COVER LETTER CHECKLIST
A well-written cover letter showcases your communication skills and can increase the chances of landing an interview.

General Appearance and Format
- Be sure your cover letter is one page in length with consistent font size (11pt-12pt) and type (Times New Roman, Arial, Verdana, Calibri) throughout. Coordinate with your resume for a consistent feel.
- Use single spacing for each paragraph but leave blank lines between each paragraph and as appropriate to business letter format rules.
- Do NOT use business letterhead from your present employer or refer to a business email address.
- Be genuine, professional and friendly. Use your own words. Avoid clichés, overly formal or flowery wording.
- Do NOT use a standard cover letter. Employers can tell when you change a standard letter and make it your own because they fall flat. A cover letter showcases you and the quality of work you can generate. If you don’t put forth the effort in your cover letter now, it is likely the hiring manager will assume you will fall short on the job later.
- Do NOT use unprofessional language (chat speak, texting language, 😊’s, or shorthand).
- Always proofread your cover letter to be sure it is 100% free of grammatical and spelling errors!!!!
- Do NOT regurgitate the information on your resume; you may however highlight your strong points to get the reader’s attention.
- Do NOT start every sentence with “I” or “My.”

Greeting
- Always address the letter to an actual contact name vs. “To whom it may concern”. With so much information available through LinkedIn and company websites, do the legwork to find the appropriate hiring manager’s name along with the exact spelling.
- Don’t assume Ms. over Mr. when it comes to gender neutral names – do your homework via networking. If appropriate prefix is unknown, use “Dear Taylor Smith” or “Dear Alex Jones.”
- If you cannot find a name for the hiring manager, use the format of “Dear Position Title Search Committee” instead of “To whom it may concern”.

The Body (1-3 paragraphs)
- Be sure all information that was requested in the job posting is included or defined in your letter (job reference number, availability, salary requirements, etc.)
- 1st Paragraph: Communicate the reason you are writing by identifying the position you are applying to, how you learned of the position and your strongest qualification for the position (For entry-level, degree-related positions, your education is of particular interest.)
- 2nd Paragraph: Communicate the reason you are interested in this position by describing how strongly your experience, education, skills, and attributes align with the position and company needs.
  - Use the job posting along with information gathered via research and networking to articulate and market “you.”
- 3rd Paragraph: Communicate the specific reason the company should be interested in you. What makes you stand out over anyone else with the same degree and same qualifications?
- Final Paragraph: Express interest in an interview, refer to your enclosed resume and any applicable attachments, provide details on how you can be contacted and express appreciation for their consideration.

Still Stuck?
Remember, a cover letter is a summary of why you are the best candidate for the position. The best candidate doesn’t merely meet the basic and preferred qualifications, rather their past accomplishments and experience make them individuals that companies want to learn more about. Your cover letter should set you apart from the competition. Does your cover letter answer the following?
- Can you do the job – Is it clear you have the right skills, abilities, education and experience to be successful?
- Will you do the job – Have you shown an interest in the work itself and the right attitude, values and spirit?
- Will you fit in – Is it evident your values align with the company values? Do you have the cultural fit for the company?

Career Services • Room 280, McCannel Hall • (701) 777-3904 • UND.edu/careerservices • UND.careerservices@UND.edu

—— Turn over for more help ——
Outline:

Date
First Name Last Name
Title
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear First Name Last Name:

1st paragraph: State the reason for the letter, providing the name of the position you are applying to and how you heard about the position by naming the publication/website/etc.

2nd paragraph: Express your interest in the position and company. Indicate your knowledge of the company by showing how your background/experience relates. Focus on what you can do for the employer.

3rd paragraph: Why you? Why should the company consider you for an interview? This is where you can spotlight the specific skills and experiences you bring.

4th paragraph: Refer to any attachments and indicate that you would like the opportunity to learn more about their opportunities. Indicate that you would be happy to provide additional information if needed and how to reach you. Thank the reader for his/her time.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name
Phone Number
Professional Email Address

Attachment

Example:

Anita Marketing

123 Street, City, State Zip Code / 123-456-7891 / firstname.lastname@email.com

Date of Submission

Smart Marketing
350 W Burnsville Pkwy
Burnsville, MN 55337

Dear Position Title Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for your Marketing Internship, as found via your website. I will receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications from the University of North Dakota in May 2018. Having gained knowledge in public relations and marketing, I have the skills to help Smart Marketing address its needs and best serve its customers.

I have experience in the PR industry and understand the need for effective marketing strategies. This knowledge was gained through my time at the University of North Dakota’s Career Services as their Marketing Intern. In this role, I gained better recognition of services offered in order to create unique social media marketing strategies to foster a larger audience. I provided outreach to engage students and assisted with office events when needed. These tasks required me to efficiently work independently, as well as collaborate in a team setting, communicate effectively and analyze various audiences and their needs.

Supplementing this experience is my education. My coursework encouraged me to ‘think outside the box,’ while incorporating technical knowledge of the field. For example, my capstone course required me to create an imaginary marketing plan for Amazon. In this project I focused on the company’s dynamic culture, helping to increase student interest. As polled through a class presentation, many students found the information helpful and would be interested in applying. This shows my ability to analyze a market and find the best means to promote an idea and/or opportunity. Having these skills will serve Smart Marketing well and increase its customer engagement and satisfaction.

As clearly shown, my experiences and knowledge strongly correlate with what your position requires. Please feel free to contact me at 123-456-7891 or at firstname.lastname@email.com to schedule an interview at your earliest convenience. I look forward to discussing your Marketing Internship further. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anita Marketing

Your Name
123-456-7891
firstname.lastname@email.com

Attachment: Resume