

# Crafting your Cover Letters | Beyond OSU: Artifact

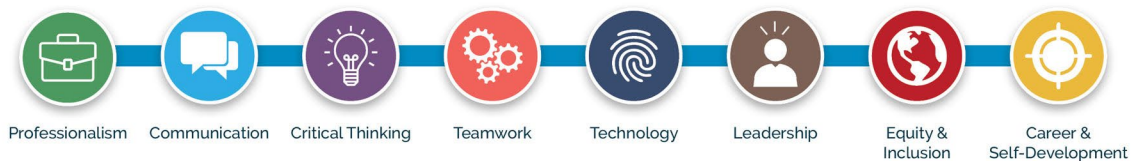
## Assignment Overview:

Cover letters are meant to connect your skills, experiences, interests and/or values to the position and organization to which you are applying. The most compelling and competitive cover letters demonstrate a strong alignment between the candidate and the position.

- Learning Outcomes:**
1. Identify the skills and experiences sought after in a job description.
  2. Construct a cover letter connecting your skills and experiences to a position.

**Beyond OSU:** This assignment falls under the **Beyond OSU I (Prepare) learning outcome #2: Apply life-long career development concepts through the creation of career relevant artifacts.**

**NACE Competencies:** **Skills developed completing this assignment:**  
Professionalism, Communication, Career & Self-Development



## Student Worksheet:

### Step 1: Identify a position or job posting.

*[Instructor note: This can be prompted as an immediate job/internship/part-time job or a hypothetical goal position after college. Consider the needs of your audience and class.]*

To complete this worksheet, find an existing position or job posting and fill out the chart on page 2 based on the information in the position description and information you can find on the company website or social media.

What is the title of the job you chose:

What organization or company is it for:

### Step 2: Turn those phrases into sentences.

After completing page two of this worksheet (below), return here, and using your results from column 2, write 6-8 sentences below highlighting the skills and experiences that best connect you with the points listed in the position description and company website/social media.

These are draft sentences, so content connection and keywords are the most important elements.

**Tip:** Lead with your experience using keywords from the position listing (example: specific software skills, team player, detail-oriented, good communicator). ATS (Applicant tracking software – AI systems and hiring teams) will scan your application for key words at larger firms, so use them in your cover letter and resume. After you list your experience bring it back to **why** you would be a great fit for this position. This process also highlights your focus on details, research and company knowledge.

## Student Worksheet:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Job Title:</b>   |  |
| <b>Job Description</b>  | <b>How I match</b>   |
| <b>LIST 3 TRAITS SOUGHT IN A CANDIDATE</b><br>Examples: Strong interpersonal skills.  | <b>WRITE 3 PHRASES DESCRIBING YOU</b><br>Examples: Strong communicator, interpersonal skills.  |
| 1)  | 1)   |
| 2)  | 2)   |
| 3)  | 3)   |
| <b>LIST 3 JOB DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES</b><br>Examples: Collect field samples, track vitals, assist clients.   | <b>WRITE YOUR ACHIEVEMENT THAT MATCHES EACH DUTY</b><br>Examples: Capstone project involved collecting weekly samples, tracked patient vitals every 2 hours, assisted customers at my job.         |
| 1)  | 1)   |
| 2)  | 2)   |
| 3)  | 3)   |
| <b>LIST 3 FACTS OR TRAITS ABOUT THE COMPANY</b><br>Examples: Provides holistic approach to housing, LEED certified, ranked #1 in customer satisfaction, innovative. | <b>LIST STORIES OR EXAMPLES THAT CONNECT WITH THOSE FACTS</b><br>Examples: Shared value of holistic counseling, interned with green building firm, was the employee of the month, highly creative. |
| 1)  | 1)   |
| 2)  | 2)   |
| 3)  | 3)   |

## Student Worksheet (continued):

### **Step 3: Turn your step 2 sentences (page one) into a Cover Letter**

Build three segments into your letter. 1) Introduction, who you are and why you are interested in the position. 2) Main Body: Match the main position requirements to your skills and experiences. What is your strongest sentence above? Then add a few more of your sentences to strengthen why you fit and what you bring to the company and culture (2-3 paragraphs). The more you understand about the job and place, the more you can tailor it! 3) Closing: Wrap up final thoughts, thank them, and let them know you are excited to speak more about this position. Please write your cover letter content in the box below.

[A Career Development Center cover letter checklist can help guide your through the process.](#)

### **Step 4: Review Session** (optional - instructor can determine):

After you have a cover letter finished, present the letter along with this worksheet and a copy of the original job posting to someone for help. We recommend a peer review or a professional review from industry contacts or alumni from your college. Having multiple people look at your application materials is always a great idea. The more feedback you receive, the better prepared you will be for real applications.

## Notes for Instructors:

Please adjust this assignment as needed to fit your schedule, point system and course outcomes. While this cover letter assignment is designed intentionally to build a professional cover letter, we know that career development is not a one-size fits all process. Be mindful of your audience and their readiness for this process. Consider adding specific industry elements to make this more engaging and beneficial.

### Suggestions for this assignment:

**Length:** You can add a peer, industry professional or alumni review session to this assignment to produce feedback and dialogue for your students. Coach students through any industry expectations and best practices in their field(s).

**Assessment & Submission:** Please assess this assignment in line with the other work for your course, and direct students in how you would like them submitted (printed and turned in during class, electronically filled out and submitted via Canvas, etc.). In terms of scaffolding, several of our other assignments could serve as pre-work, including Transferrable Skills, Crafting Resume Bullets, etc. You could also use this assignment in concert with the Using AI for Resumes and Cover Letters assignment if exploring generative AI is part of your pedagogy.

**Additional Resources:** Please consider using the robust online resources the [Career Development Center](#) offers you and your students. For more information on using the Career Development Center's tools, events and workshops in your classroom, please [visit our website](#).



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