

Cover Letter and Resume Guide



Handshake

uwec.joinhandshake.com

Advising, Retention + Career Center

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Eau Claire

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter serves as the introduction to your resume. It is specific to each position and demonstrates interest in a particular employer or job. It should include expanded information from the resume and should not repeat things.

Because it is often the first contact with a prospective employer, it should be concise, well-written, and demonstrate effective communication.

COVER LETTER SECTIONS

The cover letter typically consists of three parts: introduction, body, and closing. Within these three parts, include:

- How you found out about the position (referral, networking event, etc.)
- Why you are interested in the organization
- Why the organization should be interested in you
- When and how you will contact the organization to follow up

Introduction

- Capture the reader's interest
- Tell the reader how you learned of the position or organization (Why did you decide to apply?)
- If appropriate, mention the name of someone who suggested you apply to the company and/or for the job opportunity

Body

- Demonstrate your ability to do the job in 1-3 paragraphs
- Promote your education, experiences, past jobs, internships, and student activities
- Use examples and tell your story
- Illustrate the skills related to the position and what you can offer to the position
- Enhance your accomplishments with details, do not repeat what is on your resume

Closing

- Indicate next steps, including a plan to follow up with the employer
- Thank the employer for taking the time to consider your application materials
- Close the cover letter with "Sincerely" or "Respectfully"

TIPS

- Proofread
- Personalize each letter (make every attempt to address each letter to a specific individual)
- Limit the cover letter to one page, be concise and compelling
- Avoid overusing the word "I"
- Vary writing style and offset long sentences with short ones
- Sign the cover letter
- Use a 10-12 font size
- Use paper, font and a header that match your resume to make a consistent application package
- If including items with the cover letter such as a resume, references, or writing samples, use one of the following notations below your name: Enclosure, Encl., or Enc. or Attachment, Att. Or Atch. if sent electronically
- Keep a copy of every letter you send as part of your job search file
- Send as a PDF document

COVER LETTERS SAMPLE

Utilize block format to give a professional first impression to the reader.

Darcy R. Heath
123 Mulberry Street
Stillwater, MN 58329

Optional-utilize the same header as the resume to create a streamlined application package.

Address the letter to a specific person or hiring team. Never assume titles and match name listed in job description.

August 12, 2019

EcoSource
12123 Fall Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703
Attn: Patricia West

Note how you found the position. If referred by a company employee, include the contact's name in the letter.

Dear Patricia West:

Please accept this letter of interest regarding the Project Manager position available at EcoSource. I learned of the position while reviewing Handshake. As a passionate and committed graduate, I am looking forward to continuing my career path at EcoSource.

State in the first sentence why you are writing the letter.

As I read your position description, I have experience in each item you outline. My Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Communication has taught me interpersonal and leadership skills, while offering me practical experience. I have worked in a professional environment as an intern at FOX Sports North where I developed project work schedules, engaged team members, and managed day to day project tasks. I monitored work-flow requirements to meet timelines and quality assurance standards. Bringing a high attention to detail and strong communication skills to the position, I organized company events and managed social media campaigns. I enjoyed this experience and further confirmed my interest in working as a project manager.

Demonstrate how your career goals align with the position and organization.

Explain qualifications and skills in relation to the open position.

As a Student Supervisor of the Service Center team in Davies Center at UW-Eau Claire, I have honed my customer service skills, which I consider essential to the profession of project management. My greatest strengths are taking the initiative to identify customer needs and working efficiently to achieve team goals. I believe I am well-equipped to transition into a member of your customer focused, dynamic organization.

Demonstrate your knowledge of the position and company. Frame experiences to focus on skills relevant to a particular job.

Sign the cover letter before sending it to the employer.

Through my student work experience and internship, I have proven my ability to handle multiple projects and stay focused on the needs of the customer. My enclosed resume further details my qualifications for this position. Please feel free to contact me at heathdr@gmail.com or 715-555-5555 with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Include contact information in the last paragraph of the cover letter.

If including other documents with the cover letter, use Enclosure, or Attachment if sent electronically.

Sincerely,



Darcy Heath

Enclosure (Resume)

A cover letter accompanies a resume and other application documents. It serves as your first impression to an employer and helps you to stand out from other job seekers.

