



**GOODWIN
COLLEGE**

CAREER SERVICES

COVER LETTER GUIDE

Career Services
Goodwin College
One Riverside Drive
East Hartford, CT 06118
(860) 727-6768

COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter introduces you to a prospective employer and should always be included when you submit your resume. The cover letter should be unique to each position that you are applying to and express your interest in both the company and the position. Since the cover letter is the first contact that you have with a potential employer, its effectiveness and appearance are critically important. This is your chance to introduce yourself in a manner that is more individualized and personal than the resume.

This is an opportunity for you to impress an employer with your writing skills, qualifications and enthusiasm, while at the same time exhibiting your sincerity, personality and style—all important elements in the hiring decision. The main purpose of the cover letter is to get the employer to read your resume.

Your cover letter should:

- 1) Be one page;
- 2) Be addressed to a specific person (if at all possible) with the person's job title; make certain that you correctly spell the person's name;
- 3) Conform to standard business style and be **error free!**
- 4) Refer to your resume without repeating it word for word;
- 5) Compel the employer to read beyond the first paragraph;
- 6) If mailing, be laser printed on a bond paper and be of the exact same kind, quality and style as your envelope and resume paper.

Tips for Great Cover Letters*

Your cover letter is the best way to sell yourself on paper and makes the employer want to read your resume. It allows your personality to come through and identifies to the employer the benefits of hiring you. It should always accompany your resume or job application.

Follow these tips for writing effective cover letters:

1. **Always include pertinent information.**

Your name, address and telephone numbers (including the area code) should be easily visible on every cover letter you submit. The reader will need this when trying to contact you. In the first few sentences of your letter, identify the specific job for which you are applying.

2. **Make it personal.**

Address your letter to a specific person within the company. If possible, call for a contact name. "To whom it may concern" and "Dear Sir/Madam" letters are more likely to be ignored than those addressed to a specific person.

3. **Make the opening sentence catchy.**

When employers read letters, they scan them for content. Attention-grabbing first sentences (ones that describe why you're the best person for the job, or address the employer's needs) will be more likely to persuade the reader to continue reading.

4. **Each letter you mail should be unique.**

There's no such thing as a „one size fits all“ cover letter. Each job and company for which you apply is different. Express interest and knowledge about the specific company, its products and services. Local newspapers, business magazines, trade journals, and the company's website are all valuable sources of information.

5. **Describe your skills as they relate to the job you are applying for.**

Saying you worked for a company in a job does not mean the reader will make the connection between you, your previous job, and the job in question. Relate your experience, training and accomplishments to show that you have the skills to successfully perform the job.

6. **Always type and proofread your cover letter before sending it.**

Cover letters **must** be professional; mistakes are simply unacceptable. Typing errors may negatively affect the employer's judgment of you. If your letter is neat and professional, the employer is more likely to believe that you are too.

7. **Be brief and use action words to describe your accomplishments.**

Some employers receive many cover letters and resumes daily, so they want to know as much about you as possible without having to read a lot.

8. **Always keep a copy of every cover letter you send.**

Maintaining copies of prior letters you have sent will make your job search and follow-up much easier.

9. **Always request a response or an interview.**

Your goal is to obtain an interview, so explain that you will call on a specific date (usually seven to ten business days after you mailed the letter) in order to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.

10. **Be sure to sign your letter.**

*(Taken from the Connecticut Department of Labor)

General Outline for a Cover Letter

Your Name
123 Anywhere Street
Anytown, CT 00000

Date

Mr. Wonderful Employer
Vice President
XYZ Company
1234 First Avenue
Anytown, CT 12345

(Use complete title and address)

Dear Mr. Employer:

(Address it to a particular person)

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying.

(Make the addressee want to read your resume. Be personable and enthusiastic)

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH: Explain why you are interested in working for this employer (mention some fact you uncovered in your research) and specify your reasons for your interest in this type of work. If you have had related work experience or education, be sure to point it out.

