



# Cover Letters

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### All cover letters should:

#### **Explain why you are sending a resume.**

Don't send a resume without a cover letter. Don't make the reader guess what you are asking for; be specific: Do you want a summer internship opportunity, or a permanent position at graduation; are you inquiring about future employment possibilities?

#### **Tell specifically how you learned about the position or the organization**

A flyer posted in your department, a web site, a family friend who works at the organization. It is appropriate to mention the name of someone who suggested that you write.

**Call attention to elements of your background** — education, leadership, experience — that are relevant to a position you are seeking. Be as specific as possible, using examples.

**Reflect your attitude**, personality, motivation, enthusiasm, and communication skills.

**Provide or refer to any information specifically requested** in a job advertisement that might not be covered in your resume, such as availability date, or reference to an attached writing sample.

#### **Indicate what you will do to follow-up.**

**In a letter of application** — applying for an advertised opening — applicants often say something like "I look forward to hearing from you." However, if you have further contact info (e.g. phone number) and if the employer hasn't said "no phone calls," it's better to take the initiative to follow-up, saying something like, "I will contact you in the next two weeks to see if you require any additional information regarding my qualifications."

**In a letter of inquiry** — asking about the possibility of an opening — don't assume the employer will contact you. You should say something like, "I will contact you in two weeks to learn more about upcoming employment opportunities with (name of organization)." Then mark your calendar.

### **Overall**

- Concise; limited to one page.
- Does not overuse first person "I" to begin sentences and paragraphs.
- Avoids using qualifiers (i.e. I feel, I think, in my opinion, etc.).
- Sentence and paragraph structure is well thought out and is easy to read.
- The reader will immediately understand the purpose of the letter.
- Doesn't restate exactly what is in your résumé.
- Customized to a specific position—shows how your qualifications match their requirements.
- Letter is employer focused throughout using the job description to focus on employer needs.
- Reflects research and knowledge of the company.
- Printed on the same paper as your résumé.
- Letter is signed.
- Converted to pdf. document if sending electronically to eliminate compatibility errors.