

COVER LETTER BASICS

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself to a prospective employer and explain why you are sending a resume. A cover letter should be tailored to fit a specific job with a specific employer and should describe the skills and abilities you can bring to that particular job.

Within the body of a cover letter, several components should be mentioned, including why you are writing, contributions you believe you can make to the organization based on your qualifications and enthusiasm for the position, and your interest in obtaining an interview. Because it is often an initial contact between you and a potential employer, it is important that your cover letter makes a strong first impression.

DO:

- ❖ Be 100% honest about your qualifications and work history.
- ❖ Personalize each cover letter to the specific company and position you are applying for.
- ❖ Be brief, organized, and to the point.
- ❖ Keep it to one-page and a maximum of four paragraphs.
- ❖ Be consistent: use the same font for the cover letter as you do your resume.
- ❖ Refer to 3-5 specific accomplishments or skills you have and that the employer is looking for.
- ❖ Research the company and position for a more effective letter.
- ❖ Proofread, proofread, proofread!
- ❖ Visit the SCC Career Services office to get assistance.

DON'T:

- ❖ Send a generic letter to multiple companies.
- ❖ Claim to be the “ideal candidate.”

When Should You Include a Cover Letter?

Always—unless an employer has specifically asked you not to send one. Generally, providing a cover letter in addition to your resume puts you a step above applications without cover letters. It shows you put in the extra effort to obtain an interview and have a vested interest in the position.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

First and Last Name

Phone # | email

Date:

Employer Name (Contact Person)

Business Title

Company's Name

Street Address

City/State/Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Mx.* / _____ (or) Dear Hiring Manager (if no name provided):

1st Paragraph: State the position you are applying for and the title of company/organization. State how you heard about the position (contact person/referral, employee website, job posting).

2nd Paragraph: This is your time to shine. Describe why you are qualified to work for the company (education and/or experience). Provide specific examples about how you have gained skills and experience that may relate to the position. Do not underplay your experiences; many skills are transferable.

3rd Paragraph (optional): After researching and obtaining information about the employer, use what you've learned to provide clear examples for why you are excited to work for them. This shows you've gone the extra mile to learn about the organization, and that you can show how your values, interests, etc., align with the employer's.

4th Paragraph: Conclude your letter by thanking the employer for taking the time to review your application. Let them know that they can contact you if they have any further questions and indicate how you can be reached (include your email and phone number). State that you look forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,
Your name

* "Mx." is a gender-neutral honorific. Unlike "Mr." or "Miss," "Mx." *may* be preferred by individuals who identify as non-binary. Research the company's hiring manager, or staff members most likely to be involved in the hiring process, to assess the most appropriate honorific.