

Cover Letters

RCPT 413 Professional Issues

Topics for Today

- Purpose of a cover letter
- Keys to success
- Letter format & layout
- Example
- Common Mistakes



Cover Letter

- Purpose: Adds a personal touch to your application and shows employers that you are a serious and professional candidate
- Goal is to secure an interview
- Consider the cover letter as part of the packet
 - ◆ (letter, resume, and goals)
- First thing interviewer sees

Keys to Effective Letter Writing

1. Customize – match your qualifications to their requirements
2. Meet their needs – don't describe what you want but what you can do for them
3. Actively sell yourself – tell them why they should hire you
4. Keep it simple – professionalism is the key

Cover Letter - Format

- Three paragraphs
 1. Who you are and what you want
 - ◆ Interested in agency for internship
 - ◆ When?
 - ◆ How long?
 2. Something special about you
 - ◆ Experiences
 - ◆ Skills
 3. What you want to happen
 - ◆ Interview
 - ◆ Will call them

Required Elements

- Person's name, title
- Agency name
- Agency address
- Dear Ms./Mr. Last Name:
- Sign name
- Same paper as resume and goals

Block Style (flush left)

Heather A. Easterling
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Phone: 540.577.1550 • Email: heasterli@radford.edu

September 22, 2003

3 blank lines

Ms. Lesley McInvale, CTRS
Internship Coordinator
Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation-Roosevelt Hall
P.O. Box 1000
Warm Springs, GA 31830

Dear Ms. McInvale: 1 blank line before and after salutation (colon)

I was very pleased to speak with you concerning my interest in participating in your internship program. Enclosed you will find my resume, internship goals, and a list of references submitted for consideration of a 15 week/600 hour internship this coming semester.

Single space with 1 blank line between paragraphs

As we discussed, I am currently completing my senior year at Radford University. I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in recreation, parks, and tourism with a concentration in therapeutic recreation. My collegiate years have provided an opportunity to be a part of many programs that have taught me valuable teamwork and leadership skills. Performance evaluations have described me as, enthusiastic, responsible, dependable, with a positive attitude, and strong work ethic. I look forward to bringing these qualities into your internship position.

For the past five years, I have actively worked with the Montgomery County Public School System. Most recently, I played an integral role in providing the county's only recreation activities for students with disabilities. I have worked with a wide variety of ages and disabilities including Angelman Syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, severe respiratory conditions, ADD, ADHD, multiple sclerosis, depression, mental retardation, and dementia. I believe that completing an internship at your agency will provide me with valuable learning experience toward becoming a highly effective professional in the field of therapeutic recreation.

Thank you for your consideration for this position. I look forward to speaking with you again and will call during the week of September 29th to discuss a possible interview date.

With enthusiasm, Closing followed by comma
Signature Leave three blank lines for signature followed by your name
Heather A. Easterling
Enclosures (2) One blank line and then enclosures

Alternative Styles

Modified
Block



Block



Semi-Block



Common Mistakes

- Addressing letters "To Whom It May Concern"
- No signature
- Spelling errors
- Grammar
- Post-It notes
- Using the word "I" too much
- Cluttered graphics



Source: www.careerlab.com

More Common Mistakes

- Oddball phrasing
- Ending with "Thank you for your consideration."
- Abbreviations or acronyms
- Forgetting enclosures
- Full left and right justification
- Using a jet printer