




# Cover Letter and Resume Guide



**Advising, Retention + Career Center** | Old Library 2100 | 715-836-3487 | [arcc@uwec.edu](mailto:arcc@uwec.edu)



# COVER LETTERS

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A cover letter serves as the introduction to your resume. It is specific to each position and demonstrates interest in a particular employer or job. It should include expanded information from the resume, and should not repeat things.

Because it is often the first contact with a prospective employer, it should be concise, well-written, and demonstrate effective communication.

## COVER LETTER SECTIONS

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The cover letter typically consists of three parts: introduction, body, and closing. Within these three parts, include:

- why you are interested in the organization
- why the organization should be interested in you
- when and how you will contact the organization to follow up

### Introduction

- Capture the reader's interest
- Tell the reader how you learned of an opening
- If appropriate, mention the name of someone who suggested you apply for the company and/or the job opportunity

### Body

- Demonstrate your ability to do the job in 1-3 paragraphs
- Promote your education, experiences, past jobs, internships, and student activities
- Use examples and tell your story
- Illustrate the skills that are related to the position
- Enhance your accomplishments with details, do not repeat what is on your resume

### Closing

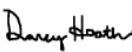
- Indicate next steps, including a plan to follow up with the employer
- Thank the employer for taking the time to consider your application materials
- Close the cover letter with "Sincerely" or "Respectfully"

## TIPS

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- Proofread
- Personalize each letter, make every attempt to address each letter to a specific individual
- Limit the cover letter to one page, be concise and compelling
- Avoid overusing the word "I"
- Vary writing style, try to offset long sentences with short ones
- Sign the cover letter
- Use a 10-12 font size
- Use paper and font that match your resume to make a consistent application package
- If including items with the cover letter such as a resume, references or writing samples, use one of the following notations below your name: Enclosure, Encl., or Enc.
- Keep a copy of every letter you send as part of your job search file

# COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Utilize block format to give a professional first impression to the reader.	<b>Darcy R. Heath</b> 123 Mulberry Street Stillwater, MN 58329
	August 12, 2015
Address the letter to a specific person or hiring team.	EcoSource 12123 Fall Street St. Paul, MN 55124 Attn: Ms. Patricia West
State in the first sentence why you are writing the letter.	Dear Ms. West:
Explain qualifications and skills in relation to the open position.	Please accept this letter of interest regarding the Project Manager position available at EcoSource. I learned of the position while reviewing Bugold CareerLink. As a passionate and committed recent graduate, I am looking forward to continuing my career path at EcoSource.
	As I read your position description, I have experience in each item you outline. My Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Communication has taught me interpersonal and leadership skills, while offering me practical experience. I have worked in a professional environment as an intern at FOX Sports North where I developed project work schedules, engaged team members, and managed day to day project tasks. I monitored work-flow requirements to meet timelines and quality assurance standards. Bringing a high attention of detail and strong communication skills to the position, I organized company events and managed social media campaigns.
	As a Student Supervisor of the Service Center team in Davies Center at UW-Eau Claire, I have honed my customer service skills, which I consider essential to the profession of project management. My greatest strengths are taking the initiative to identify customer needs and working efficiently to achieve team goals. I believe I am well-equipped to transition into a member of your customer focused, dynamic organization.
Sign the cover letter before sending it to the employer.	Through my student work experience and internship, I have proven my ability to handle multiple projects and stay focused on the needs of the customer. My enclosed resume further details my qualifications for this position. Please feel free to contact me at heathdr@gmail.com or 715-555-5555 with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.
If including other documents with the cover letter, use Enclosure, Encl., or Enc.	Sincerely,  Darcy Heath Enclosure (Resume)
	Note how you found the position. If referred by a company employee, include the contact's name in the letter.
	Demonstrate how your career goals align with the position and organization.
	Demonstrate your knowledge of the position and company. Frame experiences to focus on skills relevant to a particular job.
	Include contact information in the last paragraph of the cover letter.

A cover letter accompanies a resume and other application documents. It serves as your first impression to an employer and helps you to stand out from other job seekers.

- Write the cover letter targeted to an industry, company, or job
- Determine important job requirements from the position description and customize your cover letter to highlight key skills and experiences
- Do not copy and paste information from the resume; expand on experiences, skills, and accomplishments
- Proofread, spell check, and edit the cover letter
- Make your points succinctly and concisely; do not ramble
- Do not send the same generic cover letter for all jobs

# RESUMES

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A resume highlights qualifications for employment including education, experience, skills, and other relevant information. The resume is used by employers to determine potential interview candidates for specific opportunities. Tailor the resume to a specific career opportunity and company. This is your chance to tell your story.

