COVER LETTER

career.ndsu.edu

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Appointments are no longer required. Drop in to work on career documents or have a conversation about your future.

Services offered:

- Resume and cover letter advising
- Interview preparation
- CAREERlink job and internship board
- Internship Program
- Career fairs and expos
- LinkedIn profile assistance
- Navigating job offers
- On-campus interviews
- Graduate school preparation
- EPIC Journey: Online Career Training
- Alumni services
- Career Closet
- Career coaching and exploration

COVER LETTER RUBRIC

COVER LETTER LEARNING OUTCOMES:

• Produce a compelling cover letter that summarizes interest and qualifications for a targeted position in a particular organization.

• Demonstrate writing competency, which follows accepted writing conventions for the cover letter genre.

	1 – Needs Improvement	3 – Average	5 – Effective	Comments
Presentation and Format Visually appealing, proper grammar and spelling, and standardized cover letter format	☐ Does not use business letter format ☐ Letter is not addressed properly ☐ Letter's header does not match resume's header ☐ Does not use appropriate language/grammar for the position ☐ Multiple grammatical and/or spelling errors ☐ Visually unappealing	☐ Uses business letter format, but elements are incorrect with date and/or employer address and signature/address sections ☐ Uses a greeting and addresses a person, but some elements need editing ☐ Name and contact information are included in header, but header does not match the resume ☐ Some of the language and grammar is inappropriate for the position and needs editing ☐ A few errors ☐ Some parts are visually appealing, but other parts can be enhanced	☐ Uses correct business letter format with date and employer address at the top and job seeker signature/address at the bottom ☐ Uses an appropriate greeting and addresses the correct person and department ☐ Header matches resume and includes name and contact information ☐ Uses appropriate language and grammar for the position ☐ Error free ☐ Visually appealing	
Opening Paragraph Why you are writing and why the organization should take interest in you	☐ Does not identify position, organization and purpose for writing ☐ Does not describe interest in, and brief qualifications for, position and/or organization being targeted ☐ Does not use transition sentence to introduce second paragraph	☐ Vague in describing position, organization and/or purpose for writing ☐ Inadequately describes interest in, and brief qualifications for, position and/or organization being pursued ☐ Weak transition into second paragraph	☐ Identifies positions, organization and purpose for writing ☐ Describes interest in, and brief qualifications for, position and organization being pursued ☐ Uses a transition sentence to effectively introduce second paragraph	
Middle Paragraph(s) Present relevant qualifications, experience and skills related to the position/organizations	☐ Does not describe ways to contribute to the position/organization based on relevant experience and qualifications ☐ Does not illustrate contributions referenced in opening paragraph in a relevant and/or measurable way	☐ Inadequately describes one to three ways to contribute to the position/organization based on relevant experience and qualifications ☐ Illustrations of contributions referenced in opening paragraph are not relevant enough or measurable enough	☐ Describes two to three ways to contribute to the position/organization based on relevant experience and qualifications ☐ Illustrates—using examples—relevant, measurable contributions to organizations referenced in opening paragraph	
Closing Paragraph Wrap-up/action	☐ Does not thank reader ☐ Does not express interest in a meeting or conversation	☐ Thank you statement and/or expression of interest for a meeting or conversation needs editing	☐ Thanks reader for considering him/her ☐ Expresses interest in a meeting or conversation	

This rubric was created using guidelines from the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) community. NACE is a consortium of more than 3,000 university relations, recruiting professionals and business affiliates. It is the leading source of information on the employment of the college educated, and forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks starting salaries, recruiting and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks.

COVER LETTERS

Definition: A professional letter introducing another document. A letter of application summarizes qualifications for employment and introduces a resume.

COVER LETTER ESSENTIALS

- **Focus**
  Well-written professional document created for a specific company and addressed to a specific person/department/company

- **Balance**
  Document must look good on a page
  1 page - Font size: 1O-12 pt.
  Font styles: Calibri, New Times Roman, Arial

- **Error-free**

- **Address position requirements**
  Identify skills, core attributes, experiences, etc., that show your value to the reader – what you can do for the employer.

- **Strong closing**
  Express an interest in participating in an interview to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.

COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

Use the same heading as your resume or:
Street Address
City, State Zip
Month, Day, Year

Name of Recruiter
Title of Recruiter
Employer's Name
Employer's Street Address
City, State Zip

SALUTATION
Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. *(recruiter's last name followed with a colon or comma):*

OPENING PARAGRAPH *(why you are writing)*
- Identify the position for which you are applying and/or state the intent of your letter. Identify two or three elements of the position, organization, or both that interest you and which you have experience or knowledge.
- Use a transitional sentence to introduce the second paragraph.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S) *(qualifications)*
- Identify two or three ways you could successfully contribute to the overall functioning or growth of the company.
- Explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position.
- If you have some practical experience, point out specific achievements or unique qualifications that evolved from it.
- Illustrate relevant knowledge and qualifications by providing at least one example of a time you used the specific knowledge or skill.
- Include a summary statement about your interest in the company and your ability to transfer your academic knowledge/work experience into a professional position.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH *(wrap-up/action)*
- Express an interest in participating in an interview to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.
- Provide your contact information.
- If applicable, make a statement that will encourage a response. For example, you can say you will be in town on a certain date and would like to schedule an appointment or you will call on a certain date.
- Thank the person for his/her time and consideration.

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE
- Examples may include: Sincerely or Respectfully (always followed by a comma)
- Your name should appear with three blank lines below the complimentary close, and your signature should appear in the blank space.
- Note: The word "enclosure(s)" should appear beneath your name if you are sending any additional information (resume, etc.)

Bill E. Bison

Current Address • City, State Zip • 701.555.1212 • first.last@ndsu.edu

March 14, 20xx

Ms. Carolyn Johnson
Human Resources Director
Employer Name
1234 Street NW
City, State Zip

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you for considering me for your Project Manager position. One element that impresses me about your company is your commitment to being the market leader in the design and manufacture of compact equipment used in the construction industry. Another element I am drawn to is that you are a global company with engineering projects sourced in North Dakota and in other countries around the world. This aligns well with my work experience and career direction.

I graduate this May from North Dakota State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering. My course work has provided me with a broad spectrum of technical theories and applications. In addition to my courses, I have worked as an Electrical Engineering intern for (insert company name) in Alexandria, MN the past two summers. My work included designing and installing equipment, which lent a hand in improving my attention to detail and time management skills. I also consulted with engineers and technicians when developing designs and modifications for the lock-out/tag-out safety procedures, which enhanced my presentation and communication skills. As a result of my designs, the plant's electrical generation efficiency was increased as well as the overall plant safety rating. My time spent focusing on these aspects was also a big contributor to the company's goals of making a safe and efficient environment for all those involved.

I am confident I could use these same skills to enhance your company's mission. A copy of my resume is enclosed for your consideration and I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in person. Please feel free to contact me at 701.555.1212 or at first.last@ndsu.edu to schedule an interview at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Typed name

(Optional) Enclosure: Resume

- *Alternate formatting note*: When addressing job qualifications in a cover letter, you can use a bulleted list in place of the "middle paragraph." However, if you choose to use a bulleted list, be sure your punctuation is correct. If you have questions about format, please contact the Career Center, and we will be happy to assist you.