



# Cover Letter Guide

## Why write a cover letter?

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself to HR and the hiring manager, encourage them to review your resume and consider you for an interview. It is your opportunity to make a great first impression, and share the *soft skills* and *professional interests* that don't always show up on your resume. We recommend spending the time on a cover letter to make your application stand out!

## What do I say?

Rather than restating your resume, your cover letter should emphasize unique qualifications and personal characteristics that are relevant to the job at hand. A good cover letter should explicitly address *what you can do for the organization*, not what it can do for you. The most effective way to do this is to research the role, department, and Mission Health System.

## What is the format?

Cover letters should typically be *one page with 3-4 paragraphs* (although there are exceptions).

### Business letter with address, date and salutation:

- Your address and date at the top of the page
- Name, professional title, and address of the person/organization to whom you are writing
- Formal salutation: Use the correct name if you can: "Dear Mr. / Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ : " or a generic professional salutation, such as "Dear Hiring Manager," You can also SKIP the salutation if you don't know what to list.

### Opening Paragraph (WHO, WHAT)

- Begin by stating the purpose of the letter: **who** you are, **what** job you're seeking
- Tell the employer how you heard about the position (word of mouth, job posting, Career Exploration, manager, etc.)
- If you have previously met the manager or department, you may remind him/her (i.e., "After working with you on the GoLive initiative," "after job shadowing in your department")

### Second Paragraph (WHY Them)

- Research the department, who it serves, and the program/department goals
- Answer the question *"Why do you want to work in this role?"*
  - Consider this from the hiring manager's perspective, rather than your own. Why are you applying to this role in particular? What interests you about the work? Keep it focused on the future and the work.

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- If applicable, share why you want to work with Mission and contribute to the BIG(GER) Aim, or any other specific organizational cultural values that are meaningful to you.

## Third Paragraph (WHY You) *(can use a 4th paragraph if needed)*

- Answer the question “*Why are you qualified for the position?*” (What unique strengths, skills and experience do you offer?)
- Describe how you will relate your previous skills and experience to the requirements of the position and benefit of the department.
- Provide specific examples to support your qualifications- don’t just quote your resume. Indicate how your work, experiences and career aspirations relate to the position and the department’s interests.
- Note, bulleting how your qualifications match their needs can be an effective method to use here.

## Third Paragraph (Courtesy, Action)

- **Seek follow up with the employer** on the status of your application/inquiry.
- Invite him/her to contact you should additional information be needed.
- Indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place.
- Repeat your phone number and/or e-mail in the letter.
- Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.
- Formal closing: “Sincerely,” with your name signed and typed.

## I have a draft. What now?

### Be sure that your cover letter...

- ✓ is in standard business letter format (see two sample formats attached).
- ✓ remains professionally focused, not personally focused. (i.e. highlight your skills and strengths instead of the pay, the circumstances at your present job, etc.)
- ✓ conveys your enthusiasm for the opportunity
- ✓ uses confident language that emphasizes your preparedness
- ✓ avoids colloquial language and clichés
- ✓ is written in your own style, using your own words
- ✓ does not read like a form letter or a letter sent to multiple employers
- ✓ includes correct contact information for you and the employer.
- ✓ is free of punctuation, spelling, and typographical errors.

## Samples:

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Ira Jobseeker  
1 Main Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

January 1, 20XX

Human Resources  
Mission Health  
1 Hospital Drive  
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to express my interest in the Certified Medical Assistant opening that is posted on the Mission Health website. Having worked as a CNA at CarePartners for the last two years, I am eager to explore new opportunities within the system and use my strengths and skills to contribute to the BIG(GER) Aim, with a particular focus on getting patients and families to their desired outcome with an excellent experience for all.

My experience working with a wide range of patients at CarePartners, from home health to hospice, as well as post-acute care, makes me an ideal candidate for this role. In addition, I recently completed my Medical Assisting Certification at AB-Tech, where I found the coursework to be rewarding, and well aligned with my personality and interests. Bringing comfort through excellent care is a point of pride for me- even before working in a professional medical setting, I helped care for my diabetic grandmother in her home. I have excellent communication skills, and a strong ability to put patients at ease. I have a passion for helping and caring for others, and have aspirations to continue gaining knowledge and experience in an organization I admire.

I am confident that my professional experience and educational background would serve me well in the CMA role. It would be my pleasure to grow within the Mission Health System, and use my new skills to help others in our community. I look forward to the opportunity to interview with you to allow us to further discuss my qualifications for the position. If you have any questions or would like me to provide any additional information, please feel free to contact me at (555) 555-5555 or [ira.jobseeker@gmail.com](mailto:ira.jobseeker@gmail.com). Thank you for your time in considering my resume. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

*Ira Jobseeker*

Ira Jobseeker

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## Sally A. Sample

111 Main Street · Asheville, NC 28801 · [ssample@gmailz.com](mailto:ssample@gmailz.com) · (555) 555-5555

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August 1, 20XX

Human Resources  
Mission Health  
1 Hospital Drive  
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Human Resources:

I was thrilled to learn of the new opening for Practice Specialist II from my work with the Career Exploration team. I have been exploring opportunities within Mission that best align with my strengths and career goals. I feel confident that I would be a valuable asset to Mission Medical Associates in this supportive role.

I have worked at Mission Hospital in the Bean Shop for just over one year. During that time, I have come to love the people and culture of Mission, and have been exploring ways I can use my skills to serve others in a broader way. My customer service skills, attention to detail, and collaborative spirit would be a valuable addition to the MMA practice. I have been complimented by staff and patients on my bright personality and fast service in the Bean Shop, and I know I can do even more given the opportunity. I see this as an excellent opportunity to align more directly with patient care, and help patients and families have the best experience possible in the outpatient setting.

Prior to Mission, I was a server at a popular restaurant downtown. There I honed the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of clientele in a busy, fast paced environment, and take time to listen to their needs and concerns. While paying my own way through AB-Tech, I also worked part time filing paperwork and scanning documents in a medical practice. I learned a lot about confidentiality, compliance, and professionalism in the medical setting.

I am excited to learn more about how I could contribute to MMA's success as a Practice Specialist II. I look forward to meeting in person to learn more about the role, and share how my strengths could benefit the team. In the meantime, you may reach me by phone (555) 555-5555 or by email at [ssample@gmailz.com](mailto:ssample@gmailz.com). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Sally Sample*  
Sally Sample