



College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences

## **Cover Letters Content Guide**

<b>General Guidelines</b>	
<b>Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 page</li></ul>
<b>Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Same header as resume</li><li>• Same font and size as resume</li><li>• 3-4 paragraphs</li><li>• Handwritten signature</li></ul>
<b>When to Submit One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If job description requires = yes</li><li>• If job description says optional = recommended</li><li>• If job description doesn't say = recommended</li><li>• It's always better to submit one when in doubt.</li></ul>

<b>Heading &amp; Address</b>	
<b>Header</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Same as resume<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Name, email, phone number (required)</li><li>◦ LinkedIn URL, physical address (optional)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Address</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include date application/cover letter will be sent</li><li>• Address to a specific person<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Name</li><li>◦ Title</li><li>◦ Company</li><li>◦ Physical Address</li></ul></li><li>• If no specific person can be found, address to<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Hiring Committee/Manager</li><li>◦ Search Committee</li><li>◦ Admission Committee</li></ul></li></ul>

<b>Paragraph 1: Introduction</b>	
<b>Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3-5 sentences</li></ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specify position applying to, demonstrate interest and fit</li></ul>

<b>Required Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name the position applying for and how you found it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I'm writing today in reference to the Sales Agronomist Position I saw on your company website.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Mention your interest in the position and what you'll contribute/why you're an ideal candidate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am eager to contribute my two years of sales agronomy experience...</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Share knowledge of the company/industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>...to your team's mission of building trust and relationships with farmers in rural North Carolina counties.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Optional Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name drop/show personal connection to the company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Longtime Bayer board member Dr. Ronald McDonald recommended I apply for this position based on my interest in....</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Name degree title/graduation year/years of experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am eager to bring my enthusiasm to Bayer upon my graduation from NC State in December 2021.</i></li> <li><i>I bring one year of sales agronomy experience through an internship with....</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Tips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a unique opening line</li> <li>Keep it short &amp; sweet</li> </ul>

<b>Body Paragraph(s)</b>	
<b>Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two short (3-4 sentences) OR one longer (5-6 sentences) paragraph(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use one paragraph per experience or skill to deep dive into</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate skill match, motivation, and key selling points with examples from experience</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List key selling points that the company is looking for, backed up with specific examples from your experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I have honed my skills in agriculture sales through my internship with....</i></li> <li><i>Teamwork has been a critical part of my experience in....</i></li> <li><i>I also offer strong experience in data management from...</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>If not an exact experience match, focus on transferable skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am excited to translate my front end customer services experience from (____) to a sales role with your team.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Provide specific and unique experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>As a CALS Ambassador, I've presented to over 6,000 prospective students and families...</i></li> <li><i>I have worked with Dr. Amy Greene in extension research facilities doing....</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Tips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't restate what's on resume, be more specific with examples</li> <li>• SHOW don't TELL</li> </ul>
-------------	---

<b>Closing Paragraph</b>	
<b>Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-4 sentences</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks, demonstrate interest, push for contact</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Thank you for your consideration...</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Forward-looking statement/next step <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>I look forward to speaking with you soon...</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Restate contact information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Please contact me at (email &amp; phone)...</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Leave them with something memorable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>I am committed to helping NC State research labs "think and do" extraordinarily in 2022.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Show good attitude/motivation to learn and contribute to something specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>I hope to speak with Ms. Brown further about her work in...</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>