(Be brief, but specific; your resume contains details)

However, do not just reiterate what's on your resume, elaborate. If you are responding to an ad, **use key words found in the ad**. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying (give examples!). Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well. You may refer the reader to your enclosed resume (which gives a summary of your qualifications and achievements).

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Do not be passive. Have an appropriate action; closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action you will take to discuss initiating an interview date.

(Statement of action)

Sincerely,

Written signature,

(Always sign your letters-legibly. Use ballpoint pen, not felt tip markers).

NOTE: Business letter format allows some flexibility. For example, your address may alternatively be centered and the date and closure flush with the left margin.

What to Include in Your Cover Letter

Parts of a Cover Letter

A cover letter is comprised of several parts: contact information, the body of the cover letter, and an appropriate closing. If you are writing a cover letter to mail or to upload to a job board or company website, the first section of your cover letter should include information on how the employer can contact you. When you send an *email cover letter*, instead of listing your contact information at the top of the message include your contact information in your signature.

Make it personalized!

It is going to be time consuming to write a custom cover letter for each job you apply for, but it is important to take the time and effort to show the company why you are a good match.

When it comes to cover letters, taking the time to get personal is really important. Find out as much as you can about the company and the hiring manager. Personalize your cover letter and, if you can, address it to the individual responsible for hiring. If need be, research online or make a phone call to find out who the hiring manager is.

How should I address it?

Employers who responded to a recent employer survey conducted by Saddleback College preferred:

- Dear Hiring Manager (40%)
- To whom it may concern (27%)
- Dear Sir/Madam (17%)
- Dear Human Resources Director (6%)
- Leave it blank (8%)

How should I close it?

It is important to close your letter in a professional manner. Here is a list of letter closing examples that are appropriate for professional correspondence.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Sincerely | • Most sincerely |
| • Sincerely yours | • Respectfully |
| • Regards | • Respectfully yours |
| • Best Regards | • Thank you |
| • Kind regards | • Thank you for your consideration |
| • Yours truly | |

Follow the closing with a comma, a space, and then your name and your contact information. For example, if you are sending an email message:

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your email address

Your phone number

Tips for getting your cover letter seen:

Always follow the instructions from the employer for submitting your application materials. If you are asked to email your resume, cover letter, and list of recommendations: attach the resume and recommendations and paste the cover letter into the body of the email.

Building Your Cover Letter

Intro (before body of letter): I'm writing to apply for the position of **(job position)** at **(company name)**. I am confident that my skills are well-aligned with the role, and that I would be an excellent fit for your organization; therefore I have enclosed my resume for your review.

Body (see examples below)

Conclusion (after body of letter): I believe my experiences and track record make me an excellent fit for this opportunity. Please feel free to contact me via phone or email at a time of your convenience to discuss my background as well as the requirements for the role. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Signature

*The "Body Selections" can be used singly or mixed and matched to create the body of your cover letter. These are just suggestions to get started and can be customized to reflect you and the position you are applying for. Most **bold/underlined** words are there for you to insert your personal experience and specific details.*

Student (Body Selections)

- My studies at Goodwin College have revolved around **subject**, allowing me to hone my skills in **area of expertise**. I believe my knowledge of **subject matter** would make me a great addition to the **company name** workforce.
- During my time at Goodwin College, I have received recognition for excellence in **subject matter** as well as **enter accomplishment**. I am eager to take my **subject matter** skills to the next level and apply them in a professional setting.
- Studying **subject matter** at Goodwin College has given me deep insight on **subject** and a varied skillset that includes **skill** and **skill**. I believe these skills will make me a valuable asset to **company name**.
- At Goodwin College, I have learned to **perform a skill** and **perform a skill**, as well as **perform a skill** – skills that I believe will make me an excellent addition to the **company name** team.
- After extensive research, I have found your company, **company name**, to reflect my own priorities- **list priorities and values**.
- I feel that a job as **position** at **company name** will allow me to hone my **skill type** skills and **grow in a certain way**.

