

COVER LETTERS

and other letters FROM UNIVERSITY OF MARY CAREER SERVICES

THE IMPORTANCE OF A COVER LETTER

A well written letter is an effective way to present your qualifications to an employer. Letters of application (cover letters) are read, compared, and used to screen candidates for interview consideration.

Your resume, when accompanied by a cover letter, is a sign of a serious and professional approach to job hunting. It will give employers whom you approach an indication that you are sincerely interested in their organization, have done some research and that you are giving them personal attention that would not be shown by the arrival of an unaccompanied resume.

A well written cover letter presents your ability to communicate in writing, as well as your organizational ability, both of which are pertinent to most positions.

Remember

The purpose of the cover letter is to get an interview.

Jobs develop from interviews, not letters, so the application letter must achieve a number of things in a minimum amount of space:

- introduce you to employers
- arouse their interest
- persuade them that you are the person to interview

Write a rough draft and have another person critique it. Revamp and refine the copy until you are satisfied that the finished letter is warm, personalized and, at the same time, businesslike in its approach.

Tips on Cover Letters

Every resume should be accompanied by a cover letter.

Each letter of application should be typed individually.

Duplicated letters with fill-ins are not appropriate.

Keep a record of all correspondence.

The letter should be addressed to a particular individual in the company, preferably the head of the department in which you are hoping to work.

Use simple, direct language and correct grammar.

Use plain bond paper.

Strive for a “picture frame effect” with your margins.

Proofread your letters for errors; consider the tone it represents. Use “I” sparingly.

Be sure to sign your letters, and make certain your address is plainly visible.

Optional: Refer to mutual acquaintance.

Optional: Ask for additional information, if appropriate.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS

Letter for Gathering Information (often called an Inquiry Letter)

Stress the fact that you are looking for information and advice, and are not at this point in time seeking a job interview. Sell the idea of getting together to discuss career options.

Follow Up Letters

Indicate the date you first contacted, or interviewed with, the organization, and restate your job interest. Stress why you are interested in the organization and in the position. Inquire to see if additional information is needed.

continued

Thank You Letters

Should be sent to individuals who have:
 referred you to employer
 interviewed you for employment
 offered you a position
 rejected you for employment
 provided you with general information
 written recommendations for you

Letters of Acknowledgement

Always acknowledge receipt of offers. Restate title of position, salary and express your appreciation. Indicate your interest and specify the date you will let the organization know of your decision.

Letter of Refusal

Express appreciation for the offer and the organization's interest in you. Close the door gently so as not to affect the job opportunities for other University of Mary students or your own future possibilities. Professional courtesy is important.

Letter of Acceptance

Indicate your acceptance of the offer restating position, salary and starting date.

COVER LETTER *format and contents*

Your Street Address
 City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of Person & Title
 Company/Organization
 Street Address
 City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. ...

introduction: State the reason for writing. Name the specific position, or type of work for which you are applying. (Mention the resource used in finding out about the opening/company: news media, friend, faculty, if appropriate.)

body: Explain why you are interested in working for that employer, or in that field of work, and most importantly what your qualifications are (academic background, work experience, personal skills). Point out achievements that relate to the field and why you enjoy that work. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume, application, and/or portfolio.

closing: Indicate your desire for an interview. State that you will call on a specific day to see if an interview can be arranged at this person's convenience. (If you will be in their geographic vicinity on a certain day, stress the importance of setting up an interview on that day.)

Sincerely,

Your signature
 Your typed name

Enclosure

University of Mary Career Services
 7500 University Drive
 Bismarck, ND 58504-9652
 Phone: 701-255-7500 ext. 414
 Fax: 701-255-7687
 e-mail: krism@umary.edu
<http://www.umary.edu>

University of Mary Career Services

are available to students and alumni to assist in determining and attaining career goals. Our services include a Career Resource Center (located in the University of Mary Library), the Work Information Network (WIN), the Campus Recruiting Program, workshops, and individual appointments.