



Career Services

COVER LETTERS

The purpose of a cover letter is to target your skills and goals to the position and organization. Cover letters allow you to:

- Make a good first impression and entice the reader to look at your resume
- Tell the employer which job you're interested in and why you're a good fit
- Show your excitement for the job you're applying for

Standard Business Format:

- Everything is left-aligned
- List your contact information, date, and their contact information at the top of the page
- Instead of indentations between paragraphs, use a blank line
- Leave 4 blank lines between your ending salutation and your typed name

Structure of the Cover Letter

The cover letter is no more than one page containing four paragraphs:

1. "Why are you writing to me?" Tells the employer where and when you heard about the opening
2. "What's special about you?" Indicate how your skills meet their needs.
3. "Why do you want to work here?" Describe your interest in the company. How do your values align, cite the vision/mission statements to show you know about the culture and goals.
4. "What's next?" Close the letter and indicate how you, as the job seeker, will follow up.

Salutation Tips

Find the name of the person who is making the hiring decision and address the cover letter to him/her.

When you do not have a specific name to which you can address your cover letter, try one of these options:

- Dear Search Committee
- Dear Hiring Manager
- Re: Position Title Applying for

Additional Tips

- Always *spell check* your letters!
- Include your return address, telephone number and e-mail address
- Date your letters
- Include the name, title and address of the recipient
- Always tailor your cover letter to the specific job you are applying for
- Visit Career Services for a critique before you send your application