

Cover Letters

Your cover letter introduces your resume or CV, and highlights aspects of your experience and skills that are most relevant to the position you are seeking.

WRITING GREAT COVER LETTERS

A cover letter should accompany each resume or curriculum vitae you distribute. It should be concise and to the point, certainly no longer than one page.

Your cover letter will be much more effective if written for a particular employer and position. Research each employer and position. This allows you to personalize the letter and draw direct connections between your qualifications and the job requirements.

Your letter should answer four questions for the reader:

Why are you writing?

Why are you interested in the organization and/or job?

Why would the employer be interested in you?

What is your next step?

Don't forget to:

Address your letter to a person, not a title. Check employer information or directories for contact names or call the organization directly to ask for the name (and correct spelling) and title of the appropriate person.

Demonstrate your focused job interest, emphasize what you offer the employer, and supplement and support your resume.

Give concrete examples of your abilities and skills.

Use your own words. Your letter should highlight your individual strengths and communication skills. View available sample letters as examples of how letters might be written, not how they should be written.

Use direct, positive language. Avoid flowery or overly formal wording. Use active, not passive, statements.

Follow proper business format. Center your letter on the page. Use the same paper and font style as on your resume.

Use envelopes that match your resume/cover letter paper. Your resume and cover letter may be folded for mailing.

PARTS OF A COVER LETTER

Introduction

Introduce who you are and why you are writing to the employer. Answer the reader's question, "Why am I reading this letter?" Name the position or field you are interested in, how you learned of the opening or organization, and, if appropriate, who referred you. In a sentence or two, at most, explain what skills make you the best candidate for the position.

Body

In one or two concise paragraphs, match your background to the needs and interests of the employer. Summarize your qualifications and give specific examples, without repeating your resume. Focus on your transferable skills, strengths, accomplishments, and results. Your research on the organization will be important here, because it will help you specifically link your qualifications with each employer.

Closing

In this brief paragraph, make a summary statement and refer the reader to your enclosed resume, then state what the next step is. End actively, with an offer to contact the employer within a specific period of time, usually one to two weeks. Confirm how they may reach you, via phone or email. Thank the reader for their time/consideration and remember to sign your letter.

Source

<https://graduate.dartmouth.edu/student-support/career-services/correspondence/cover-letters>