

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 resume. 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 Tips

1. Address the cover letter to a specific person. Avoid "To Whom It May Concern," but if you cannot find the contact's name, using "Dear Hiring Manager" is acceptable. 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.
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.

Your Personal Header

Date

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

Dear First Name & Last Name, or Dear Dr. 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 the person's permission to use their name). Include why you are interested in the company/position and 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 (like 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 details about one or two experiences that provide evidence of the relevant skill set without repeating your resume. Reinforce how the experiences you include will prove to be beneficial for the employer. Overall, this portion is about two paragraphs of content highlighting your qualifications for the position.

Closing Paragraph: include what actions you would like to take next. State your desire to arrange an interview. Refer to your enclosed resume, and remember to include your phone number and email again 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



Alumni & Student Connections

Nesvig Alumni House • 253-535-7415 • career@plu.edu
Pacific Lutheran University • 12180 Park Avenue South, Tacoma, WA
98447-0003

www.plu.edu/alumni-student-connections

Need more assistance? Email your resume to cpe@plu.edu

Note: see samples on the next pages.

Firname Lastname

Tacoma, WA | (123) 456-7890 | firstnamelastname@plu.edu

August 29th, 20XX

Alumni & Student Connections
518 123rd St S,
Tacoma, WA 98444

Dear Alumni & Student Connections Hiring Manager:

Throughout my search for an on-campus job for the upcoming fall, I have been 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, Tingelstad Resident Director Peter Parker, he suggested that the Career Peer Educator position posted on the Opportunities Board would 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 for a number of reasons. For example, I am experienced in presenting and speaking in front of large groups, and I also interact with students individually in my role as a Resident Assistant. This year as the supervisor of the Tingelstad front desk, I reviewed applications and resumes, 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 job search materials 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 resume with a CPE, so I am deeply aware of the tangible value CPEs offer to students at PLU and would love the chance to provide support to students in this way. 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 email@plu.edu.

Sincerely,

Firstname Lastname

Firstname Lastname

A signature is optional.

This is a great example of a cover letter for those trying to attain an on-campus position.

1. Notice that this cover letter 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 a desire to be interviewed in addition to providing contact information.



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Firname Lastname

Redmond, WA | lastname@plu.edu | 123-456-7890

July 10th, 20XX

Jordan Lute, HR Recruitment & Retention Coordinator
Friends of Youth
13116 NE 132nd Street
Kirkland, WA 98034

Dear Jordan Lute:

After meeting with Devin Knight, a former coworker of yours, I learned that there is an open position at Friends of Youth as a Bilingual Family Support Coordinator in Issaquah, WA. I am interested in this position for multiple reasons: Friends of Youth has been supporting youth for over 70 years, you provide holistic services like mental health counseling, and, specifically with this position, provide bilingual services to families with different cultural backgrounds. I grew up in a household where both English and Spanish were spoken, and I feel I can easily relate to the families I will serve in this position. After reading the job description, I concluded the Bilingual Family Support Coordinator in the Healthy Start Program must be experienced in working with families, especially parents, be effective in outreach, and provide education.

When I was an intern at PLU's Center for Gender Equity, I engaged with the middle-schoolers' parents frequently. I found I was having to suggest ways to engage with their children more effectively, like helping with homework or starting a conversation. In my counselor role at the Peace Community Center, I had one parent who felt they couldn't help their child with their homework because the parent hadn't finished high school. I then offered tutoring to any parents who hadn't finished school and the program lasted about 6 months with 5 adults showing up consistently. With that being said, I know how to provide education to adults; I developed curriculum, created presentations and planned hands-on workshops. Several of the parents expressed they felt more capable of helping their children with homework afterward. This success shows I am fully prepared to implement the PAT Program at Friends of Youth.

I also have extensive outreach experience through my internship and working as a resident assistant, which will be helpful in promoting the Healthy Start Program to families in the Issaquah community and beyond. Many of the students and adults I've worked with were not originally assigned to me, but the relationships developed through initiating conversations or providing other workshops that were of interest to them. I plan to show that same enthusiasm when working with families and community partners.

It is my experience with tutoring parents, creating workshops and building relationships that makes me a great candidate for this position. I am excited for this opportunity and I thank you for your time and consideration of my application. Please feel free to contact me at lastname@plu.edu or 123-456-7890. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Firstname Lastname



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

1. Notice that this cover letter includes a personal connection to the organization.
2. Highlights the needs of the employer and addresses them in the body paragraphs.