CAREER SUCCESS CENTER

WESTCONN WORKS

WESTSIDE CAMPUS CENTER, 3RD FLOOR

OPTIMAL CAREER & TALENT SUITE
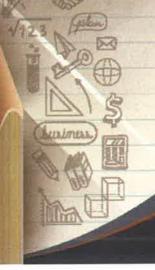## DOCUMENT CENTER GUIDE - LETTERS

DISCOVER CAREER OPTIONS

EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIPS

CREATE YOUR BRAND

ACTIVATE THE PLAN

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

The Optimal Résumé™ Career and Talent Suite has a variety of different career tools to help one prepare for, and succeed, at their job/career search. Whether it is a part-time job or internship, this Letter guide is a supplement to the Western Connecticut State University Career Success Center's comprehensive Resource Guide and website, www.wcsu.edu/careersuccess. In this guide you will find tools to help you understand:

- How to create and build any type of professional Letter
- Browse and choose from thousands of Letter templates
- Store and update as many Letters as you need
- Send Letters through the Review Center for quick feedback and guidance

Before you begin using this guide, you will need to create an account with Optimal Résumé™ by accessing wcsu.optimalresume.com.

To Create an Account:

1. Log into wcsu.optimalresume.com and click "*New User*" located at the top right corner of the page.
2. Insert your WCSU email address and hit "*Continue.*"
3. Complete the registration process and remember your user name and password for future access.

Once you have access to the platform, watch the 20 minute video tutorial to get a preview of how to use the Career & Talent Suite. Good luck and we look forward to working with you.

Connect with us on WESTCONN WORKS
www.wcsu.edu/westconnworks

By launching your WestConn Works account, you will have access to job, and internship postings, campus events and career resources that will help you find employment.

Office Hours:
Mon – Fri 8:30 to 4:30

Drop-In Hours:
Mon – Fri 9:00 to 4:00

OptimalLetter Help

Table of Contents

➤ Creating a New Letter

To begin a new Letter:

1. **Click the Create New Letter** button in your Document Center.

2. **Enter a name** for your Letter (names can include any combination of letters, numbers, and spaces) and click **Start Letter.**

3. **Select how you would like to build your Letter.**

➤ Three Ways to Build a Letter

There are three options you can use to build a Letter.

Note: Depending upon your institution's settings you may or may not see all three options. Some institutions may have disabled certain options.
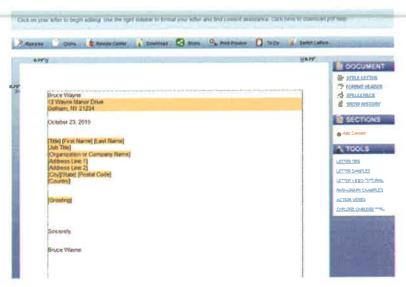
I.   Start from Scratch

This method will essentially load a blank page (with the exception of the header information being pulled from your profile and automatically pre-loaded) and the user will have to insert section titles and content.

To Start from Scratch:

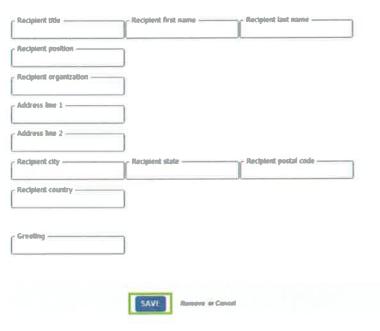1.   Click the **Continue** Button on the **Start from Scratch** box.

2.   Your document will open in a default style. Since the program is not copying a sample, it will need to know what font to use, how to format the header, margins, spacing, etc. Your institution will have designated a *default* style. You will be free to change these settings and we will discuss this in the **Styling Your Letter** section on page 12.

3. Click the **Recipient/Salutation** section to open it for editing. It is not necessary to enter information into every field. The program will adjust spacing accordingly. Click **Save** to exit the editor.

Recipient title _____   Recipient first name _____   Recipient last name _____

Recipient position _____

Recipient organization _____

Address line 1 _____

Address line 2 _____

Recipient city _____   Recipient state _____   Recipient postal code _____

Recipient country _____

Greeting _____

[SAVE] Remove or Cancel

4. Click the **Add Content** button located in the SECTIONS box on the right side of the screen.

5. Enter your content and format the text using the ribbon and click **Save** when finished.

Enter content here

[SAVE] or Cancel

6. Click the closing and edit, if desired, and click **Save** when finished.

Closing _____
Sincerely,

Signature _____
Bruce Wayne

Enclosures 0

[SAVE] or Cancel

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II. Browse Letter Types

This method shows descriptions of different letter types and allows you to view a database of sample paragraphs appropriate to the letter type selected.
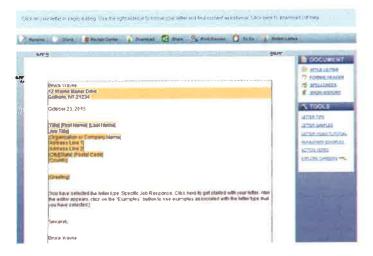
To Browse Letter Types:

1. Click the **Continue** Button on the **Browse Section Sets** box.

2. Select a **Letter Type** to see its description. Once you have decided which letter type is best for you, click the **Select** button.

