



COLORADO COLLEGE  
**Career Center**



# COVER LETTER GUIDE

Cover letters can help employers learn more detailed information about you, your accomplishments and how you can contribute to their company. A cover letter is not a reiteration of your resume.

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## **Cover letters are:**

- Concise - be as clear as possible to demonstrate your qualifications.
- Consistent - maintain the same format and style throughout the letter.
- Powerful - emphasize your skills with examples and accomplishments.

## **Getting Started:**

- Research the company - What do they do? What are their values? How does the company align with your interests, values, and skills? Why do you want to work there?
- Look at the job description - The job description can help you figure out what to address in your letter. The description will tell you what skills and qualifications the employer is looking for and what keywords to include.
- Identify your skills - What skills do you have that the company is looking for? How can you accurately portray these skills in your cover letter?
- Identify your experiences - What past experiences have you had that make you qualified for this position? These can be classroom experiences, extracurricular, volunteer, internships, and paid experiences.
- Determine your top 3 qualifications - This can be a combination of skills, knowledge, and experiences. These can serve as a guide while you write your letter.

## **Standard Format:**

- *Heading* - Includes your name and contact info (phone, email, city and state).
- *Addressing the letter* - Date, company/hiring managers name, address, and greeting.
- *1st Paragraph* - Serves as an introduction. You will identify the role you are applying for, talk about why you are excited about the opportunity and how it aligns with your values/career goals. You close out the 1st paragraph by summarizing your strongest qualifications for the role.
- *2nd Paragraph* - Discusses your relevant experience highlighting specific qualifications and skills that make you the best candidate. Provide specific examples from your experiences and how they have prepared you for this role.
- *3rd Paragraph* - If you feel like one paragraph isn't enough to describe your qualifications and experiences you can write an additional paragraph.
- *4th Paragraph* - Serves as a conclusion. You will use this paragraph to thank the employer and reiterate your strongest qualifications. Include a closing (like sincerely) and your name.

## **Cover letters tips:**

- Write a personalized cover letter for each position you are applying for.
- Pay attention to the instructions in the job post in regards to the cover letter. Some employers instruct candidates to answer specific questions or provide certain information.
- Address the letter correctly. Sometimes you might not be able to find the hiring managers name, in these cases you can put the company's name at the top then address the letter as "Dear Hiring Manager."
- Your letter should be one page in length.
- This letter is a professional document, so don't use humor, creative prose or quote other people.
- Ensure you have your letter reviewed by other people! The Career Center offers cover letter reviews.

# Cover Letter: Develop your Content

## Job/Internship Requirements:

*What are the employer's top needs?*

*Skills:*

*Knowledge:*

*Experience:*

*Why them?*

*What do I know about the employer?*

*Why do I support their mission/purpose?*

## You:

*How do you meet these needs?*

*Skills:*

*Knowledge:*

*Experience:*

*Why you?*

*Why am I a good match?*

*How do I make a connection between the employers' needs and my skills?*

# Cover Letter: Organize your Content

We will organize your following paragraphs based on top needs of the company. What are keywords from above? (*Example: communication, research, etc.*).

Paragraph 1: Think of this as your thesis statement. Considering the strongest most needed skills. (*Like writing an essay, you should have a solid thesis statement before you write the cover letter. Your thesis statement guides how you write your cover letter and your resume.*)

Paragraph 2: Theme you've identified from the keywords and what experiences you can describe that indicate your skills/qualifications. (*Example: maybe a big theme you've identified is communication, describe your prior experiences that demonstrate your skill with communication.*)

Paragraph 3: Another theme you've identified and what experiences you can describe. (*Example: perhaps another theme you identified is critical thinking skills, you will describe your experience as it relates to this skill.*)