Career Change (Body Selections)

- For **number of years**, I held the position of **position** at **company name**. This required me to **enter responsibility**. I also worked for **number** of years as a **position** at **company name**. In this capacity, I was responsible for **responsibility**. Were I to be hired as a **position** at **company name**, I would bring to the table expertise in **translatable skills**.
- My position as **position** at **company name** allowed me to hone my **skill** and **skill**- skills I believe would translate well into a position as a **position**.
- My breadth of experience has made me well rounded and versatile. My work history reflect this. In my position as **position** at **company name** I excelled in **skill** and even **enter accomplishment**. While working as **position** for **company**, I **enter accomplishment**.
- Having worked as both a **position** and **position**, I bring to the table a breadth of experience, versatility, and insight. I believe these qualities will make me a valuable addition to the **company name** team.
- In the past, I have excelled as **position**. I am confident that I would achieve this same level of excellence working as a **position** for **company name**.

Returning to Work (Body Selections)

- As you can see from my resume, I have been out of the workforce for **number** of years. During this time, I have been **enter productive activity**. I am now ready to return to a regular job and apply my expertise in **area of expertise** to a position as **position**.
- I have **number** year's experience in **field**. I worked as a **position** for **number** years for **company name**, **position** for **number** years for **company name**. I believe this makes me an ideal candidate for a job as **position** at **company name**.
- During my **number**-year hiatus, I have **enter productive experiences of projects related to desired position**. In this way, I have managed to stay up to date on the latest trends in the **industry type** industry.
- I have **number** years of experience in **field** and a degree in **subject** from Goodwin College. My strengths include **list 2-3 strengths**. I believe my experience and expertise would make me a valuable addition to the **company name** team.
- During my time off, I have kept up with the developments in the **industry type** industry. I have **enter activity related to industry** and **enter activity related to industry**.

General (Body Selections)

- My skill-set and industry expertise are comprehensive and up-to-date. I make it my top priority to see that **enter job duty** is done well and efficiently. My career has also seen its share of achievements; while working as a **job title** and **company name**, I **enter major accomplishment**.
- I have learned and accomplished a great deal in my **number** years of **enter type of experience**. One of my proudest moments to date occurred while I was a **job title** at **company name**. In this capacity, I was responsible for **enter job responsibilities**. On one occasion, I **enter accomplishment**, which led to **positive result**.
- I believe myself to be an excellent **job title** candidate for **company name**. During my time working at **company name** as **job title**, I have learned a great deal and achieved a number of goals. One of my highest achievements was **enter major accomplishment**. This led to **enter positive result**, which in turn **enter positive end result for company**.
- In my recent capacity as **job title** for **company name**, I was able to significantly expand my skill-set. My responsibilities for **enter core job responsibilities** caused me to develop my **skill #1** and my **skill #2** in particular. I believe that these skills, as well as my **degree** in **major**, make me an excellent candidate for **job title** at **company name**.
- In my **number** years working as **job title**, I have honed my skill-set and accomplished a great deal. My last position was working as a **job title** for **company name**. In addition to tending to my responsibilities for **responsibilities**, I **enter major accomplishment**.
- I am motivated, task-oriented, and efficient, and my knowledge of the **enter industry** industry is comprehensive and current. While working as a **job title** at **company name**, I was responsible for **responsibilities**. I also **enter major accomplishment** during my time there, which **enter positive effect**.
- My background in **enter areas of expertise** and training in **industry** would make me a valuable asset to **company name**.
- My experience and past accomplishments in **enter type of relevant experience** make me an excellent candidate for **job title**. Previously I worked as **job title** for **company name**. In this position, I had a chance to truly hone my skill-set and **enter major accomplishment**.
- My **number** years of experience have resulted in a strong understanding of **job duty or industry**. My skill-set is extensive and well balanced. In addition, I am proficient in **equipment or software**.
- My enthusiasm and commitment to excellence have served me well. I have extensive experience with **enter job responsibility**, having had the chance to significantly develop my **enter relevant skills** while working as a **job title** at **enter previous company name**.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Richard Anderson
1234, West 67 Street
Carlisle, MA 01741
(123) 456 7890

