Cover Letters

Purpose

- **To explain your reason for writing**
- **To sell yourself in a brief way so the reader will want to review your resume**
- **Follow the directions in the job posting.** Attach as a pdf if directions indicate a separate cover letter. If only a resume is required, do not send a cover letter.

Common Guidelines

- **Paragraph and page length:** 3-4 paragraphs and 1 page
- **Font type and size:** Arial, Times New Roman, Gill Sans (easy to read types), 10 – 12 pt size. Maintain consistency with your resume.
- **Your name, mailing address, and the date** should always be included
- **Use a standard business letter format** for cover letters
- **Margins:** ½ inch to 1 inch on all sides. Keep sides symmetrical
- **Write a unique cover letter** for each position to which you apply
- **Address your letter** to a specific person, avoid "To Whom it May Concern" and Dear Sir / Madame
- **Proofread** each cover letter and have others review it for typos, grammar and clarity
- **Save your cover letters as .pdf and name the document** appropriately when saving to your computer, (ex. Jane Doe Vanguard Cover Letter 2013.pdf)

Before You Begin

Below is a list of what you will need to know/have before you begin writing each cover letter:

- A copy of your resume(s)
- Advertisement for each position you plan to apply to
- Contact information for a representative at each organization
- Knowledge about each potential employer

Paragraph by Paragraph

Your cover letter should complement, not duplicate your resume. Below are suggestions of what to include in each paragraph of your cover letter.

1st: State what position you are applying for and how you learned of the position. It is helpful to include a transitional sentence to set the tone for your letter.

> *Example*: I'm writing in reference to the Client Relationship Associate position advertised on the Vanguard website. After reviewing the qualifications you seek, I believe that my background and experience are a good fit. The attached resume highlights my active involvement in several organizations at Gettysburg College and skills; such as leadership and communication, that could be valuable assets to Vanguard.

2nd: Address the specific needs of the employer and show how you can fill those needs. Do not simply list or repeat items on your resume. Highlight 2-3 relevant skills or experiences. Give examples and show transferable skills – it is up to you to show how what you have done connects to what the employer seeks.

3rd: This optional paragraph is a good place to highlight additional skills, a specific interest in the company, or educational experiences.

4th: The closing paragraph calls for action. You should mention your intention to follow-up with the employer and let the reader know that you want to interview for the position. Close by thanking the reader for considering your application. (See reverse for a sample)

Make it Unique

It is easy to spot a 'canned' cover letter; one that is generically written and sent to *every* employer, regardless of the type of position advertised. Take the time to write a unique cover letter for each job you apply for and make sure that what you write *sounds like you.*

Jane Doe
300 N. Washington Street
Campus Box 425
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Ms. Jennifer Smith
123 Any Street
Sometown, PA 17325

August 23, 2013

Dear Ms. Smith:

I'm writing in reference to the Client Relationship Associate position advertised on the Vanguard website. After reviewing the qualifications you seek, I believe that my background and experience are a good fit for your organization and this position in particular. The attached resume highlights my active involvement in several organizations at Gettysburg College and skills; such as leadership and communication, which could be valuable assets to Vanguard.

While at Gettysburg College, I seek new challenges, both in the classroom and out of it. As a student pursing a major in Spanish, I also have a keen interest in the world of business. To supplement my academic pursuits, I, along with several classmates, have joined the Students in Free Enterprise club (SIFE). As active members of SIFE we have developed an award-winning business plan which is currently being implemented. This plan bridges my skill and passion for Spanish and my career-orientation for business --- we provide translation/language services to the local Spanish speaking population through partnerships with area businesses. Our goal was to have 3 partnerships; we have 6! Our attention to client needs and excellent management of each account has extended contracts and enabled us to broaden our available services.

Vanguard has a strong reputation for both high quality and exceptional customer service. It would be a great achievement to be a member of this team of dedicated professionals. The corporate culture of Vanguard, which is described in great detail on vanguard.com, matches what I would describe as an ideal work environment.

I will contact you within two weeks to confirm that you have received my resume. At that time, I would welcome the opportunity to schedule an interview to learn more about the Client Relationship Associate position at Vanguard. Thank you for your consideration and I hope to speak with you soon.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Enclosures