

How To Write A Cover Letter

A cover letter is a letter of introduction that you send along with your resume to employers. This letter highlights your skills, experiences and specific interest in working at that organization. The cover letter is not a copy of your resume but rather is used to target your fit to the specific organization and job to which you are applying. Each cover letter is unique to each job.

An excellent cover letter:

Begins with **RESEARCH**. Learn about the organization to find out what interests you and why you want to work there (aside from the fact that they have a job vacancy!). Look at their website, conduct online research, talk to faculty, staff, friends, family who either have worked there or may know people who work there to find out key information such as: the organization's mission, values and goals, if the organization has been in the news (favorably or unfavorably), their products, services, customers, locations and affiliations.

Use this research to help yourself determine in what ways you would be a good fit with this organization. Help the employer understand why you want to work there and should bring you in for an interview.

BRIDGES THE GAP between what the employer needs and what skills you have to offer.

Is **SPECIFIC**. Each cover letter is unique. Address the letter to a specific person at a specific organization. Indicate how you found out about that particular position (ad, website, person who referred you) and to which specific position you are applying. Remember that the Human Resource Director and/or Manager of the Department may receive hundreds of resumes. Help them understand quickly how to categorize your application documents.

Is **ERROR-FREE**. Do not rely solely on "spell-check" to make sure your documents are free of errors. Proofread. Have friends, family, Career Center staff look over your cover letters and resumes. Proofread again. Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. Details matter.

Is **BRIEF**. Employers will glance at your documents to see if you meet the basic requirements of the job. The cover letter needs to be 3-4 paragraphs at the most and certainly never more than one page in length.

1st Paragraph: names the position and how you found out about it

2nd/3rd Paragraph: Highlights your skills in relation to what is sought for that position. It also indicates why you are interested in that organization/facility. If you have experience there via your clinicals or internships, mention what you enjoyed about your experience.

Closing Paragraph: Asks for an interview. Thank them for considering your application.

How To Write A Cover Letter

Your Street Address
City, State, ZIP CODE

Date of Letter

Employer's First Name Last Name, Title
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State, ZIP CODE

Dear Ms./Mr./ Dr. Employer's Last Name:

Opening Paragraph: State why you are writing. Indicate the name (and reference number, if applicable) of the position and how you heard about the opening (ad, website, person) or organization. If you are making a general inquiry about a job without knowledge about a specific vacancy, state that you are inquiring if there are positions available in the field you are interested.

Middle Paragraph(s): Explain why you are interested in working for this employer (this is where the research that you've done comes in handy). Specify your skills, education and/or experience in relation to the advertised position. If you have clinical or internship experience at this organization, mention what you enjoyed about that experience. Do not reiterate your entire resume but choose what to highlight that will intrigue the employer to read through your resume and invite you in for an interview. Remember that the employer views this letter as a reflection of your writing and communication skills. Demonstrating interest in the organization/position, confidence in your abilities and professionalism are key!

Closing Paragraph: You may want to refer to your enclosed resume and ask for an interview. If you are relocating, this is a good place to mention when you will be in their area to set up a time to meet. This paragraph should be a call to action. Indicate that you will follow up with them or encourage them to contact you for an interview. Be sure to give them an accurate phone number and/or email address so they may reach you without delay. Thank them for considering your application.

Sincerely,

Your signature
Your name