May 1, 2013

Mr. John Smith,
Human Resource Manager
National Hospital
257 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 12345-6789

Dear Mr. Smith:

Within # years, I have developed strong medical skills. Goodwin College has enabled me to build my knowledge of competencies which I feel capable of performing. I thrive on challenge and change, and I look forward to new opportunities to build positive customer relationships every day while establishing myself in the medical community.

I believe that as a medical assistant for company, my energy, analytic skills, organizational abilities, and creativity in tackling problems will make a positive contribution. I am equally comfortable working independently to meet company goals, as well as collaboratively as part of a team. I have always been able to establish and maintain excellent relationships with clients and coworkers at all levels.

My professional skills include:

- **Professional Skill #1**
- **Professional Skill #2**
- **Professional Skills #3**

I would welcome the chance to provide you with additional information to supplement what appears in my enclosed resume. I am available for a personal interview at your convenience. I know you are busy, and have many applications to review, so please let me know if you wish to further discuss your requirements and my ability to meet them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Anderson

Enclosures: Resume

LETTER OF INTEREST SAMPLE

Richard Anderson 1234,
West 67 Street
Carlisle, MA 01741
(123) 456 7890

May 1, 2013

Human Resource Manager
National Hospital
257 Park Avenue South New
York, NY 12345-6789

Dear Human Resource Manager:

I am certified in medical assisting and I would like to inquire about positions at **ABD Company. ABD's Program has been recommended to me as one of the most highly regarded medical training programs in the industry.** I would be interested in learning more about the company and about available opportunities.

I have a **Certificate/Associates Degree** in **field** from Goodwin College. In addition, I completed an externship focusing on **list duties performed at externship.**

My resume, which is enclosed, contains additional information on my experience and skills. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss any open positions with you and to provide further information on my candidacy. I can be reached at **860-727-6768** or by email at **Richardanderson@student.goodwin.edu**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your typed name

PROSPECTING LETTER SAMPLE

Richard Anderson 1234,
West 67 Street
Carlisle, MA 01741
(123) 456 7890

May 1, 2013

Mr. John Smith,
Human Resource Manager
National Hospital
257 Park Avenue South New
York, NY 12345-6789

Dear Mr. Smith:

I read about **Company name's type of field** program in **College Graduate Magazine (name of source where you got the info)** and I would like to inquire about the possibility of openings. I am interested in the health care field and establishing myself in the health care industry. I would be interested in learning more about the company and about available opportunities.

I have an **Associates Degree/Certificate in program**, as well as patient care experience as a **list previous job if applicable**. In addition, I completed an internship focusing on **something your internship focused on**. My professional skills include:

- **Professional Skill #1**
- **Professional Skill #2**
- **Professional Skill #3**
- **Professional Skill #4**

My resume, which is enclosed, contains additional information on my experience and skills. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the **position** with you and to provide further information on my candidacy. I can be reached at **860-727-6768**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely

Your signature

Your typed name

PROSPECTING/POSSIBLE JOB OPENINGS LETTER SAMPLE

(using examples from your job history)

Richard Anderson 1234,
West 67 Street
Carlisle, MA 01741
(123) 456 7890

May 1, 2013

Mr. John Smith,
Human Resource Manager
National Hospital
257 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 12345-6789

Dear Mr. Smith:

For the past # years I have followed your career through news events, interviews and web research. *Your dedication to the enhancing all aspects of patient care and your understanding of the important role medical assistants play in today's faced-paced health care environment, coupled with your belief in the power of teamwork and leadership skills.* **This is where to use information you researched about the company, their mission statement, their future plans, or anything else you came across during your research.**

I have had the privilege of honing my medical abilities at Goodwin College. Before college, I worked for **name of company** and learned all aspects of **job duties and responsibilities with similar applications to prospective job**. I then moved to **another job title** for a **different name/type of company** composed of a small to mid-sized facility which focused on great customer service. In my current position, I am **job title** for **name of company**.

