

Cover Letter Writing

Getting Started

PURPOSE

Cover letters are used to introduce yourself to an employer and express your interest in both the position you are applying for and in the company. This is the first impression an employer will have on what kind of worker you are: while a resume focuses on facts, figures, and dates, cover letters can be more personal in describing your skills, abilities, and experiences.

FORMATTING

Font: Use consistent fonts, formatting, and size on ALL documents (resume, cover letter, reference page).

Margins: 1/2" — 1"

Contact Information/Heading: Keep your heading consistent across all professional documents (resume, cover letter, reference page). This helps keep all the documents together and shows attention to detail.

Layout: The letter should include an introductory paragraph, one to two body paragraphs, and a closing paragraph. Limit your letter to 1 page, single-spaced.

SALUTATION

Do NOT use “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Sir/Ma’am”. This is vague and communicates a lack of interest.

- If the job posting does not have a specific name or title listed, addressing your letter to the “Hiring Committee” or “Human Resource Personnel” is more appropriate.

TIPS ON GETTING STARTED

- Review the job posting and company website to gain more information on the company and the type of work you would be doing.
- Be specific and use examples. Show an employer your skills and special qualities through examples and purposeful language.
- Tailor your application materials to the organization/industry/company you are applying to.
- Create a cover letter for each job you apply to. Base the cover letter of each individual job listing and tailor your use of experiences and examples to that specific job.
 - Think of an organization’s needs and link your skills, experiences, and qualifications to those needs.
 - Experiences can be academic (class projects), work-related (paid or volunteer), or work-integrated learning experiences (clinical placement, practicums, internships).

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