# RUBRIC: COVER LETTER

## Required Fields/Items

### Contact Information/Formatting

**Meets Minimum**
- Your address (include city, street, zip).
- The current date is at the top of the letter.
- Recipient’s address.

**Exceeds Minimum**
- Cover letter and résumé, when placed side-by-side, appear branded with the same formatting of the job seeker’s contact information.

## Salutation

**Meets Minimum**
- An appropriate salutation is used (e.g. Dear).
- Addressing the letter “To Whom It May Concern” is no longer acceptable; use “Dear Hiring Manager:” only if contact name is not available. Make an effort to address your letter to an individual.

**Exceeds Minimum**
- Research employer (Linkedin/Google/call) for contact’s name and title.

## Opening Paragraph

**Meets Minimum**
- The opening paragraph establishes a purpose and provides details to support the position application.
- The content states why the applicant is a strong candidate for the position.
- Fluff is avoided (i.e. “hard working” and “strong communications skills”).

**Exceeds Minimum**
- Name a mutual acquaintance or identify people through a contact you made within the organization.
- Answer how you were introduced to the organization – do you follow the organization as a customer, as a volunteer or have you interned for one of their customers?
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### Layout/Design

**Meets Minimum**
- The content sells the candidate and focuses on the employer's needs, explaining how the candidate will be valuable to the organization.
- The word “I” is not overused.
- The letter is one page and includes three to four paragraphs.
- Appropriate punctuation is used.
- There are no typographical or grammatical errors in the letter.
- Content is concise and written with excellence; tone is appropriate.
- Essential requirements of the job are addressed.

**Exceeds Minimum**
- Avoids common verbiage such as “self-starter” and “strong written communications skills” but successfully illustrate strengths and attributes.
- Letter concentrates on the requirements that will be most highly valued by the organization as determined from its website and mission statement or strategic plan.
- Provide a position number if applicable.

## Last Paragraph/Ending the Letter

### General
- The closing includes a well-written statement of appreciation.
- The closing motivates action from the employer.

### Exceeds Minimum
- Unless instructed not to call, we encourage your closing to identify when you plan to follow up with a phone call to learn the next steps in the hiring process.

## Signature

### General
- The content mentions the enclosed/attached résumé.
- Four line spaces between the closing and the person's name for the signature are included, and the letter is signed – no italic font for signature.