

Cover Letter Guide for Part-Time Jobs

Why Write a Cover Letter?

A cover letter helps employers understand who you are beyond your resume. It gives you the opportunity to explain your interest in the position, highlight experiences that demonstrate your skills, and show why you would be a positive addition to their team.

Many on and off campus supervisors hire students for their potential, not because they already have years of work experience. A thoughtful cover letter can help demonstrate your enthusiasm, professionalism, and willingness to learn.

What to Include

1. A Greeting

Whenever possible, address your letter to the hiring manager by name.

Examples:

- Dear Ms. Johnson,
- Dear Mr. Lee,
- Dear Career Design Center Hiring Manager, (when a contact is not listed you can highlight the department)

2. Introduce Yourself

Your opening paragraph should answer three questions:

- What position are you applying for?
- Why are you interested?
- Why are you excited about this opportunity?

Ask yourself:

- What caught your attention about this job?
- Why does working in this office or department interest you?
- What do you hope to learn?

3. Connect Your Experiences

The middle paragraph(s) should explain why you're a good fit.

Don't simply list skills. Instead, describe experiences that helped you develop them.

Think about experiences from:

- Classes or academic projects
- Student organizations
- Volunteer work
- Athletics
- Previous jobs
- Leadership experiences
- Family responsibilities
- Research
- Creative activities

Then connect those experiences to the position.

Instead of writing:

I have good communication skills.

Try explaining:

As the secretary of my student organization, I regularly communicated with members, organized meeting information, and coordinated events, which strengthened my communication and organizational skills.

4. Match Your Skills to the Job

Review the job description and identify the qualities the employer is seeking.

Then explain how your experiences demonstrate those qualities.

Examples include: [Career Readiness Competencies](#)

- Customer service
- Organization
- Time management
- Teamwork
- Reliability
- Problem solving

- Adaptability
- Attention to detail
- Initiative
- Technology skills

5. Close Professionally

End by:

- Thanking the employer for their time.
- Expressing interest in discussing the position further.
- Your name.

Tips for a Strong Cover Letter

Customize Every Letter

Avoid sending the same letter for every job. Show the employer that you understand what their office/organization does and why you are interested in working there.

Focus on Growth

Employers know you're a student. It's okay if you haven't done this exact job before.

Instead, emphasize:

- your willingness to learn
- your curiosity
- your dependability
- your commitment to contributing to the campus community

Show, Don't Tell

Rather than simply claiming you have a skill, describe a situation where you used it. Employers are more interested in evidence than adjectives.

Keep It Concise

A cover letter should be one page. Aim for three or four short paragraphs that are easy to read.

Proofread Carefully

Before submitting:

- Check spelling and grammar.
- Make sure the employer's name and job title are correct.
- Ask someone to review your letter or schedule an appointment with the Career Design Center.

Before Your Submit

Ask yourself:

- Have I explained why I want this position?
- Have I connected my experiences to the job?
- Did I provide examples instead of simply listing skills?
- Does my personality come through?
- Is my letter professional, clear, and free of errors?

Remember: Your cover letter doesn't need to prove you're already an expert. Its purpose is to show that you're ready to learn, contribute, and grow through this opportunity.