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## Writing your nursing cover letter

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When applying to a job, externship, or internship, you may also submit a cover letter (even if it's not required!) because it's another opportunity for you to connect your strengths with the employer's needs. Sometimes it's also called an application letter. Whatever the name, the purpose of the letter is to introduce yourself and to directly connect the experiences on your resume with the experience/position/job you want to gain.

**Before you write a cover letter, it may be helpful to think about a couple things:**

- Why am I a good fit for this position?
- What key experiences/strengths make me a strong candidate?
- What aspects of the job description match up with my interests and skills?

All cover letters have a similar format: a heading, intro paragraph, 2-3 strength paragraphs, conclusion, and signature line. It shouldn't be more than a page and many cover letters may only be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a page.

Just like your resume, you will benefit from someone else looking at your cover letter. You can make an appointment with the CON Career Advisor to review your cover letter or talk more about what the cover letter is.

**See the next page** to view a sample format of a cover letter.

## SAMPLE DESCRIPTION OF THE PIECES OF A COVER LETTER

Your Address

City, State, Zip Code (You may want to add extra polish by copying and pasting your heading from your resume onto your cover letter so every document you submit looks consistent.)

Date

Name of Person (try to avoid To Whom It May Concern at all costs!)

Title

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The introductory paragraph is your chance to introduce yourself and explain your interest in the position. You may also mention how you heard about the position and briefly outline your strengths that fit with what the position requires.

The strength paragraphs serve to highlight your specific qualities or skills or experiences that match up with the position. It may help to think about the strength paragraphs in terms of categories or competencies. If you gather from the job description that the employer wants someone who is organized, has relevant clinical experience, and good teamwork skills, why not make these the focus of your paragraphs? Connect the strength back to why it matters and/or how it's applicable to the position.

Your second strength paragraph would highlight yet another competency.

Your third strength paragraph would discuss (you guessed it!) a third competency. Depending on the situation, you may only have 2 strength paragraphs.

The conclusion is a short recap of your interest in the position, your strengths, and some general good sentiments (e.g. I look forward to discussing the position and my qualifications with you soon).

Sincerely,

You (Leave enough room before your typed name so you can physically sign in that extra space, unless you are submitting it online or via email.)

Extra strength paragraph tips:

- Keep it simple. Don't try to squeeze everything into the cover letter. Remember, this document supplements your resume. You want to use the cover letter to re-highlight the most important things and explain them in more detail than your resume.
- Connect each theme with the job. It's not enough to just say 'I have good teamwork skills' – you'll want to say 'I have good teamwork skills and that's important for this job because...' or 'that will benefit me in the role because...' Always try to connect what you're highlighting back to why it matters to the employer.