- Write the cover letter targeted to an industry, company, or job
- Determine important job requirements from the position description and customize your cover letter to highlight key skills and experiences
- Do not copy and paste information from the resume; expand on experiences, skills, and accomplishments
- Proofread, spell check, and edit the cover letter
- Make your points succinctly and concisely; do not ramble
- Do not send the same generic cover letter for all jobs

RESUMES

A resume highlights qualifications for employment including education, experience, skills, and other relevant information. The resume is used by employers to determine potential interview candidates for specific opportunities. Tailor the resume to a specific career opportunity and company. This is your chance to tell your story.

Basic types of resumes include:

Chronological-It is the most frequently used resume by new college graduates and people with continuous employment history. Chronological resumes list information in reverse chronological order (most recent items first) and give a brief account of education and experiences.

Functional-It focuses on an individual's professional skills and most often is used by individuals whose education and experiences do not match career goals. A functional resume is used when there are noticeable gaps in experience. Skills are used as headings followed by statements demonstrating accomplishments and utilization of skills.

Combination- It is a mix of chronological and functional resumes. Combination resumes list information in reverse chronological order and focus on skills.

Scannable-A scannable resume is one that can be "read" by Applicant Tracking Software (ATS) and scanned for keywords and specific information. Keyword searches focus on words used in the position description.

Information should be presented in the order that best supports the individual's objective and enhances candidacy for career opportunities. Do not hesitate to create headings specific to experiences. Resumes should stand out from other applicants' documents; **do not use resume templates.**

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

A CV is a document similar to a resume because it provides an overview of your professional and educational experiences. The difference between the two documents primarily lies in the content and purpose. CV content may include publications, presentations, research, honors and other relevant information; and can be multiple pages. A CV is typically developed for applications for international jobs, graduate programs, teaching, or research positions in a university or research setting. A resume is prepared for employers outside of academic settings and is typically one full-page.

SAMPLE RESUME HEADINGS

Academic Achievements	College Activities	International Experience	Relevant Course Work
Academic Honors	Community Involvement	Internship Experience	Relevant Experience
Accomplishments	Computer Experience	Job History	Research Experience
Activities	Computer Knowledge	Leadership Roles	Skills and Qualifications
Additional Experience	Computer Skills	Honors	Skill(s) Summary
Associations	Conferences	Lab Skills	Special Training
Athletic Involvement	Credentials	Language Skills	Special Awards
Awards and Distinctions	Education	Memberships and Activities	Special Licenses and Awards
Campus Involvement	Education and Training	Military Experience	Student Teaching Experience
Career Goal	Employment	Military Service	Study Abroad
Career Highlights	Employment Objective	Military Training	Summary of Qualifications
Career Objective	Employment History	Objective	Teaching Experience
Career Related Experience	Exhibitions and Awards	Professional Affiliations	Technical Skills
Career Summary	Experience(s)	Professional Development	Volunteer Experience
Certifications	Extracurricular Involvement	Professional Experience	Work Experience
Classroom Experience	Field Placement	Professional Organizations	Work History
Coaching Experience	Highlights of Qualifications	Related Experience	Workshops and Seminars

RESUME SECTIONS

Heading

- Name, mailing address (can be optional), professional email address and phone number
- LinkedIn URL, e-portfolio or a professional website is optional (not hyperlinked)

Professional Objective (Optional)

- A brief statement that tells the reader about career goals and/or expresses interest in a specific job
- Include a specific job title, company name, general occupational field, and qualifications

Education

- Universities attended and location (city and state)
- Degree(s), major(s), minor(s), academic certificate(s)
- Date of graduation (month and year)

Optional educational information may include:

- Study abroad experience (university, location, and dates)
- Cumulative and/or Major GPA (3.0 or better)
- Relevant coursework
- Scholarships and academic honors

Experience

- Job title from employment, research, internship, student teaching, etc.
- Employer name and location (city and state)
- Dates of employment (month and year)
- Bulleted description of responsibilities and accomplishments using action verbs (called accomplishment statements)

Special Skills

- Skills related to the position (typically technical and language skills) and level of proficiency

Awards and Honors

- Scholarships, academic honors (i.e. Dean's List), and special recognitions (i.e. Employee of the Month)

Activities

- Campus and community activities including organizations, clubs, student government, athletics, and professional affiliations (include dates)

References

- Reference name and title, organization, phone number, and email address
- Include references on the resume or on a separate document
- **Make sure you have asked each person for permission to be used as a reference.**

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

A Good Accomplishment Statement Should Contain:

