

Upperclassmen Cover Letter Guide

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Writing Effective Cover Letters

A cover letter serves to explain why you are applying for a position and why you are the ideal candidate. Resumes are only as good as the letter accompanying them. So make sure that you spend time on your letter and direct it to the appropriate person. What you write and how you write it tells potential employers a great deal about your professionalism, competence, and personality.

Opening Paragraph:

- What is your intent for writing this letter?
- What position are you applying for and how did you learn about it?

Briefly introduce yourself (and your major, and degree, if needed). Be specific about the position you are applying for. If someone recommended you for this opening/organization, this paragraph should mention them and the **subsequent factors** that prompted you to apply. Your **interest** is vital and needs to be conveyed professionally. Instead of writing “I really want to work as Analyst here”, write “My past experience as an Analyst Intern where I developed quantitative and communication skills learned through writing business reports and identifying financial status by comparing and analyzing results with forecasts have set me up perfectly for this opportunity here”.

Second Paragraph:

- What are your qualifications?
- Why do you want to work for this organization? What would you enjoy doing for them?

Describe the most relevant highlights from your background that would be of greatest interest to the employer. DO NOT regurgitate your whole resume or LinkedIn profile. For the Analyst example, further expand on your responsibilities and accomplishments. Include other relevant professional and personal experiences. Like the resume, appropriate use of action verbs is essential in this paragraph. Along with your skills, convey why you are interested in the organization and information you know about their services. **Remember:** Make your argument about how you add value to the organization. [This paragraph can be divided into 2/3 paragraphs based on content]

Closing Paragraph:

- What is your plan of action?

Close your letter by stating that you would like to discuss employment opportunities or other information with the individual and that you will await their response. This demonstrates your interest in the position and organization and your initiative to actively seek out opportunities.

Formatting Tips:

- Use same font as your resume (Garamond)
- Start off with your name, address, and contact information, then the addressee and organization name and address, followed by the date you are submitting [all left aligned]
- Write in block format – do no indent
- Revise, revise, revise for spelling and grammatical errors. [Print out a copy and read out loud]
- If submitting online, make sure it is a PDF document, not Word.

Format 1

This format is the most common, with your name and address leading followed by the name and address of your potential employer

Your Name
Your Campus Address
Wabash College
Crawfordsville, IN 47933

August 14, 2016

Millicent McGillicuddy, Director
Office of Cover Letter Creation
Wabash College
Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933

Dear Ms. McGillicuddy:

The purpose of this letter is to express my interest in the WISE Cover Letter Creation Expert position you posted on WabashWorks. I am particularly interested in working with you because of the opportunity to positively affect the lives of your clients, and to work with individual students to help them achieve their unique career goals. I believe my diverse work experience and personal attributes make me a valuable candidate for this position.

I have experience in cover letter creation through my position at the XYZ Cover Letter Creation Office at Camp Wanamucca. In my role as a Cover Letter Counselor, I especially enjoyed working with campers to create effective, error-free cover letter templates. In addition, I have well-developed skills in writing, paragraph development, and event marketing. At Camp Wanamucca, I created and marketed the first cover letter development party, successfully attracting 79 campers through social media initiatives, including a targeted Twitter campaign.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to further discuss this position with you at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Format 2

While Format 1 is the most common amongst Wabash cover letters, Format 2 is also acceptable. Instead of writing in your address, you can take the heading from your resume and put it at the top of your cover letter.

Alex F. Upperclassman

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Sincerely,

Your Name

IMPORTANT NOTES & TIPS

Originality

- Do not copy the wording of a cover letter example or of past cover letters you have written.
- Use specific, real-world examples that pertain to the job you're applying for

Formatting

- Center your letter on the page
- Do not feel the need to re-hash your entire resume; keep your letter short and to the point
- Address your letter to the contact listed in the WabashWorks job posting
- Double-check for grammar and spelling; read it out loud to catch problems
- Bring your cover letter by Career Services if you would like someone to help you with proofreading and formatting