



CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

COVER LETTERS

Cover letters give you the opportunity to be your strongest advocate and make an argument to a future employer about how you're the best candidate for their position. Cover letters are less constrained than resumes in terms of space and formality, so they can help generate interest in your application. An ideal length for cover letters are $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page - although your focus should be on strong content, not length. All cover letters should include contact information - if possible, use the same header as your resume - as well as, the position you are applying for. When you focus on showing what you can do for the company, using words that convey the true impact of your work, and highlighting your accomplishments, your cover letter will serve as a strong argument for your candidacy.

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

In the first paragraph of your cover letter, stress your fit with the organization. Think about what interests you about the organization - is it their mission, values or culture? The projects they undertake? Their management or organizational structure? Use the first paragraph to specifically cite why you're interested.

Avoid generalities such as 'I'm interested in Company ABC because you're a global leader in the field.' Share how your interests reflects the skills, strengths, experiences or passion you bring to the organization, and how your skills/ interests for the organization can be an asset to that organization. Make sure to use the job description to help you tailor your cover letter.

This section requires that you know the organization well in order to tailor your information to them. Below are some fields to consider as you do your employer research.

Organization	
Missions/Values	
Strategic Goals	
Projects	
Recent News	
Culture/Office Environment	

Find the right coach for you at: <http://careers.utah.edu/coaches> or by making an appointment in 

*Log-in to your account from our website: careers.utah.edu, or through CIS

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S)

The bulk of your cover letter will focus on showing the organization you are the best applicant. This is not the place to repeat your resume or list all of your accomplishments. Rather, you want to think of 2-3 key distinct themes – ideally reinforced in your resume – that make you a strong candidate. Think of a specific example or narrative you can share that highlights how you've applied the skills, strengths or experiences you want to emphasize. Cover letters give you the space to provide specifics and share a story that shows how your experiences made an impact. This provides the employer with a vision for how you might transfer or apply that same skill-sets, strengths or experiences to their organization. This section requires that you know what the employer is seeking and how you can show that you are a strong candidate. Below are some questions to consider as you formulate your argument.

Position:	
3 Greatest Skills Needed/ Required for the position	
What experiences do you have to meet the skills needed?	
In what ways are you their ideal candidate?	

CONCLUSION

Use this final paragraph to reinforce/summarize the themes you want the employer to remember after reading your application materials in 1-2 sentences. Thank the employer for their time and consideration and reinforce your interest in the position. Be careful with assertive endings that let the employer know you will be following up with them – focus on showing your interest rather than on insisting on a time-line that may or may not be realistic for the employer.

FINALIZE

After you've finished, double check your spelling and grammar. Ensure that every sentence is focused on the reader's interest and needs. Make sure you use the job description as a guide. Then, save your cover-letter as a PDF if you're planning to attach or upload it to preserve formatting. Checking-in via email or phone inquiring about the time-line within a three week period is appropriate.