The information in this short guide is focused on tips that you should consider when writing and sending your cover letter.

A cover letter is a unique and personalized way to introduce yourself and explain why you are sending a resume to a potential employer for a job opening. Your cover letter should explain to the employer why you are interested in their company or available position and why you are the best candidate.

Here’s what you need to know...

- The cover letter should be easy to read, look crisp, and have a format and style that is consistent with your resume.

- Before you begin writing a cover letter, it is important to research both the position and organization to which you are applying. Use the company’s website and LinkedIn to supplement the information outlined in the job description. From here, spend some time determining how your prior experience has provided you with the necessary qualifications that the employer is seeking and work to emphasize those qualities in your cover letter.

- Always customize your cover letter for each position that you apply to, based on the particular job posting.

- If submitting cover letter documents online/email, upload the document as a PDF and send it accordingly.

- Sometimes the cover letter may be listed as optional, if that is the case, it is highly recommended to include it with
Many companies use **Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)**, which scan cover letters for keywords and themes that match the job description. These words identify skills that the company is looking for to fill specific job postings. However, due to the use of this software, there are specific ways a cover letter should be formatted so that it will scan properly into the company’s system.

- Do not use a template, invisible text boxes, special graphics, color, or shading. Always use a **blank Microsoft Word document** to create a text-only version of your cover letter for online submissions your application as it could serve in your favor if hiring managers are deciding between two candidates.
- Use standard, non-decorative fonts between **10.5-12 pt.** in black ink.
- Margins should be equally set between **.6-1 inch** on all sides.
- Cover letters should not exceed **1 page** and should not be folded.
- Always **proofread** your cover letter before you send it!

**Formatting the Cover Letter**

The letter should contain the following information, in this order.

- Heading with your contact information (should match the heading on your resume)
- The date that you send the letter
- Greeting
- Employer’s contact information
- Introduction paragraph - This paragraph should tell the employer the exact position that you are applying to, include your referral if applicable, and highlight a few of your key qualifications that match the job description.
• Supporting, or “selling” paragraph(s) - The central paragraph of the cover letter is unique for each person, but the premise is the same for everyone: sell yourself! In this paragraph, you want to describe how you fulfill the job’s requirements by expanding on the skills and experiences you have talked about in your resume or providing additional information.

• Closing paragraph - This paragraph essentially acts as the Thank You and Goodbye of your cover letter and informs the employer of the best way to contact you for an interview.

• Closing (sincerely, etc.)

• Your signature

• Enclosure (optional) - If you are sending anything other than a cover letter (a resume, for example) use “Enclosure” or “Attachment after your name/signature so the employer knows to expect.

**Need More Help?**

Let us help you build your cover letter, advise with our career consultants!