3. Your document will open in a default style with the aforementioned sections pre-loaded for you. Since the program is not copying a sample, it will need to know what font to use, how to format the header, margins, spacing, etc. Your institution will have designated a *default* style.
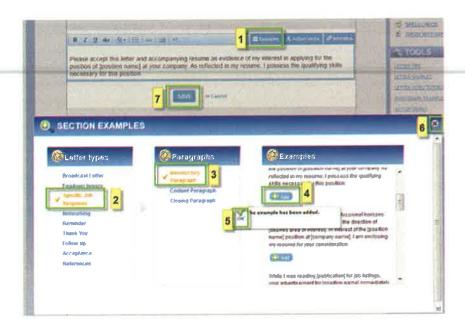
4. Click the **Recipient/Salutation** section to open it for editing. It is not necessary to enter information into every field. The program will adjust spacing accordingly. Click **Save** to exit the editor.

Recipient title ——

Recipient first name ——

Recipient last name ——

Recipient position ——

Recipient organization ——

Address line 1 ——

Address line 2 ——

Recipient city ——

Recipient state ——

Recipient postal code ——

Recipient country ——

Greeting ——

SAVE   Remove or Cancel

5. Click the Body section to open it for editing. Remove the instructions after reading them. You will see an **Examples** button on the editor ribbon. Click this to see appropriate example introductory, body and closing paragraphs for each letter type. When you find one you like, click the **Add** button and close out of the Examples window.

6. Repeat this process for the Body and Closing paragrpahs and then click **Save** to exit the editor.
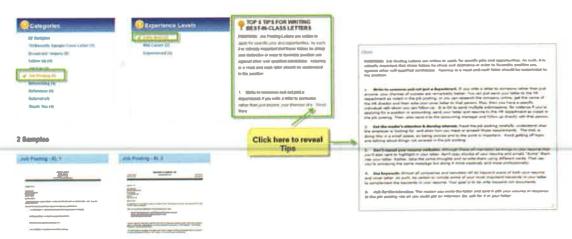
III. Browse Samples

This method starts with a complete document, with appropriate but fictitious content, from which you work backwards, editing and replacing content, to reflect what you want to say.

To Browse Samples:

1. Click the **Continue** Button on the **Browse Samples** box.

2. Select an appropriate **Category** and **Experience Level**. This displays a variety of samples within that Experience Level.

3. Note also the **Top 5 Tips For Writing Best-In-Class Letters** section on the right side of the page. As the name suggests, this contains valuable tips for improving your letter.
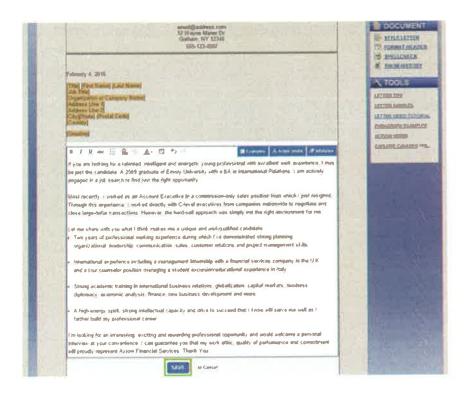

4. Click on a sample to magnify the view and examine the sample. If you like it, click the **Use This Sample** button (otherwise click the X to close the view and select another to examine).

5. After selecting a sample, click each section to open the inline editing feature and enter your content, formatting the text using the formatting toolbar if desired and then click **Save** to exit the editor.

➤ Working with Sections

I. The Letter Header

The **Header** is the top section part of your Letter that contains your contact information. If you already filled out your contact information when you registered for an OptimalResume account, the header will automatically contain that data.

You can modify or edit your header information by clicking on the desired field (phone number, address, name, etc). Once you're finished editing, click **Save** to save your work. When editing a field in the header, you also have the option to remove the field by clicking the **Remove** button.

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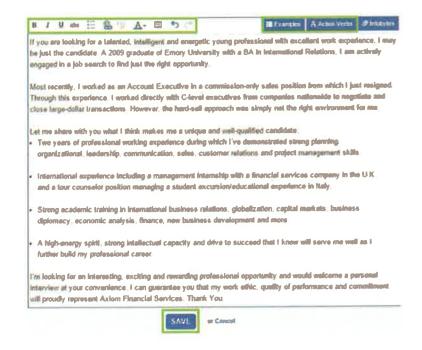
For additional options, click **Format Header** in the right-hand toolbar. For more details on the **Format Header** tool see page 14.

