



**COLORADO  
COLLEGE**

**Career Center**



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# Cover Letter Development

Cover letters are your introduction to potential employers. A good letter identifies the position you are seeking and indicates how you learned about the opening. Unlike a resume, a cover letter elaborates and illustrates how your experiences complement one another to showcase you as the ideal candidate. **Remember**, always research the company and the position in order to customize the application materials to their needs.

## ***If Nothing Else...***

### **Be Brief**

Write no more than one page.

### **Be Consistent**

Maintain the same format and style throughout your letter.

### **Be Powerful**

Emphasize your skills with examples of accomplishments.

### **Be Conscious of Image**

Create a document that is visually appealing with no errors.

## How to Start

- **Research the company.** What do they do? What are their values? What does the industry look like right now, and what needs might the company have that you can fill?
  - **Relate your skills to the potential job.** Sometimes, the skills that most pertain to the job are in seemingly unrelated experiences. Dealing with disgruntled customers in a diner is not that different than appeasing disgruntled customers at a bank—that's customer service. Apply your skills to the job description to make yourself a stronger candidate.
  - **Tie your experiences to why you want *this* position.** A good way to go about doing this is to choose two or three experiences from your resume, and explain in detail what you learned from them and how they prompted you to pursue this direction or field.
  - **Focus on the positive.** Confidence is a must. Explain why you are the best person for the job. Write not only as though they want you; make them see that they NEED you. Do this by addressing accomplishments, not by focusing on shortcomings. Be assertive rather than arrogant as you write about your accomplishments and abilities.
  - **Write with enthusiasm.** Keep it professional, but avoid getting bogged down with cliché stories. Your letter is your chance to show them some energy and personality and to demonstrate that you are a committed individual that will add to their company.
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### *Do's*

- Focus on what you can do for the employer, not on what they can do for you.
- Use specific examples to highlight your strengths.
- Focus on your skills instead of the nitty-gritty details of your experiences.
- Write a personalized letter, especially if you are applying to multiple companies.
- Check for organization, clarity, and brevity.
- Use multiple proofreaders.

### *Don'ts*

- Use self-deprecating humor, creative prose, or quotations.
- Try to be cute.
- Focus on weaknesses; this is the time to market yourself by focusing on strengths.
- Assume you know what the employer is looking for or put words in their mouth.
- Embellish; it can come back to bite you.
- Make your experiences sound more important to you than they are.

## Proofreading and Editing

Have your resume and cover letter critiqued by several people, including experienced proofreaders. Incorporate your reviewers' feedback and show them your new versions. We recommend at least three revisions to produce a solid product. The Career Center Staff is an excellent resource for resume and cover letter reviews. **When it's ready, save and send your final draft as a PDF document.**

## Follow-Up

Be thoughtful and considerate about your mode and degree of follow-up. Calling to check on your status or to verify that your resume and cover letter have been received shows the employer that you are motivated and very interested in the position. But, if 200 people apply for a position and a quarter of them call, that is 50 calls for an already busy individual! If the employer has specifically requested no phone calls, definitely do not call—they may perceive you as unable to follow simple instructions. Use your best judgment, and if you're unsure, consult the Career Center staff for advice on how to proceed.