A cover letter is the first opportunity to tell a potential employer about yourself and share how your skills and experiences make you the best candidate for their company.

**DO**

- **CUSTOMIZE**
  Take the time to write and send an original cover letter to each company

- **PROOFREAD**
  Use the Career Center Drop-in Advising to have your Cover Letter reviewed

- **INCLUDE AS AN ATTACHMENT**
  Consider attaching a cover letter to a resume during submission, even if it is not required

- **KEEP A COPY**
  Save an electronic copy of each cover letter for your records

- **FOLLOW-UP**
  Contact the potential company one to two weeks after submission to check the status

**DON’T**

- **LOSE THE READER**
  Ensure your first paragraph catches the reader’s attention and encourages them to continue reading

- **OVERUSE “I” STATEMENTS**
  Focus on how you meet an employer’s needs and not your personal story

- **BE TOO LONG**
  Keep your writing concise and up to one page in length

- **OVERSELL ABILITIES**
  Avoid using adjectives that exaggerate your experience such as “exceptional” or “impeccable”

- **UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR WRITING**
  Remember that cover letters serve as a sample of your writing and communication skills
COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

LAYOUT AND FORMAT
- Font size is 12 and easy to read
- Margins are minimum .5 inch and maximum 1 inch
- Free of spelling and grammatical errors
- No use of acronyms
- Cover letter design is consistent with professional practice
- Cover letter, resume layout, and format are consistent

GREETING
- Reference employer’s name with Mr. or Ms.
- Address cover letter as Dear Hiring Committee if employer name is unknown

PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION
- Listed below signature
- Includes phone number and email

SIGNATURE
- Include valediction (closing)
- First and last name is used

COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION
- Include employer’s first and last name
- Include employer’s position title, company name, and full address if known

OPENING PARAGRAPH
- State the full position title and company to which you are applying
- Reference how you found the position
- Summarize your intention and reason for your interest in the job and/or company

MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS
- State how your qualifications and experiences meet the needs of the position
- Mention specific interest in the organization
- Address specific requirements listed in the position description and why you meet those requirements
- Do not restate your resume
- Communicate your fit for the organization by highlighting what interests you about the mission, values, services of the organization

FINAL PARAGRAPH
- Make a request to talk with the employer
- Include your contact information and any preferences for your preferred type of contact (email, phone, etc.)
- Thank the employer for their time
Month Day, Year

Dear [Employer’s Name],

This opening paragraph indicates the position title and company you are applying to and how you heard about the position. You should provide a brief overview of your background including your major and areas of expertise. You also should express your interest and enthusiasm in the position and how your career goals align with the company.

This second paragraph should summarize your previous employment experiences that will allow you to meet the expectation and responsibilities of the position. You should provide two or three examples of your duties and experiences outlined on your resume without copying verbatim and connect them to the requirements of the position. You can utilize terminology from the position posting to make this connection.

This third paragraph is an extension of the second paragraph if you have a longer employment history. If you do not have a long employment history move directly to the fourth.

This fourth paragraph should summarize your career goals and how these goals align with the position. You also should reference your knowledge of the company including topics such as their history, vision statements, values, and strategic plan. You want to demonstrate to the company that you support and represent their mission.

This closing paragraph restates your interest in the position. You should request an opportunity to arrange a mutually convenient time to further discuss your qualifications. Thank the employer for their time and consideration in reviewing your application materials.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name
Phone Number
School or Professional Email Address
Dear Ms. Doe,

Please accept this letter of interest and attached resume for the Mascot position at Valparaiso University that was advertised through Handshake. I am currently a first-year student pursuing a degree in communication with a minor in marketing. I welcome the opportunity to represent Valpo through this position to promote a sense of spirit and comradery between the students and greater community, while finding innovative ways to enhance the University’s mascot brand.

In my previous position as the Mascot at the Great School, I had the opportunity to interact with students, parents, and community members to promote school spirit. The position required an extensive amount of time management due to the large number of appearance requests. I represented the school at over 50 events as the Mascot, designing routines and skits with high energy to engage the audience.

Furthermore, I currently work as a Barista at the Coffee Bean where I have gained valuable, hands-on experience in customer service, while working in a fast-paced and team-oriented environment. The position provides me the opportunity to greet and interact with over 100 customers each day and craft specialty beverages of their choice. I am entrusted with the cash handling and following all health, safety, and sanitation guidelines.

These experiences have demonstrated my responsibility, leadership, and commitment to an organization’s values. I recognize the large role Valpo has within the greater community and ways this position unites students and community members. I am confident in my ability to exceed expectations and demonstrate the high level of energy and dedication required to promote the University’s brand, while bringing together audience members to support Valpo.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss my qualifications for the Mascot position at Valpo. I am available for an interview at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Chrissy Crusader
888-555-3333
Chrissy.crusader@valpo.edu