Basic types of resumes include:

**Chronological**-It is the most frequently used resume by new college graduates and people with continuous employment history. Chronological resumes list information in reverse chronological order (most recent items first) and give a brief account of education and experiences.

**Functional**-It focuses on an individual's professional skills and most often is used by individuals whose education and experiences do not match career objectives. A functional resume is used when there are noticeable gaps in experience. Skills are used as headings followed by statements demonstrating accomplishments and utilization of skills.

**Combination**- It is a mix of chronological and functional resumes. Combination resumes list information in reverse chronological order and focus on skills.

**Scannable**-A scannable resume is one that can be "read" by Applicant Tracking Software (ATS) and scanned for keywords and specific information. Keyword searches focus on words used in the position description.

Information should be presented in the order that best supports the individual's objective and enhances candidacy for career opportunities. Do not hesitate to create headings specific to experiences. Resumes should stand out from other applicants' documents; do not use resume templates.

# CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

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A CV is a document similar to a resume in that it provides an overview of your professional and educational experiences. The difference between the two documents primarily lies in the content and purpose. CV content may include publications, presentations, research, honors and other relevant information. A CV is typically developed for application for international jobs, graduate programs, teaching or research positions in a university or research setting. A resume is prepared for employers outside of academic settings.

# SAMPLE RESUME HEADINGS

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Academic Achievements	College Activities	International Experience	Skills and Qualifications
Academic Honors	Community Involvement	Internship Experience	Skill(s) Summary
Accomplishments	Computer Experience	Job History	Special Training
Activities	Computer Knowledge	Leadership Roles	Special Awards
Additional Experience	Computer Skills	Honors	Special Licenses and Awards
Associations	Credentials	Memberships and Activities	Student Teaching Experience
Athletic Involvement	Education	Military Experience	Study Abroad
Awards and Distinctions	Education and Training	Military Service	Summary of Qualifications
Campus Involvement	Employment	Military Training	Teaching Experience
Career Goal	Employment Objective	Objective	Technical Skills
Career Highlights	Employment History	Professional Affiliations	Volunteer Experience
Career Objective	Exhibitions and Awards	Professional Experience	Work Experience
Career Related Experience	Experience(s)	Professional Organizations	Work History
Career Summary	Extracurricular Involvement	Related Experience	Workshops and Seminar
Certifications	Field Placement	Relevant Course Work	
Classroom Experience	Foreign Language	Relevant Experience	
Coaching Experiences	Highlights of Qualifications	Research Experience	

# RESUME SECTIONS

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## Heading

- Name, mailing address, email address and phone number
- LinkedIn account information is optional

## Professional Objective (Optional)

- A brief statement that tells the reader about career goals and/or expresses interest in a specific job
- Include a specific job title, company name, general occupational field, and qualifications

## Education

- Universities attended and location (city and state)
- Degree(s), major(s), minor(s), academic certificate(s)
- Date of graduation (month and year)

Optional educational information may include:

- Study abroad experience (university, location, and dates)
- Cumulative and/or Major GPA (3.0 or better)
- Relevant course work
- Scholarships and academic honors

## Experience

- Job title from employment, research, internship, student teaching, etc.
- Employer name and location (city and state)
- Dates of employment
- Description of responsibilities and accomplishments using action verbs

## Special Skills

- Skills related to the position (typically technical and language skills) and level of proficiency

## Awards and Honors

- Scholarships, academic honors (i.e. Dean's List), and special recognitions (i.e. Employee of the Month)

## Activities

- Campus and community activities including organizations, clubs, student government, athletics, and professional affiliations

## References

- Reference name and title, organization, phone number, and email address
- Include references on the resume or on a separate document

**Make sure you have asked each person for permission to be used as a reference.**

# ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

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## A Good Accomplishment Statement Should Contain:

- 1) An action verb describing role and/or responsibilities
- 2) The scope of activities (i.e. size of unit managed, size of budget managed, or a number of personnel affected)
- 3) The results of activities, given in measurements such as, numbers/percent, amount of money, or value-added for customers
- 4) Specific skills gained from the experience

## Tips for Writing Effective Accomplishment Statements:

- Tailor statements to company and job of interest
- Use approximately 2-5 statements for each position
- Bulleted action statements are much easier and quicker to read than paragraphs
- Use indenting where appropriate to signify points that are a subset of an accomplishment

## Examples:

- Initiated advanced assembly procedures to increase production 15% by reducing turnaround time from six to five days
- Led a team of volunteers in planning, preparing, and serving a weekly meal for 90 residents at a local shelter
- Coordinated a community event for 150 individuals that resulted in \$1000 collected for the New York Disaster Relief Fund

