.
- If you have some practical experience, point out specific achievements or unique qualifications that evolved from it.
- Illustrate relevant knowledge and qualifications by providing at least one example of a time you used the specific knowledge or skill.
- Include a summary statement about your interest in the company and your ability to transfer your academic knowledge/work experience into a professional position.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH (*wrap-up/action*)

- Express an interest in participating in an interview to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.
- Provide your contact information.
- If applicable, make a statement that will encourage a response. For example, you can say you will be in town on a certain date and would like to schedule an appointment or you will call on a certain date.
- Thank the person for his/her time and consideration.

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE

- Examples may include: Sincerely or Respectfully (always followed by a comma)
- Your name would appear typed four spaces below the complimentary close and your signature would appear between these two items.
- Note: The word "enclosure(s)" should appear beneath your name if you are sending any additional information (resume, etc.)

Bill E. Bison

Current Address • City, State, Zip • 701.555.1212 • first.last@ndsu.edu

March 14, 201X

Ms. Carolyn Johnson
Human Resource Director
Employer name
1234 Street NW
City, State, Zip

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am applying for the position of Project Engineer advertised in The Forum on Sunday, March 13. The skills I developed during my Cooperative Education assignment and throughout my academic work give me confidence in my qualifications for this position.

The Project Engineer position requires a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering, which I will have upon graduation this May from North Dakota State University. My course work has given me a broad spectrum of technical theory and applications. For the past two summers, I have worked as an Electrical Engineering Co-Op for (insert company name) in Alexandria, Minnesota. My work included designing and installing equipment to improve electrical generation efficiency and plant safety. Consulting with engineers and technicians when developing designs and modifications allowed me to learn new techniques, test new theories and improve my presentation skills.

This position requires similar skills that I developed working as a Co-Op, giving me confidence in my abilities to meet and exceed your expectations. Enclosed is a copy of my resume for your consideration and I look forward to an opportunity to discuss them with you in person. Please contact me at 701-555-1212 or first.last@ndsu.edu to schedule an interview.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Typed name

Enclosure

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- *Alternate formatting note:* When addressing job qualifications in a cover letter, you can use a bulleted list in place of the “middle paragraph.” However, if you choose to use a bulleted list, be sure your punctuation is correct. If you have questions about format, please contact the Career Center and we’re happy to assist you.