II. The Body

Once you have clicked the **Body** of the letter and opened the editor you can add content by dropping in and modifying examples from the **Examples** button, or simply typing in your own content. Text can be formatted using the editor ribbon.

Once you are finished adding content, click the **Save** button.

III. The Closing Section

Click the **Closing** to edit or enter your Closing, Signature and Enclosures (if applicable) and click **Save** when finished.

IV. Editing Tools

When entering content, you will notice a toolbar above the editing field. This bar contains helpful features to format and guide your writing.

B *I* U abc ☰ ☷ A· ☐ ↺ ↻   ☰ Examples   A Action Verbs   ✍ Infobytes

Among the features are:

- **Bold** – bolds highlighted text.
- **Italic** – italicizes highlighted text Underline – underlines highlighted text.
- **Underscore** – underlines highlighted text.
- **Strike Through** – allows one to strike through highlighted text. This is more of an editing tool one might use to provide feedback.
- **Text Color** – allows you to change text to a color selected from the palette.
- **Bullets** – adds a bulleted list.
- **Hyperlink** – inserts, changes, or removes a hyperlink to another website.
- **Table** – adds a table into the text editor. Click on the Table tool to select the number of rows and columns for a new table. Right-click on an existing table to modify rows, columns, and alignment settings. Click and drag columns in the text editor to resize them.
- **Undo/Redo** – removes/redoes any formatting applied to selected text.
- **Examples** – opens the Examples menu, where you can browse sample content for a specific section. Available sections are listed in the left box. Click on a section type to see examples for that section. If available, you can also click the Add button next to an example to insert that example into your editor.
- **Action Verbs** - 400+ verbs to help you describe your work experience.
- **Infobyte** – opens the Infobyte menu, where you can insert an Infobyte next to selected section. Infobytes appear only in your online resume. They are small icons that can be moused over to reveal additional information about your resume. These are a great way to elaborate on the sections of your resume without adding extra pages. There is also an Examples section specifically for Infobytes if you are unsure of what to write.

➤ Styling Your Letter - The Styling Palette

To style/restyle your Letter, click the **Style Letter** button in the **DOCUMENT** section of the right-hand toolbar. This will open the **Styling Palette**. The Styling Palette is composed of a series of tabs, most of which contain a drop down menu with various options.

Pre-Styles

Click on the **Pre-Styles** tab to apply a pre-made Letter style. Once you decide upon the style you wish to use click **Apply**.

Layout

Click on the **Layout** tab and use the drop down menu to set margins, and format your header.

Font

Click on the **Font** tab and use the drop downs to format your header, document, section title, employer and job fonts.

Bullets

Click on the **Bullet** tab to format your bullet style and indent level.

Lines

Click on the **Lines** tab and use the drop downs to add/remove line of various styles within your header.

Spacing

Click on the **Spacing** tab and use the drop downs to add/remove spacing within the various sections of the letter.

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Styling Your Letter – Format Header

The **Format Header** button will open the **Header Layout** option in the **Styling Palette** where you can change the appearance of your header and contact information.

There are four header layout options.

To Format/Reformat your Header:

- Choose a header layout.
- Drag and drop individual information fields. into your chosen header layout.
- Click **Apply** when you've finished arranging your information.

Notes:

- You can display your address on a single line (horizonatal) or on 2 lines (vertical).
- You can add address and phone labels.
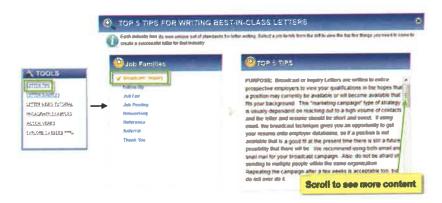- You can include a secondary page header.

➤ Letter Tips

Select a job family (occupations grouped together based on type of work and skills required) and view professionally written top 5 tips for writing a successful Letter for that job family. Take note of the keywords/tags.

➤ Letter Samples

View professionally written **Letter Samples**, categorized by letter type and subdivded by experience level.
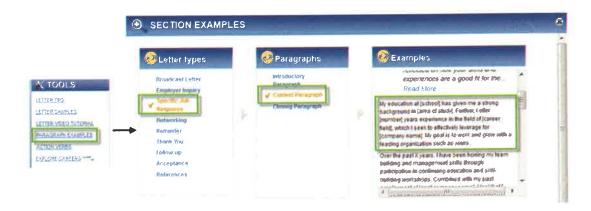
Note that your institituion may have displayed their own samples, or may have chosen not to display some or all of OptimalLetter's default samples.

Paragraph Examples

Having trouble knowing how best to include certain information? View the instructions to learn the purpose of a section as well as tips on how best to incorporate your information into that section.