# ACTION VERBS

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## Administrative Skills

Approve  
Arrange  
Catalogue  
Classify  
Collect  
Compile  
Execute  
Generate  
Implement  
Inspect  
Monitor  
Operate  
Organize  
Prepare  
Process  
Purchase  
Record  
Retrieve  
Screen  
Specify  
Validate

## Communication Skills

Address  
Arbitrate  
Arrange  
Author  
Collaborate  
Develop  
Direct  
Draft  
Edit  
Formulate  
Influence  
Interpret  
Mediate  
Moderate  
Motivate  
Negotiate  
Persuade  
Promote  
Publicize  
Recruit  
Speak  
Translate

## Creative Skills

Act  
Conceptualize  
Create  
Design  
Develop  
Direct

Establish  
Fashion  
Find  
Illustrate  
Initiate  
Institute  
Integrate  
Introduce  
Invent  
Perform  
Plan  
Publish  
Shape

## Financial Skills

Administer  
Allocate  
Analyze  
Appraise  
Audit  
Balance  
Budget  
Calculate  
Compute  
Develop  
Forecast  
Manage  
Market  
Plan  
Project  
Research

## Helping Skills

Assist  
Assess  
Clarify  
Coach  
Counsel  
Demonstrate  
Educate  
Facilitate  
Familiarize  
Guide  
Refer  
Represent  
Service  
Support  
Tend  
Tutor

## Information Skills

Catalogue  
Clarify  
Classify

Compile  
Compose  
Convey  
Copy  
Correct  
Define  
Document  
Gather  
Inform  
Proofread  
Question  
Review  
Specify  
Survey  
Tabulate  
Test  
Verify

## Leadership Skills

Appoint  
Approve  
Arrange  
Assess  
Assign  
Authorize  
Coach  
Complete  
Consult  
Delegate  
Demonstrate  
Direct  
Enlist  
Facilitate  
Head  
Initiate  
Launch  
Motivate  
Negotiate  
Nominate  
Preside  
Start

## Management Skills

Administer  
Analyze  
Assign  
Attain  
Contract  
Consolidate  
Coordinate  
Delegate  
Develop  
Direct  
Evaluate

Execute  
Improve  
Increase  
Organize  
Plan  
Prioritize  
Produce  
Recommend  
Review  
Schedule  
Strengthen  
Supervise

## Problem-Solving Skills

Analyze  
Apply  
Calculate  
Compile  
Consult  
Correct  
Create  
Critique  
Design  
Develop  
Diagnose  
Discover  
Dissect  
Examine  
Explore  
Problem solve  
Propose  
Research  
Resolve  
Revise  
Search  
Study  
Track  
Troubleshoot

## Research Skills

Clarify  
Collect  
Critique  
Diagnose  
Evaluate  
Examine  
Identify  
Inspect  
Interpret  
Interview  
Investigate  
Organize  
Review

Summarize  
Survey  
Verify

## Teaching Skills

Adapt  
Advise  
Clarify  
Coach  
Communicate  
Coordinate  
Develop  
Enable  
Encourage  
Evaluate  
Explain  
Facilitate  
Guide  
Inform  
Initiate  
Instruct  
Persuade

## Teamwork Skills

Accomplish  
Assist  
Collaborate  
Coordinate  
Corroborate  
Encourage  
Explain  
Help  
Share  
Volunteer

## Technical Skills

Assemble  
Build  
Calculate  
Compute  
Design  
Devise  
Engineer  
Fabricate  
Maintain  
Operate  
Overhaul  
Program  
Remodel  
Repair  
Solve  
Train  
Upgrade

