

# Cover Letter Tips

## What is a cover letter, and why do I need one?

A cover letter should accompany every resume unless otherwise stated. It's an opportunity to explain to the hiring manager why they should consider you and why the attached resume will interest them. The cover letter is where you highlight and expand on your resume's most relevant points.

## A good cover letter should...

- Give the reader a sense of the person behind the words and demonstrate interest and enthusiasm.
- Connect your experience to the position by providing examples of your relevant experiences, skills or qualities.
- Have a professional tone and appearance. Be within 1 page.
- Contain no spelling or grammar errors.

## Tips

Cover letter writing takes practice. Here are some tips to make it easier.

- Research the organization or department so you can talk about how your values and interests match the organization's goals and values.
- Know what you can and want to contribute — skills, qualities and experiences.
- Note: you can disclose information about yourself if you feel it will support your application or fill a diversity hiring need (disability, Indigenous self-identification, etc.). Many inclusive employers encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds. Using language like "lived experience" is recommended.

## Common mistakes

- Lack of distinction from your resume - using short sentences or bullet points that do not provide any additional information
- Not tailoring the letter to the organization or forgetting to update the company name
- Not articulating how previous experience relates or adds value to the role



## Cover letter formatting

Your contact information (use the same format as the styled header on your resume)

Date you will submit the application

Full name of the hiring individual (make sure spelling is correct)

Position of the individual

Company name

Address

Postal code

Re: Application for Job ID #/ Job Title, if applicable.

Dear full name, (if the name is not available, use “hiring manager”)

The first paragraph usually addresses what position you’re applying for, how you found out about it (mention your referrer if possible), and why you’re interested in the position or organization. Make sure to integrate some of your key qualifications as an opener to capture the reader’s attention.

The middle two or three paragraphs usually address how your experience (work, academic, volunteer), skills and interests relate to the position and how your values and goals are in alignment with the organization. Use your understanding of the job requirements to decide which skills and experiences to highlight. Provide some specific examples to capture the reader’s attention. Use situation, action, result (SAR) stories to explain these experiences.

Address the following points in the body of the letter to make it easy for the reader to recognize how you will be a valuable team member.

- Include specific experiences that relate to the job.
- Customize each letter and address specific qualifications that the posting highlights.
- Include characteristics that make you a good employee and provide evidence (i.e., awards, feedback from supervisors or clients).

In the closing paragraph, briefly summarize some professional qualities (work ethic, strengths, etc.) that will contribute to the organization or team. Explain how and when they can contact you. Finish the letter with some pleasantries such as, “I look forward to meeting with you to discuss how I may contribute to your team” or “thank you for considering my application.”

Sincerely,

Full name

