

# COVER LETTERS

## WHY HAVE A COVER LETTER?

When applying for a position, a cover letter is your chance to convince the employer to read your résumé. It gives you the opportunity to express your interest and enthusiasm in the position and the possibility of working for the company/organization. In addition, it allows you to highlight the skills and experiences relevant to the position, demonstrates your writing and communication skills, and strengthens your chances of securing an interview.

### Cover Letter Format Tips

**1** Address the cover letter to a specific person. Avoid "To Whom It May Concern." By personalizing the letter, it demonstrates that you researched the organization. If the job posting does not include a name you can either call the organization and ask or search the company on LinkedIn and look for the names of the department directors. If you cannot find a specific name, use the director of the department's name of the organization to which you are applying to.

**2** Determine the needs of the company and how your experiences and skills compliment and/or align with the position.

**3** Spend a good amount of time researching the organization and the position for which you are applying.

Date

Contact's Name, Title  
Company Name  
Address  
City, State, ZIP code

Dear (Dr., Mr., or Ms. Last Name): (Not Dear First Name, Last Name)

Introductory Paragraph: Briefly state the specific job title that you are applying for. If you have a personal connection to the organization, mention that person's name (be sure you have that person's permission to use his/her name).

State why you are interested in that particular job and why it is a good fit for you. Explain why you are applying to this company specifically, what sets them apart from similar organizations? You may include what you know or respect about the organization (this may include a value or a practice of the company that you share).

Body Paragraph(s): State how your skills, education, or experience match a required skill set of the position. Use specific examples and short stories to provide additional detail about one or two experiences that provide evidence of the relevant skill set without repeating your résumé. Reinforce how the experiences you include will prove to be beneficial for the employer.

Closing Paragraph: Include what actions you would like to take next. State your desire to arrange an interview. Refer to enclosed résumé, remember to include your phone number and email to make it easy for the employer to contact you. Express your appreciation for the employer's time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature,  
Print Your Name

Enclosure:  
(Include what else will be sent with cover letter. (Résumé, Transcript, etc.)

**TIP:** Remember that consistency is important. Your cover letter should include the exact same header as your résumé.



# Jiahui Li

Tacoma, Washington • lijiahui@plu.edu • 253-555-1212

April 4, 2015

Mary Alexander  
Executive Director, Career Connections  
Pacific Lutheran University  
12180 Park Avenue South  
Tacoma, WA 98447

Dear Ms. Alexander:

In my search for an on-campus student job for the upcoming fall, I am looking for a new leadership experience that will be valuable and allow me to continue to help students at Pacific Lutheran University. In discussing on-campus jobs with my current supervisor, Tinglestad Resident Director James Walker, he suggested that the Career Peer Educator position you have posted on the Career Connections Opportunities Board might be an opportunity for me to further develop my professionalism and learn useful new skills.

My work with Residential Life qualifies me for this position. I am experienced in presenting and speaking in front of groups, and I interact with students individually in my role as a Resident Assistant. This year as the supervisor of the Tinglestad front desk, I reviewed applications and résumés, conducted interviews, and hired the front desk staff. This position has been a great opportunity to develop professionally and has given me a new understanding of how managers and supervisors view applicants. I believe this perspective will allow me to help others improve their professionalism and foster their marketability to employers.

In my employment experience as a server at Red Robin Gourmet Burgers I accumulated two years of experience interacting and communicating with diverse groups of people. Taking orders and managing the guest experience for many different ages and demographics further developed my interpersonal skills. Working in a fast-paced, high-volume restaurant emphasized the importance of quality and efficiency in a variety of situations—skills necessary for the CPE position.

I have personally worked on my résumé with a CPE, so I am very aware of the tangible value CPEs offer to students at PLU. Helping students obtain internships and jobs is a rewarding and valuable opportunity that will give me new leadership and professional experience in my last year at PLU. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to discussing the position further with you. Feel free to contact me at 253-555-1212 or at martist@plu.edu.

Sincerely,

Jiahui Li

Enclosure: Résumé

This is a great example of a résumé for those trying to obtain an on-campus position. 1. Notice that this résumé does a great job at highlighting a specific skill and providing the context in which they gained/enhanced that skill in each of the two body paragraphs. 2. Includes his desire to be interviewed in addition to providing his contact information. Although contact information is part of the header, including it again in the closing paragraph makes it easier for the employer to contact you.

# Vanessa Martinez

Olympia, Washington • martiva@plu.edu • 253-555-1212

April 4, 2015

John Napat  
Career Counselor, Career Connections  
Pacific Lutheran University  
12180 Park Avenue South  
Tacoma, WA 98447

Dear Mr. Napat:

I would like to express my interest in the position of Career Counselor that you have posted in the Career Connections Opportunities Board. A former CPE, Pam Moore, encouraged me to submit an application for this position. Following up on my interest in applying, I introduced myself to Mary Alexander at a Career Connections networking event. I know that Career Connections is a valuable student resource, and the people there commit themselves to fostering student preparedness for life in and after college.

I understand this position requires customer service experience, familiarity with mentorship and leadership, the ability to interact with a dynamic range of people, and a desire to be part of a team in a professional working environment. I have extensive leadership experience in campus clubs, which demonstrates my strengths in self-management, self-monitoring, interpersonal communication and public speaking. With my experience in leadership and service, I am confident that my skills will benefit your department.

I am passionate about giving back and helping others realize and reach their potential. I get energized speaking with others and find joy in creating relationships. I have dynamic experience interacting with a wide-range of individuals, including my peers, international and high-school students, and foster children. My background has shaped me to be an open-minded person who advocates for social responsibility and global citizenship—attributes that resonate with your department's values of fostering preparedness and growth.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to discussing the position further with you. Until then, should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 253-555-1212 or at martiva@plu.edu.

Kind regards,

Vanessa Martinez

Enclosure: Résumé

This is a great example of a résumé geared toward a full-time position.

1. Notice that this résumé includes the job posting number. It makes it easier for the employer to search for the job position being applied for.
2. Includes a personal connection to the organization