

FLASHPOINT CHICAGO

A CAMPUS OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE HOLLYWOOD

USING YOUR COVER LETTER

It's not uncommon for employers to receive hundreds of résumés for one position, so including a well-written cover letter will set you apart from the competition. An effective cover letter must convey your value, align your experience and abilities to the company needs, and influence the reader. It's also the perfect place to infuse your brand and showcase your personality and traits beyond your hard skills.

It is very important that you think of this document as a template, which you can alter for each job you apply to in order to meet these three goals:

ALIGN TO THE ROLE: The best way to modify your cover letter is to customize the bullet points that describe how your skills or work experience align to the needs outlined in the job, as you understand them through your experience and the research you've conducted.

CONVEY THE COMPANY'S VALUES: To win a hiring manager's interest, it is necessary to directly relate what you offer and the challenges you solve to the company's particular culture, needs and challenges.

PERSONALIZE TO THE READER: Capture the reader's attention by addressing your letter specifically to the actual person who will read your cover letter and résumé. To ensure you are reaching a person with influence, research the company first. Call to find the name of the hiring manager for your desired position or the name of a recruiting specialist to whom you should address your cover letter. By making the effort to connect with a real person, you're showing your willingness to be a self-starter and seek out answers on your own. If this information is inaccessible, use a greeting such as "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon."

Proofread your customized cover letter before you send it. There is no excuse for typos, and if you're the type to miss details, ask Career Services to proofread it as well.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO SEND COVER LETTERS:

When applying online for a job, upload a customized cover letter along with your résumé.

After submitting your online application, follow up and thank the hiring manager for taking the time to review your application. First, identify the hiring manager for the position (hint: try a Google, social media or professional networking site search to find a contact name). Then, email him or her a personalized version of your cover letter in the body of the message with your résumé attached.

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SAMPLE COVER LETTER

YOUR NAME

(xxx) xxx-xxxx | email@email.com | URL

DATE

Contact person
Company name
Street address
City, State Zip

Re: Job title and/or job order number

Dear [Mr. or Ms. Last Name],

Develop a paragraph of two to three sentences that cover the following information: Why you are writing, what position you are targeting and where you saw the position advertised (or how you became aware of the position). This paragraph can also explain why you are currently looking for work (e.g., you recently graduated, moved to a new location, or are finishing a temporary assignment).

Provide an introductory statement to some of the highlights you are offering:

- List some of the job-specific skills relevant to the target job (or that are mentioned in the job posting) and how you acquired or applied those skills.
- List a few of your transferable skills that illustrate how you perform relevant tasks. Provide a supporting example.
- List an example of an accomplishment that was achieved by applying skills that are relevant to the target job.
- Say something about your interpersonal and/or communication skills and provide an example of how they impacted your performance.

For the closing paragraph, indicate that the résumé is enclosed, acknowledge its limitations and request an interview. Tell the employer how to reach you (you may also suggest the best times), and include any additional information that will confirm your interest in connecting.

Thank the employer for his or her time and consideration. Indicate an interest in the next step.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]