



## How to Write a Letter of Application

- ✓ The letter of application, also known as a cover letter, explains to the employer why you are qualified for the position in which you are applying and why you should be selected for an interview. A letter of application should complement, not duplicate, your résumé. Its purpose is to interpret the résumé and add a personal touch. The letter of application is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression. That first glance at your letter of application is your one opportunity to make a good impression and make it to the next round in the search process.
- ✓ In order to pass that first round of screening, you must specifically address the job posting and state why you are qualified for the position. This way, the search committee can see at a glance, why and how you're qualified for the job. The letter of application responds to a known job opening and should express a high level of interest and knowledge about the position. Effective letters of application explain the reasons for your interest in the specific job position and identify your most relevant skills or experiences.
- ✓ Your letter of application should be designed specifically for each position you seek. Do not design a form letter and send it to every potential employer. Although it can be time consuming to write a custom letter of application for each job, it's important to take the time and effort to show why you are a good match. To write a custom letter of application, take the job posting and list the criteria the employer is looking for. Then list the skills and experience you have. Either address how your skills match the job in paragraph form or list the criteria and your qualifications.
- ✓ Writing a letter of application can seem like a challenging task. However, if you take it one step at a time, you'll soon be an expert at writing letters of application to send with your application packet. Here is information on how to write letters of application, along with letters of application samples and examples.

## **Letter of Application Guidelines**

**Font:** Use a traditional font such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri. The font size should be between 10 and 12 points.

**Format:** A letter of application should be single-spaced with a space between each paragraph. Use about 1" margins and align your text to the left, which is the standard alignment for most documents.

**Length:** A letter of application should be about one page long.

## **Letter of Application Organization**

**Header:** A letter of application should begin with both your and the employer's contact information followed by the date. If you have contact information for the employer, list it below your contact information. If not, leave this section off your letter.

### **Contact Information**

The first section of a letter of application should include your contact information:

- Your Name
- Your Address
- Your City, State, Zip Code
- Your Cell Phone or Home Number
- Your Email Address (optional)

**Salutation:** Follow the salutation with a colon, a space, and then start the first paragraph of your letter. For example:

Dear Search Committee:

(First paragraph of letter.)

The following is a list of letter salutation examples that are appropriate for letters of application and other employment-related correspondence.

### **General Salutations for Cover Letters**

- Dear Hiring Manager
- Dear Search Committee
- To whom it may concern
- Dear Human Resources Manager
- Dear Sir or Madam

**Introductory Paragraph:** Begin by stating the job for which you are applying. Briefly mention how your skills and experience match the company and/or position; this will give the employer a preview of the rest of your letter.

**Body Paragraph(s):** In a paragraph or two, explain why you are interested in the job and why you make an excellent candidate for the position. Mention specific qualifications listed in the job posting and explain how you meet those qualifications. Do not simply restate your résumé, but provide specific examples. You can either write about these specific examples in complete sentences or in a bulleted format. It is better to use shorter paragraphs or a bulleted list of your qualifications rather than one large block of text.

**Closing Paragraph:** Conclude your letter of application by thanking the employer for considering you for the position and state that you would like to interview and/or discuss employment opportunities.

The following is a list of letter closing examples that are appropriate for letters of application and employment-related correspondence.

#### **Cover Letter Closing Examples**

- Sincerely
- Sincerely yours
- Regards
- Best regards
- Kind regards
- Yours truly
- Most sincerely
- Respectfully
- Respectfully yours
- Thank you
- Thank you for your consideration

Follow the closing with a comma, four spaces, and then your typed name. For example:

Best regards,

Your Name

**Signature:** Lastly, sign your name between the closing and your typed name.

***Remember to proof and edit your letter before sending it***

## Sample Letter of Application Format

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your City, State, Zip Code  
Your Phone Number  
Your Email Address (optional)

Date

Contact's Name  
Contact's Title  
Organization's Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Salutation and Contact's Name

Introductory Paragraph

Body Paragraph(s)

Closing Paragraph

Complimentary Close

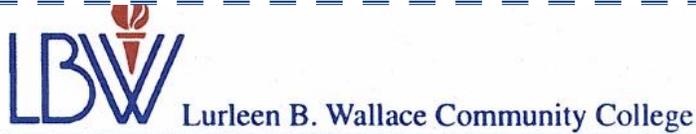
Your Signature

Your Typed Name



## **Sample Job Posting**

Below is an excerpt of the top portion of a position announcement and examples of the correct way to respond to the position announcement using paragraph format and bullet format.



**POSITION:** Financial Affairs Cashier

**STARTING DATE:** March 2013

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Minimum of an associate degree or the equivalent coursework is required. Minimum of three years of clerical or financial accounting experience is required. The ability to manage time, maintain confidential information, and safeguard cash is required. Knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles and terminology is required.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Bachelor's degree is preferred.

### **Example 1: Letter of application using paragraph style as the format of the letter.**

As a Bank Teller for the past five years for Southeast Bank, I was responsible for customer service, safeguarding cash, and generating and maintaining office reports. In addition, I maintained records and accounting reports for all office transactions. Due to my responsibilities, it was important that I maintain confidential information, maintain an accurate understanding of accounting principles and terminology, and complete all task in a timely manner. In addition, obtaining a bachelor's degree in accounting has helped me throughout my years of service at Southeast Bank and I believe it will help me in completing the necessary duties for the Financial Affairs Cashier position at Lurleen B. Wallace Community College.

### **Example 2: Letter of application using bullet points as the format of the letter.**

#### **Financial Affairs Cashier Requirements:**

- An associate degree or the equivalent coursework
- Three years of clerical or financial accounting experience
- Ability to manage time, maintain confidential information, and safeguard cash
- Knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles and terminology

#### **My Skills and Experience:**

- Bachelor's degree in accounting
- Five years of experience as a Bank Teller in which responsibilities included customer service, safeguarding cash, and generating and maintaining office reports
- Experience maintaining confidential information and completing tasks in a timely manner
- Knowledge of accounting principles and terminology

As you can see in both examples the applicant has written a detailed letter of application. The employer knows exactly how the applicant is qualified for the position and why the applicant should be considered for an interview.