

# COVER LETTER WRITING GUIDE

The University of Akron Career Services

## Cover Letters: What are they?

When you apply for a job or send out your resume, you typically will include a cover letter. Your cover letter is an opportunity to establish a positive first impression and professional rapport with a potential employer.

## What is included in a Cover Letter?

Cover letters should be no longer than one page, with a maximum of three or four paragraphs. Each paragraph serves a unique purpose:

### Introduction:

Two or three sentences describing who you are, what position you are applying for, where/when you heard about the position, and why you are applying for that position/organization.

### Body:

Showcase skills that fit the position and the organization. Look at the position advertisement and/or position description, and highlight how your skills, experiences, and education will help that organization achieve its goals. Specific examples, facts, and figures can often best demonstrate your career story in a memorable way.

### Conclusion:

Reinforce your interest in the job posting. Thank the employer for reading your letter and state contact information (phone/email), as well as best times to contact you.

## Important Things to Remember:

### **Formatting/Structure:**

- Use standard business letter format.
- Use 10-12 point font in a standard style.
- Set equal page margins (.5-1 inch).
- Address your cover letter to a specific individual, if possible. If you do not know the name of the contact, use "Dear Search Committee" or "Dear Hiring Manager."
- If sending a hard copy of your letter, sign each one in blue or black ink. Also, use quality resume paper.
- If you are applying via email, copy and paste your letter into the body. Be sure to proof it for formatting and professionalism.

### **Other Tips:**

- Write clearly and concisely.
- Avoid jargon, slang, and contractions.
- Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Use the job description to honestly convey your strengths and key skills that the employer is looking for.
- Express your enthusiasm for this opportunity.
- Expand on and add to your resume but try not to repeat your content.
- Demonstrate that you have done research about the organization and express how you can help them meet their goals.
- Modify each cover letter to the specific application you are submitting.

## Letter Writing 101:

**Draft #1:** Just write it! For the first draft, do not worry about getting the wording perfect; just get the words on the page! Compare the job description and requirements with your resume and cover letter. Are you clearly conveying how you meet their needs?

**Draft #2:** Reduce to one page. Check that you have clearly communicated how you are the best candidate for that position and organization. Be consistent in your style and writing. Make sure the letter is visually appealing. Proofread your letter after editing and have someone else critique it!

Cover Letter Example:

123 Zippy Street  
Akron, Ohio 44303

Place return address here.

May 14, 2022

Chris Smith  
Personnel Director  
Zips Incorporated  
184 Exchange Street  
Akron, Ohio 44303

Address and title of the  
letter's recipient.

Dear Chris Smith,

**The opening paragraph specifies the position title and company you are applying to and how you heard about the position. You should provide a summary of your background including your major and areas of knowledge.**

**Example:** My name is Jordan Jones, and I am a recent graduate of The University of Akron with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication. I recently viewed a posting on Handshake for the position of Program Coordinator for Zips Incorporated for which I am eager to apply. I am confident that my skills, experience, and education have prepared me to be a valuable asset to your team.

**The middle paragraph(s) should summarize your previous employment experiences that will allow you to meet the expectations and responsibilities of the position.**

**Example:** During my college career, I have used strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills in my projects and written work, which I will bring to this position of coordinating your programs for employees and the community. I have experience in giving presentations and corresponding with campus sororities as a member of the Panhellenic Council at The University of Akron. I am organized and manage my time effectively, earning a 3.4 grade point average while taking a full course load of classes, working part-time, and serving in a campus organization. I am comfortable working with people of diverse backgrounds, ages, and cultures through my experience as a volunteer with the International Institute of Akron. I am confident I can help Zips Incorporated establish strong programs for employees and the community as your Program Coordinator.

**The closing paragraph restates your interest in the position. Include an opportunity to meet along with your contact information; email, and phone number.**

**Example:** Thank you for your time and consideration of my application. Please contact me at 330-555-5555 or [jmj123@uakron.edu](mailto:jmj123@uakron.edu). I look forward to the opportunity of an interview and the possibility of working for Zips Incorporated.

Sincerely,

*John Doe*

John Doe



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Career Services

Additional career resource guides are available on Handshake.

SU 211 ■ CAS 126 ■ CBA 161 ■ Polsky 451

@UA\_CareerServices ■ @UAkronCareer ■ #UAkronCareer

330.972.7747 ■ [career@uakron.edu](mailto:career@uakron.edu) ■ <https://www.uakron.edu/career>

Handshake: <http://uakron.joinhandshake.com>

Hours: M/Th/F 8:00a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tu/W 8:00a.m-6:30p.m.