



ADM's Career Coaching

2545 Erin Centre Boulevard, Mississauga, ON L5M 6Z9

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Cover Letter Critiquing Checklist

Criteria 1: Formatting & Structure

- 1-page max (3-4 paragraphs)
- Clear, professional font (Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman - 10 to 12 pt)
- Justified-alignment text with margins matching Resume
- Saved as PDF (unless requested otherwise) – FirstName_LastName_CoverLetter.pdf
- Tailor to the job description
- Use keywords from the job description (important for ATS systems)
- DO NOT repeat your Resume

Criteria 2: Header & Contact Information

- Your full name and contact info (Email, phone, LinkedIn) – As used in Resume
- Date of submission
- Hiring Manager's name, job title, company name, and address
- Proper salutation (e.g., "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear [Name]")
 - NEVER Use "To Whom It May Concern"

Criteria 3: Opening Paragraph (Hook the Reader)

- State the position you are applying for and where you found the posting
- Show enthusiasm for the company and role
- Briefly mention 1-2 key skills or experiences that make you a strong fit
- Personalize by mentioning something about the company or team

Criteria 4: Middle Paragraphs (Highlight Your Value)

- Focus on 2-3 relevant experiences that match the job description
- Use action verbs and quantify achievements (numbers, results)
- Connect your skills to the company's goals, values, mission, and/or vision
- Address any Canadian work experience or transferable international experience
- For newcomers to Canada: Mention adaptability, learning new systems, or volunteering experience.



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Criteria 5: Closing Paragraph (Strong Finish)

- Reiterate your interest in the role and company
- Mention your excitement for an interview opportunity
- Indicate you are open to discussing how your skills can contribute to the team
- Professional closing (e.g., "Sincerely," "Best regards")

Criteria 6: Professional Language & Tone

- Avoid generic phrases ("I'm a hard worker" or "I work well in a team")
- Keep a positive, professional tone throughout
- Avoid passive language ("I believe I could...") – instead use, "I am confident in my ability to..."
- Focus on answering the questions why this role, why this organization, and why now?