

# Cover Letter Rubric

## Cover Letter Learning Outcomes

- Produce a compelling cover letter that summarizes interest and qualifications for a position in a particular organization.
- Career Competency Addressed: Oral/Written Communication
- Career Competency Obtained: Career Management .

**Career Center**  
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

|   | 1-Needs Improvement  | 3-Average   | 5-Effective   | Comments |
|---|--|---|---|----------|
| <b>Opening Paragraph</b><br><br>State why you are writing, how you learned of the organization or position, why you are interested in this position or company, and your education and basic information about yourself.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify a specific position, organization and purpose for writing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Does not describe interest in, nor brief qualifications for, position and/or organization being pursued<br><input type="checkbox"/> Does not use transition sentence to introduce second paragraph  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vague in describing position, organization and/or purpose for writing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inadequately describes interest in, and brief qualifications for, position and/or organization being pursued<br><input type="checkbox"/> Weak transition into second paragraph   | <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies positions, organization and purpose<br><input type="checkbox"/> Describes interest in, and brief qualifications for, position and organization being pursued<br><input type="checkbox"/> Tailored specifically to a position or organization.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Uses a transition sentence to effectively introduce second paragraph  |          |
| <b>Middle Paragraph(s)</b><br><br>Present relevant qualifications, experience and skills related to the position/organizations. Must make a connection between your experiences and achievements and the specific job/opportunity you are applying for. | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not discuss any relevant qualifications. Have not related your skills to the position applied for.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Does not state why interested in the position, company, and/or location.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies one of your qualifications, but it is not related to the position at hand.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Restates what is on your résumé with minimal additional information.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Explains why you are interested in the position but are too vague   | <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies one or two of your strongest qualifications and/or skills and clearly relates how these apply to the job at hand.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Explains specifically why you are interested in the position and this type of job, company, and/or location.  |          |
| <b>Closing Paragraph</b><br><br>Wrap-up/action  | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not thank reader<br><input type="checkbox"/> Does not express interest in a meeting or conversation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Thank you statement and/or expression of interest for a meeting or conversation needs editing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Thanks reader for considering him/her<br><input type="checkbox"/> Expresses interest in a meeting or conversation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Includes phone number and/or email (contact information)   |          |
| <b>Presentation and Format:</b><br><br>Visually appealing, proper grammar and spelling, and standardized cover letter format  | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not use business letter format<br><input type="checkbox"/> Letter is not addressed properly<br><input type="checkbox"/> Contact information does not match résumé<br><input type="checkbox"/> Does not use appropriate language/grammar for the position<br><input type="checkbox"/> Multiple grammatical and/or spelling error<br><input type="checkbox"/> Visually unappealing | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses business letter format, but elements are incorrect with date and/or addresses and signature section<br><input type="checkbox"/> Uses a greeting and addresses a person, but some elements need editing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Name and contact information are included at top of letter.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Some of the language and grammar is inappropriate for the position and needs editing<br><input type="checkbox"/> A few errors<br><input type="checkbox"/> Some parts are visually appealing, but other parts can be enhanced | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses correct business letter format with date and addresses at the top and job seeker signature<br><input type="checkbox"/> Uses an appropriate greeting and addresses the correct person and department<br><input type="checkbox"/> Uses industry specific language from the job description<br><input type="checkbox"/> Is well written and utilizes professional grammar for the position<br><input type="checkbox"/> Error free<br><input type="checkbox"/> Visually appealing |          |

This rubric was created using guidelines from the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) community. NACE is a consortium of more than 3,000 university relations, recruiting professionals and business affiliates. It is the leading source of information on the employment of the college educated, and forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks starting salaries, recruiting and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks.

**Career Center Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_