# RESUME SAMPLE

<p>Name should be large (18-24 font size) and bold to stand out on the resume.</p>	<p><b>Darcy R. Heath</b>          heathdr@gmail.com • (453) 399-2087</p>	<p>123 Mulberry Street          Stillwater, MN 58329</p>	<p>Include name, address, phone number, and a professional email.</p>	
<p>Write out acronyms and/or abbreviations on the resume.</p>	<p><b>EDUCATION</b>          University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, <i>Eau Claire, WI</i>: December 2012          Bachelor of Arts: <b>Organizational Communication and International Business</b>          GPA: 3.6/4.0</p>			<p>Include university name, location, degree, major, minor, certifications, GPA, and honors.</p>
<p>Use bullet points focused on the scope of activities, results, and skills utilized in the experience.</p>	<p><b>INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaoguan University, <i>Shaoguan, China</i>: January 2012</li> <li>• University of Winchester, <i>Winchester, England</i>: January 2011-May 2011</li> </ul> <p><b>ACADEMIC PROJECT</b>          Human Resource Development and Training, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC): August-December 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated with a team of 6 to create an employee training program for UWEC administrative staff</li> <li>• Conducted needs assessment, researched topics utilizing online journal article database, created step-by-step training plan, developed training materials including participant and facilitator's guide</li> <li>• Independently developed learning module on active listening skills in the workplace</li> <li>• Presented training to UWEC administrative staff utilizing Microsoft PowerPoint</li> </ul>			<p>International education and work experiences should be listed on the resume.</p> <p>Add relevant projects, work experiences, skills, and activities.</p>
<p>Refrain from using complete sentences. Instead, use action verbs to start accomplishment statements.</p>	<p><b>INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE</b>          Marketing and Communications Intern - FOX Sports North, <i>Minneapolis, MN</i>: June-September 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed materials to improve online communication via social networking on Facebook and Twitter</li> <li>• Maintained and updated social network communication in order to increase customer awareness and web site traffic</li> <li>• Organized special community and fund-raising events involving the Minnesota Twins and the Minnesota Wild professional sports teams</li> <li>• Represented FOX Sports North professionally and in accordance with company standards</li> </ul>			
<p>Avoid using "I", "we", possessive pronouns or possessive adjectives.</p>	<p><b>EMPLOYMENT HISTORY</b>          Student Supervisor - UWEC Service Center, <i>Eau Claire, WI</i>: October 2011-present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide excellent customer service to on and off-campus patrons utilizing the center</li> <li>• Train cashiers on operation of the ticketing system, postal scale, money order machine, postal machine, card reader, and telephone system</li> <li>• Act as Service Center Manager in the absence of the general manager by taking on added responsibilities</li> <li>• Prepare computer reports, balance vault and lock/alarm the center at the end of day shift</li> </ul>			
<p>Avoid using cliché statements like excellent communicator, team player, or hard worker.</p>	<p>Head Coach - Burnsville Athletic Club, <i>Burnsville, MN</i>: June-August, 2008-2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized specialized drills and exercises to enhance athletes' performance</li> <li>• Handled confrontational situations effectively during games to resolve conflict</li> <li>• Interacted with parents and coaches of other teams to maintain positive relationships</li> </ul> <p><b>TECHNICAL SKILLS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, and Outlook</li> <li>• Experience with Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, and Dreamweaver</li> <li>• Skilled in social media platforms-Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram</li> </ul>			<p>Skills that are relevant and applicable to the job should be incorporated into the resume.</p>
<p>In the <i>Activities</i> section, include role, organization name, and dates.</p>	<p><b>ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIPS</b>          UWEC Center for International Education – Peer Advisor          Beta Upsilon Sigma Business Fraternity – Member          Sacred Heart Hospital – Volunteer</p>			<p>Include volunteer experience, professional memberships, athletic participation, and other related activities.</p>

A resume is a summary of education, professional experiences, and activities. The best resumes are tailored to an industry, company, and job of interest.

- Utilize a chronological format where the most relevant information listed in sections toward the top of the document
- Keep the document concise, 1-2 pages, using 10-12 font size
- Highlight important information with bold, italics, and bullet points
- State clear and concise statements
- Utilize a professional layout with a balance of white space to text
- Proofread, spell check, and edit the resume

## REFERENCE PAGE SAMPLE

Utilize the same header as the resume to create a streamlined application package.

### Darcy R. Heath

heathdr@gmail.com • (453) 399-2087

123 Mulberry Street  
Stillwater, MN 58329

#### REFERENCES

Dr. Leonardo Duck  
Professor, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Eau Claire, WI 54702  
555-555-5555  
leo@uwec.edu

Mr. Aaron Rodgers-Hammerstein  
Manager, FOX Sports North  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
555-555-5555  
arodgers@fox.net

Ms. Madison Win  
Manger, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Service Center  
Eau Claire, WI 54702  
555-555-5555  
madison@uwec.edu

Mr. Elvis Mann  
Volunteer Coordinator, Sacred Heart Hospital  
Eau Claire, WI 54702  
555-555-5555  
elvismann@ssh.org

Professional references can include a faculty member, academic mentor, advisor, supervisor, co-worker, and colleague.

Include reference's name, title, organization, address, phone number, and email.

Include 3-5 professional references. Do not include family members or friends.

A reference page is a part of the application process. References provide recommendations to potential employers about your professional experiences, skills, and work values.

- Choose references that are able to speak about your skills and experience in a positive and professional manner.
- Ask a reference for permission prior to applying to open positions.
- Provide your references a copy of your resume and the position description.
- Submit the reference page when it is requested by the hiring manager or recruiter.
- Do NOT include "references available upon request" at the bottom of the resume.