

# Cover Letters

When writing your cover letter, there are a few key things you want to do, which are described below. You can also use the **cover letter checklist** which includes a sample cover letter.

## Overall Format

- The letter should be concise, and written in an active voice, not a passive voice
- Avoid overly long paragraphs and academic asides
- Should be single-spaced, and paragraphs should not be indented; double-space between paragraphs
- At the top of the page, be sure to include your personal address block, followed by the employer's address block
  - A personal address block includes your name and address; the employer's address block includes their name, organization, and address
- Do your best to address the letter to the person hiring, or at least name the position title
  - Avoid using "To Whom It May Concern"
- Use a colon, not a comma, after the greeting
- Make sure your letter is free of spelling, grammar, syntax and formatting errors
- The letter should use the same font as, and generally match, your resume
- Save as a .pdf with your name included in the file name

## Opening Paragraph

- Write a strong opening paragraph, communicating your target job, how you learned about the position, and key strengths within the first few lines of text
  - Think of this as a thesis statement setting up the flow for the rest of the letter

- If you learned of the position by a connection to the employer, be sure to include the name

## Body of the Letter (One to Two Paragraphs)

- Demonstrate interest in the employer
  - Find information in their mission statement, on their LinkedIn page, in the job description, or through informational interviews with connections who work, or have worked, for the organization
  - Demonstrate that you have researched the organization and know why you are excited about working there
- Use industry-specific language
- Include examples of your accomplishments and successes so employers can see you have a history of diligence, etc.
- Limit the number of sentences that start with 'I'
- Do not use worn-out phrases like 'proven track record'
- Explain *why* you are a good fit for *this specific job*
  - This should NOT be a reiteration of the information on your resume
  - Show *how* your experience, education, and temperament meet the qualities specified in the job/internship description; map your skills to the position description
- Express how you would benefit the employer if you were hired
- Express clearly WHY you *want* this specific job with this specific organization
- Include all information that was *requested*, such as job reference number, employment availability date and salary requirements (put in a wide salary range which includes the minimum you'll accept)

## Closing Paragraph

- Include an easy way for employers to contact you, such as a direct phone line and email address

- Clearly request an interview/discussion/conversation

\*Don't forget to sign paper versions that you can actually mail! You can also scan your signature into electronic documents.