

RESUME COVER LETTERS

Purpose of a Cover Letter

- Never send a resume without a cover letter!
- Used when responding to specific, advertised openings or expressing interest in organization
- Explains why you are sending the resume
- Calls attention to important attributes of your background
- Shows your personality, attitude, enthusiasm and communication skills

Do's and Don'ts of Cover letters

- Don't repeat information found in resume
- Do sum up important qualities, areas of expertise, and motivation about field or position of interest
- Do include information about availability
- Do explain shortcomings or gaps in work experience in history
- Do try to keep the cover letter to one page; however, two pages are acceptable especially when reflective of extensive work experience.

General Structure of the Cover Letter

Generally accepted standard is a three-paragraph structure, though a cover letter should adapt to you needs.

1. Opening paragraph: State why you are writing, how you learned of the organization or position, and basic information about yourself.
2. Main Body paragraph: Tell why you are interested in the employer or type of work. Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position and relate your background to the employer or position. Mention specific qualifications that make you a good fit for the employer's needs. Explain in detail relevant items on your resume. Refer to the fact that your resume is enclosed. Mention other enclosures when applicable.
3. Closing paragraph: Indicate that you would like an opportunity to interview for a position or to talk with an employer to learn more about career opportunities. State how you will follow-up on the letter, such as calling the company/employer. Offer to provide employer with additional information such as certificates, references, etc.
4. Thank the employer for his or her consideration of your letter/attached resume (could be a brief 4th paragraph).

Formatting Concerns

- Be sure you use standard, acceptable margins for page layout (MS Word default)
- Use business letter style (first sentences are not indented)
- Block style is acceptable, with text flush with left margin
- Always use a black font color for your cover letter and resume