

How to Write a COVER LETTER

What *IS* a cover letter, anyway?

Cover letters are used to introduce yourself and to briefly explain your qualifications to a prospective employer. A cover letter should always accompany your resume or CV when applying for a position. The cover letter should highlight the information included on your resume or CV but not duplicate information word for word.

Cover letter template

Your Present Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date of Letter

Individual's Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. :

First Paragraph: In your initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening. (Prior contact with employer or employees of the organization you are applying to, newspaper advertisement, the Internet, etc.)

Second/Third Paragraphs: Mention why you are interested in the position and the organization. Above all, indicate what you can do for the employer. Explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. Mention ideas for future research, if applicable. If you have related experience, point this out by mentioning specific achievements or unique qualifications gained through this experience. Do not repeat information word for word as it appears in your resume/CV.

Fourth Paragraph: In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for an interview. Repeat your phone number and email in the letter and offer to provide additional information, if necessary. Finally, thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

(Your Name Typed)

Enclosures (denotes resume, CV, writing samples, etc. that are enclosed)

Final tips

- If possible, address the letter to the appropriate individual by **name** and **professional title**. If you are unable to find this information, use a formal title (Director of Personnel, Chair, Search Committee, etc.)
- **Avoid** beginning every sentence or paragraph with the word "I."
- **Open your cover letter with a strong statement.** Express enthusiasm about the position you are applying for.
- Tell **why you are interested in the employer**. Indicate what **you** can do for the employer rather than what the employer can do for you.
- Always **proofread** to correct **spelling and punctuation errors**. Both the cover letter and resume or CV must be free of mistakes. Schedule an appointment with a career counselor at the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) to critique your cover letter when you have completed your draft.