

COVER LETTER GUIDE

COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES

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A cover letter is a business letter that you use to introduce yourself to a prospective employer and to bring attention to your attached resume. A well-written cover letter highlights your experiences that meet the employer's needs. The letter should link your experience and skills to the qualifications of the position.

COVER LETTER FAQs:

Does anyone actually read cover letters anymore?

Maybe, maybe not. But it is still standard protocol to include them with a resume so it's a good idea to write one.

Do I really have to write a cover letter?

Yes, probably. If the posting requests it, you definitely have to write one. If you're uploading your resume to a corporate application system, it's a good idea to also upload a cover letter. If you are applying to a position via email, you can write the cover letter in the body of the email and attach your resume.

How long should the cover letter be?

Generally, a cover letter is three paragraphs: the first paragraph states why you're writing; the second paragraph addresses your skills and why you're a good candidate; the third paragraph thanks the employer for their consideration and mentions follow up, if appropriate.

COVER LETTER TIPS:

- Address your letter to an individual, if possible. Make sure the individual's name is spelled correctly. If a name does not appear in the posting, address the letter with 'Dear Sir or Madam:' or 'Dear Hiring Manager:'
- Tailor your cover letter to address the needs of the specific job and audience you are applying for and to. One basic letter can be modified to a variety of positions.
- The cover letter should be one page in length.
- Proofread your cover letter, and have your cover letter proofread by others. Incorrect spelling in any part of your cover letter or your resume conveys sloppiness and indifference to prospective employers.
- Keep a copy of all correspondence and make notes of actions taken.
- If appropriate, follow-up 1 - 2 weeks after you send out a cover letter and resume to an employer. Determine your follow-up method based on the posting. If you do not have contact info for an individual to follow up with, you may consider sending an email to the address where your application was submitted. If you applied to a position via an application software system, it is likely that you will be unable to follow up. Generally, follow ups via phone call are not appropriate.

Cover Letter Layout & Content:

Dear Mr./ Ms. _____:

Dear Sir or Madam:

Dear Hiring Manager:

Attn: HR Department (or whatever department that the letter is directed to in the posting)

First paragraph: The first paragraph explains the reason you are writing the letter.

State your intention clearly. Include the position title you are applying for and how you learned about the opening. If a networking contact referred you to the organization, mention the person's name and explain your connection.

Second paragraph: The second paragraph is where you adapt your cover letter to the specific job and company/organization. This is where you show them you've done your homework. Research the organization. Review their website. This will help you to emphasize relevant achievements, skills, and / or experiences. Convey to the prospective employer how you are a solid candidate for the position by understanding their business and explaining how you will be an asset.

Third paragraph: Thank the company representative for considering your candidacy. If appropriate, mention that you are available for an interview or to talk further. Conclude with a sentence about how you look forward to hearing from the company representative in the future.

Closing (Sincerely, etc.),

YOUR NAME