I would like an opportunity to visit with you to get your insight and suggestions on where my skills and abilities would be of the greatest value to the **company name**, and to inquire about possible job openings within the company.

I will call your office to set a convenient time. I do look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your typed name

SAMPLE EMAIL COVER LETTER WHEN RESUME ATTACHED

Dear Hiring Manager,

I read your job posting for the position with interest. I can offer company name:

- Translatable Skill #1
- Translatable Skill #2
- Translatable Skill #3
- Translatable Skill #4
- Translatable Skill #5

In addition to my extensive retail experience, I have excellent communication skills. I always maintain a gracious and professional manner when communicating with people, including customers and staff. My broad experience and range of skills make me an excellent candidate for this position.

My resume, which is below, provides additional information on my background and qualifications. I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible to arrange time for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

NAME

Email Address

SAMPLE NETWORKING LETTER

Contact Name
Title Company
Address
City, State, Zip Dear

Mr. Contact:

I was referred to you by **Contact Name** from **XYZ Company** in New York. She recommended you as an excellent source of information on the communications industry.

My goal is to secure an entry-level position in communications. I would appreciate hearing your advice on career opportunities in the communications industry, on conducting an effective job search, and on how best to uncover job leads.

Thanks so much, in advance, for any insight and advice you would be willing to share.

I look forward to contacting you early next week to set up a telephone informational interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name

Cover Letter Rubric

	Cover letter should get you the interview.	Cover letter could land you an interview. This is an average letter (borderline case.)	Cover letter needs significant improvement and would be discarded during screening
Business format and overall quality of writing ability	This letter uses correct business format with date and addresses at the top, and a signature at the bottom. This letter is clear and concise, and grammatically correct. There are no spelling errors.	This letter uses correct business format with date and addresses at the top, and a signature at the bottom. There are minimal grammar and spelling errors. While its content is decent, this letter does not convince an employer to call.	Business formatting is not used in this letter. There is no address or date at the top. This letter is not signed. There are multiple grammar and spelling errors. The content of this letter does not make sense to the reader.
Section 1: Introduction	This section identifies the position for which you are applying and explains why you are interested in the job. You have described how you heard about the opening. The wording is creative and catches an employer's attention quickly.	This section identifies the position you are seeking. This letter does not describe how you heard about the opening. You vaguely describe why you are interested in this job. This section is bland and might not catch someone's attention fast enough.	This section does not clearly identify what position you are seeking. There is no description of how you heard about the position or why you are interested. This letter definitely will not grab an employer's attention and keep him or her reading.
Section 2: Identification of skills and experiences as related to position	This letter identifies one or two of your strongest qualifications and clearly relates how these skills apply to the job at hand. This letter explains specifically why you are interested in the position and this type of job, company, and/or location.	This letter identifies one of your qualifications, but it is not related to the position at hand. This letter restates what is on your resume with minimal additional information. You explain why you are interested in the position but are too vague.	This letter does not discuss any relevant qualifications. You have not related your skills to the position for which you are applying. This letter does not state why you are interested in the position, company, and/or location.
Section 3: Closing	This letter refers the reader to your resume or any other enclosed documents. This letter thanks the reader for taking time to read this letter. You are assertive as you describe how you will follow up with the employer in a stated time period.	You thank the reader for taking time to read this letter. You do not refer the reader to your resume or application materials. This letter assumes that the employer will contact you to follow up.	This letter does not thank the reader for taking time to review this letter. There is no reference to a resume or other materials. This letter does not mention any plan for follow up.

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