Action Verbs

A list of 400+ action verbs to help you describe your work experience.

Explore Careers

Opens a link to the O*NET, an online database that contains hundreds of occupational definitions to help students, job seekers, businesses and workforce development professionals to understand today's world of work in the United States.
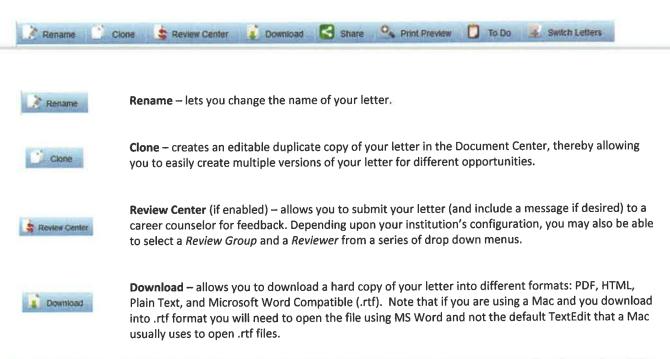
Use this to research occupation-specific information like relevant tasks, skills and abilities, knowledge areas and more, to help target your resume for that occupation.

Document Toolbar

The document toolbar allows you to manage your documents. Note that depending upon how your institution has configured their site, you may or may not see all of the buttons below.

Rename – lets you change the name of your letter.

Clone – creates an editable duplicate copy of your letter in the Document Center, thereby allowing you to easily create multiple versions of your letter for different opportunities.

Review Center (if enabled) – allows you to submit your letter (and include a message if desired) to a career counselor for feedback. Depending upon your institution's configuration, you may also be able to select a *Review Group* and a *Reviewer* from a series of drop down menus.

Download – allows you to download a hard copy of your letter into different formats: PDF, HTML, Plain Text, and Microsoft Word Compatible (.rtf). Note that if you are using a Mac and you download into .rtf format you will need to open the file using MS Word and not the default TextEdit that a Mac usually uses to open .rtf files.

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Share – allows you to generate a link that can be copy and pasted into emails, posted on message boards, or shared on a variety of social networking sites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. When clicked a downloadable web version of your resume will be displayed.

Print Preview – generates a PDF version of your resume allowing you to see how your resume will appear in downloadable versions. More importantly, Print Preview allows you to see whether your resume will require a second page, and if so, where it will break.

To Do– allows you create a to-do list. Use this to record a reminder of things you need to do, such as "proofread before sending to the Review Center", or "add a section called Other Work Experience".

Switch Letters – Clicking this button shows all of the letters you have created so far in the Document Center and allows you to switch the letter currently in the editing mode.

Post-production Tools

➤ Editing your Letter

To edit a letter at a later time, click the letter's name in the Document Center. This will bring you back to the editing page where you can save new changes to your document.
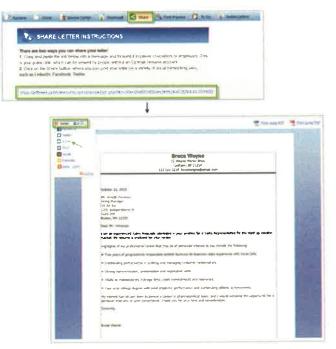
LETTERS

Create New Letter

Manage Your Letters

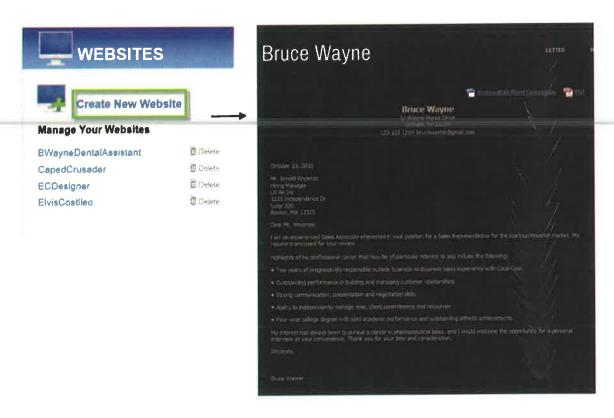FOllowUp

hire manager

➤ Sharing your Letter

There are two ways to share your letter quickly and easily:

The Share Button - Copy and paste the generated link into a message and forward it to career counselors or employers. This is a public link, which can be viewed by people without an OptimalResume account. Or, click on the **Share** button, where you can post your letter on a variety of social networking sites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter.

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Create an OptimalWebsite - We recommend that you create an OptimalWebsite that contains your letter and credentials in order to easily share your letter online with employers. If you haven't already, create a website in the Website Builder and select your desired letter from the list of available letters. For more information, refer to the OptimalWebsite help guide.

Questions?

> ### Technical Support

Support is available during standard business hours, Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm EST, toll free at 877-998-7654 or by email at support@optimalresume.com.