- 1) An action verb describing role and/or responsibilities
- 2) The scope of activities (i.e. size of unit managed, size of budget managed, or a number of personnel affected)
- 3) The results of activities, given in measurements such as, numbers/percent, amount of money, or value-added for customers
- 4) Specific skills gained from the experience

Tips for Writing Effective Accomplishment Statements:

- Tailor statements to company and job of interest
- Use approximately 2-5 statements for each position
- Bulleted action statements are easier and quicker to read than paragraphs
- Indent where appropriate to signify points that are a subset of an accomplishment
- Add scope and details to provide context such as numbers, size, ages, percentages

Examples:

- Initiated advanced assembly procedures to increase production 15% by reducing turnaround time from six to five days
- Led a team of volunteers in planning, preparing, and serving a weekly meal for 90 residents at a local shelter
- Provided excellent customer service to clients by addressing questions and assisting with purchases

ACTION VERBS

Administrative Skills

Approve
Arrange
Catalogue
Classify
Collect
Compile
Execute
Generate
Implement
Inspect
Monitor
Operate
Organize
Prepare
Process
Purchase
Record
Retrieve
Screen
Specify
Validate

Communication Skills

Address
Arbitrate
Arrange
Author
Collaborate
Develop
Direct
Draft
Edit
Formulate
Influence
Interpret
Mediate
Moderate
Motivate
Negotiate
Persuade
Promote
Publicize
Recruit
Speak
Translate

Creative Skills

Act
Conceptualize
Create
Design
Develop
Direct

Establish
Fashion
Find
Illustrate
Initiate
Institute
Integrate
Introduce
Invent
Perform
Plan
Publish
Shape

Financial Skills

Administer
Allocate
Analyze
Appraise
Audit
Balance
Budget
Calculate
Compute
Develop
Forecast
Manage
Market
Plan
Project
Research

Helping Skills

Assist
Assess
Clarify
Coach
Counsel
Demonstrate
Educate
Facilitate
Familiarize
Guide
Refer
Represent
Service
Support
Tend
Tutor

Information Skills

Catalogue
Clarify
Classify

Compile
Compose
Convey
Copy
Correct
Define
Document
Gather
Inform
Proofread
Question
Review
Specify
Survey
Tabulate
Test
Verify

Leadership Skills

Appoint
Approve
Arrange
Assess
Assign
Authorize
Coach
Complete
Consult
Delegate
Demonstrate
Direct
Enlist
Facilitate
Head
Initiate
Launch
Motivate
Negotiate
Nominate
Preside
Start

Management Skills

Administer
Analyze
Assign
Attain
Contract
Consolidate
Coordinate
Delegate
Develop
Direct
Evaluate

Execute
Improve
Increase
Organize
Plan
Prioritize
Produce
Recommend
Review
Schedule
Strengthen
Supervise

Problem-Solving Skills

Analyze
Apply
Calculate
Compile
Consult
Correct
Create
Critique
Design
Develop
Diagnose
Discover
Dissect
Examine
Explore
Problem solve
Propose
Research
Resolve
Revise
Search
Study
Track
Troubleshoot

Research Skills

Clarify
Collect
Critique
Diagnose
Evaluate
Examine
Identify
Inspect
Interpret
Interview
Investigate
Organize
Review

Summarize
Survey
Verify

Teaching Skills

Adapt
Advise
Clarify
Coach
Communicate
Coordinate
Develop
Enable
Encourage
Evaluate
Explain
Facilitate
Guide
Inform
Initiate
Instruct
Persuade

Teamwork Skills

Accomplish
Assist
Collaborate
Coordinate
Corroborate
Encourage
Explain
Help
Share
Volunteer

Technical Skills

Assemble
Build
Calculate
Compute
Design
Devise
Engineer
Fabricate
Maintain
Operate
Overhaul
Program
Remodel
Repair
Solve
Train
Upgrade

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

Name should be large (18-24 font size) and bold to stand out on the resume.

Write out acronyms and/or abbreviations on the resume.

Use bullet points focused on the scope of activities, results, and skills utilized in the experience.

Refrain from using complete sentences. Instead, use action verbs to start accomplishment statements.

Avoid using "I", "we", possessive pronouns or possessive adjectives.

Avoid using cliché statements like excellence communicator, team player, or hard worker.

In the *Activities* section, include role, organization name, and dates.

