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. E asterling
676 Central Drive – Potomac, Virginia 20850
Phone: 301.517.1500 • Email: heatherestleing@ad.edu

September 23, 2003
Ms. Lindsey McDaniel, CTE
Interim Guidance Counselor
Green Valley High School
7220 Green Valley Road
Annapolis, MD 21409

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. I understand that if I choose to continue internships and graduate, I will be granted admission to Arizona State University. In addition, I was able to talk with one of your students about her experience. I believe that competing an internship at your agency will provide me with valuable learning experience toward becoming a highly effective professional in the field of social services.

Single space with 1 blank line between paragraphs

As discussed, I am currently completing my senior year at Radford University. I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in recreation, parks, and leisure services with a concentration in therapeutic recreation. My college years have provided an opportunity to learn techniques that I can use in my future career. I enjoy working with people, especially children. 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 internships program.

Alternative Styles

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<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Semi-Block" /></td>
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Common Mistakes

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

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