

COVER LETTER

GUIDE

St. Mary's College of Maryland
CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FORMATTING

- ✓ Business Letter Format
- ✓ Block paragraphs, not indented
- ✓ One page in length max
- ✓ Margins between .5" — 1"
- ✓ Typeface, font size, and margins consistent with resume

HEADER

Date
Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Mr./Ms./Dr. Recruiter's Full Name
Recruiter's Title
Department Name
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:
-OR- RE: Position Title: (only if you cannot find the recruiter's name)

DEDUCTIVE VS. INDUCTIVE STRUCTURE

Cover letters should always be written in DEDUCTIVE structure. This type of structure is easy to skim and is ideal for employers who may not have time to read your cover letter in detail.

DEDUCTIVE

(Business Letter Style)

Moves from the general to the specific, starting with your main point and then backing it up with evidential support

Introduction opens with your main point—what position are you applying for a why

Each body paragraph starts with a topic sentence that summarizes the main idea of that paragraph

Ideal for skimmers

INDUCTIVE

(Academic Essay Style)

Moves from the specific to the general, providing evidential support and concluding with your main point

Introduction starts with a catchy opening, like a quote or a story to get the reader hooked

Each body paragraph concludes with a sentence that summarizes the main idea of that paragraph

Meant to be read in detail, cover-to-cover

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- ✓ Cover letters introduce the reader to your personality, they should supplement your resume, not reiterate it. Think about what you have learned from your experiences.
- ✓ Tailor your cover letter to the position description
- ✓ Outline your main points before you start writing
- ✓ Having a well organized cover letter that reiterates your main points throughout ensures that they stick with the reader

"Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them"

PARTS OF A COVER LETTER

INTRODUCTION

- ✓ Restates the job you are applying to
- ✓ Tells the employer how you heard about the position (if relevant)
- ✓ Briefly explains why you are interested in this specific position, this company/organization, and this field
- ✓ Briefly outlines the main points that you are going to address in your body paragraphs

EXAMPLE

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for considering my application to your open Marketing and Communications Internship position at Mentor Foundation USA. I was recommended to this position by Ms. Nicole Smith, the Director of Marketing and Outreach at your organization. I am a current student at St. Mary's College of Maryland majoring in English who is passionate about creating and fostering strong mentorship relationships to reduce substance abuse among today's youth. Through my previous internship, work, and volunteer experiences as well as my academic work, I have cultivated my written and oral communication skills and have a strong background in social media marketing. I hope to use my communication experience to help engage, inspire, and strengthen relationships with young people in your local community.

PARTS OF A COVER LETTER

BODY PARAGRAPHS

- ✓ How you organize your body paragraphs is up to you. You may split them up by experience, by skill set, or any other way that makes sense
- ✓ Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that summarizes the main point of that paragraph
- ✓ Each main point you address should be tied back into the position you are applying for

EXAMPLE

My background in social media marketing will allow me to create a social media platform that engages youth with Mentor Foundation USA. Through my involvement on St. Mary's campus, I have learned how important it is to stay on the forefront of technology trends by interacting with youth via social media. As a Professional Fellow in the St. Mary's Career Development Center, I have increased student engagement on the office's Facebook and Twitter pages by creating a social media plan that focuses on publishing interactive, weekly content and building a consistent brand for the office. Additionally, my experience as a Resident Assistant has shown me how crucial a role social media outreach can play in establishing mentorship relationships. Creating a strong social media presence on my floor has fostered a sense of community, and a willingness among my residents to come to me for guidance and support. As a Marketing and Communications Intern, I will use these same skill sets to promote youth interaction with Mentor Foundation USA's social media pages, inspire young people to recognize their potential, and encourage them to seek out the support they need to succeed.

PARTS OF A COVER LETTER

CONCLUSION

- ✓ Thanks the employer
- ✓ Restates the position you are applying to
- ✓ Briefly restates your main points
- ✓ Provides your contact information

EXAMPLE

Thank you again for reviewing my application to your open Marketing and Communications Internship position. In this position, I will use my background in social media marketing, and my experience serving as a mentor and a student leader, to help promote engagement and reduce substance abuse among youth. Please feel free to contact me at 240-855-2345 or tlwright@smcm.edu with any questions you have about my application.

Sincerely,



Tracy L. Wright

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

Date
Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Mr./Ms./Dr. Recruiter's Full Name
Recruiter's Title
Department Name
Company Name
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Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:
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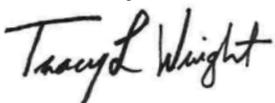
Dear Ms. Jones:

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My background in social media marketing will allow me to create a social media platform that engages youth with Mentor Foundation USA. Through my involvement on St. Mary's campus, I have learned how important it is to stay on the forefront of technology trends by interacting with youth via social media. As a Professional Fellow in the St. Mary's Career Development Center, I have increased student engagement on the office's Facebook and Twitter pages by creating a social media plan that focuses on publishing interactive, weekly content and building a consistent brand for the office. Additionally, my experience as a Resident Assistant has shown me how crucial a role social media outreach can play in establishing mentorship relationships. Creating a strong social media presence on my floor has fostered a sense of community, and a willingness among my residents to come to me for guidance and support. As a Marketing and Communications Intern, I will use these same skill sets to promote youth interaction with Mentor Foundation USA's social media pages, inspire young people to recognize their potential, and encourage them to seek out the support they need to succeed.

Thank you again for reviewing my application to your open Marketing and Communications Internship position. In this position, I will use my background in social media marketing, and my experience serving as a mentor and a student leader, to help promote engagement and reduce substance abuse among youth. Please feel free to contact me at 240-855-2345 or tlwright@smcm.edu with any questions you have about my application.

Sincerely,



Tracy L. Wright