Darcy R. Heath

heathdr@gmail.com | (453) 339-2087
linkedin.com/in/darcy Heath

123 Mulberry Street
Stillwater, MN 58329

Education

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC), Eau Claire, WI: December 2018
Bachelor of Arts: **Organizational Communication and International Business**
GPA: 3.6/4.0

International Education

- Shaoguan University, *Shaoguan, China*: January 2018
- University of Winchester, *Winchester, England*: January 2017-May 2017

Academic Project

Human Resource Development and Training, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC): August 2018-December 2018

- Collaborated with a team of 6 to create an employee training program for UWEC administrative staff
- Conducted needs assessment by researching topics through online journal article database
- Created step-by-step training plan and developed training materials including participant and facilitator's guide
- Independently developed learning module on active listening skills in the workplace
- Presented training to UWEC administrative staff and collected participant feedback

Internship Experience

Marketing and Communications Intern – FOX Sports North, *Minneapolis, MN*: June 2018-September 2018

- Develop materials to improve online communication via social networking on Facebook and Twitter
- Maintained and updated social network communication in order to increase customer awareness and website traffic
- Organized special community and fund-raising events involving the Minnesota Twins and the Minnesota Wild professional sports team
- Represented FOX Sports North professionally and in accordance with company standards

Employment History

Student Supervision – UWEC Service Center, *Eau Claire, WI*: October 2017-Present

- Train cashiers on operation of the ticketing system, postal scale, money order machine, postal machine, card reader, and telephone system
- Serve as Service Center Manager in the absence of the general manager by taking on additional responsibilities
- Prepare computer reports, balance vault and lock/alarm the center at the end of day shift

Head Coach – Burnsville Athletic Club, *Burnsville, MN*: June 2014-August 2016

- Organized specialized drills and exercises to enhance athletes' performance
- Handled confrontation situations effectively during games to resolve conflict
- Interacted with parents and coaches of other teams to maintain positive relationships

Technical Skills

- Working Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, and Outlook
- Experience with Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, and Dreamweaver
- Skilled in social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Activities and Memberships

UWEC Center for International Education – Peer Advisor: September 2017-December 2018
Beta Upsilon Sigma Business Fraternity – Member: January 2016-December 2018
Sacred Heart Hospital – Volunteer; August 2014-December 2016

Include name, address, phone number, and a professional email.

Include university name, location, degree, major, minor, certifications, GPA, and honors.

International education and work experiences should be listed on the resume.

Add relevant projects, work experiences, skills, and activities.

Skills that are relevant and applicable to the job should be incorporated into the resume.

Include volunteer experience, professional memberships, athletic participation, and other related activities.

A resume is a summary of education, professional experiences, and activities. The best resumes are tailored to an industry, company, and job of interest.

- Utilize a chronological format where the most relevant information listed in sections toward the top of the document
- Keep the document concise, 1-2 pages, using 10-12 font size
- Highlight important information with bold, italics, and bullet points
- State clear and concise statements
- Utilize a professional layout with a balance of white space to text
- Proofread, spell check, and edit the resume
- Send as a PDF document

Utilize the same header as the resume to create a streamlined application package.

Darcy R. Heath

heathdr@gmail.com |(453) 339-2087
linkedin.com/in/darcyheath

123 Mulberry Street
Stillwater, MN 58329

REFERENCES

Dr. Leonardo Duck
Professor, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702
555-555-5555
leo@uwec.edu

Mr. Aaron Rodgers-Hammerstein
Manager, FOX Sports North
Minneapolis, MN 55401
555-555-5555
arodgers@fox.net

Ms. Madison Win
Manager, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Service Center
Eau Claire, WI 54702
555-555-5555
madison@uwec.edu

Mr. Elvis Mann
Volunteer Coordinator, Sacred Heart Hospital
Eau Claire, WI 54702
555-555-5555
elvismann@ssh.org

Professional references can include a faculty member, academic mentor, advisor, supervisor, co-worker, or colleague.

Include 3-5 professional references. Do not include family members or friends.

Include reference's name, title, organization, address, phone number, and email.

A reference page is a part of the application process. References provide recommendations to potential employers about your professional experiences, skills, and work values.

- Choose references that are able to speak about your skills and experiences in a positive and professional manner
- Ask a reference for permission prior to applying to open positions
- Provide your references a copy of your resume and the position description
- Submit the reference page when it is requested by the hiring manager or recruiter
- Do NOT include "references available upon request" at the bottom of the resume