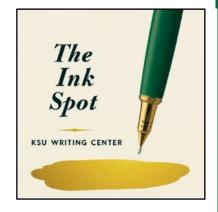


Cover Letters



A cover letter is a formal letter paired with a résumé, explaining why you want to work somewhere and how they would benefit from your skills. It is your chance to give more depth to your qualifications, as well as a chance to explain your research, professional experiences, and your desire to better the institution.

How do I draft a cover letter?

Prepare to tailor every single letter specifically to the place you are applying. While you may be able to create a *rough* template, one generalized cover letter will *not* be strong enough for any institution.

First, review the job description, the institution, and how you came across it.

• Cover letter introductions usually involve a mention of the position, the institution, and how you found the job, such as a website or by referral.

Second, research the institution's culture, history, mission statement, values, and staff.

- Keep notes on their keywords and phrases.
- Keep notes on accomplishments, student body, culture, on-site organizations, etc.

Third, brainstorm unique stories and valuable experiences that are related to your career.

- Be personal, professional, and detailed.
- Feel free to bring up your résumé for a couple of ideas. Maybe there is something in your résumé that you want to expand on.
- What experiences, jobs, and people have led you to succeed in your career? Why
 have you chosen this institution to apply to? Have you worked at a place like this
 before?

Fourth, focus on depicting your development into a competent candidate.

- Develop a collection of experiences and accomplishments that have made you who you are. **Mention any professional development!**
- **Graduate School**: Focus on the reason you completed your academic journey. Then, focus on what abilities made it possible.
- **Medical Residency**: Focus on the reason you took this journey through the medical field. Then, focus on what abilities made it possible.

Fifth, outline a rough draft. Feel free to find **online examples and templates**.

- Committees read hundreds of letters, so focus on clarity and specificity.
- Show, do not tell!
 - Instead of writing that you are passionate, do you have a story, experience, or award that shows how much you care about others and your career?
- For the outline, make sure to...
 - o organize your letter with a **header**, an **introduction**; an **expression of interest**, **skills**, **experiences**, **and accomplishments**; and a **respectful summary and send-off**. (see pages 3–4)
 - o create a hook at the start to grab attention.
 - o utilize your keywords and research from the second step.
 - Do not mention *everything* word for word. Expand on it with synonyms, stories, experiences, leadership, and accomplishments!
 - o expand on the résumé and not repeat it.
 - o be confident by using specific action verbs and direct sentences.
 - o **Graduate School**: mention the professors you want to work with and why.
 - o **Medical Residency**: focus on medical knowledge and stories.
 - o avoid clichés.

Sixth, draft the cover letter. Start as early as possible.

- Use a professional 11 or 12 pt. font, do *not* indent paragraphs, and single-space the paper.
- Place an extra space between every paragraph.
- At first, just try to get words on the page.

Seventh, prepare to revise as much as you can.

 Reach out to professors, peers, and the Writing Center to receive diverse feedback.

Ninth, before submission, edit, proofread, edit, and proofread again.

- Review the **grammar and sentence variety** to ensure that your paper feels professional, lively, and engaging.
- Read your paper backwards to catch spelling errors.

Cover Letter: Header

Feel free to review any online templates or example. There is more than one way to design the header, but it must have all of the elements of a usual letter:

- your current address
- the date that the letter is sent
- your name in the header (and at the end)
- the name and title of the person you are addressing the letter to
- the institution's name and address
- a phone number, if available
- "Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. ______" OR "Dear hiring committee/hiring manager/ hiring team/hiring director"
 - Do the research to find who your letter will be read by. If you cannot find a specific person or group, then address the letter to the department, the hiring committee, or a director. Do *NOT* use "To whom it may concern."
 - You may also use a full name if you do not want to use an honorific (e.g., Mr., Ms., Mrs.)

Richard Williams

3665 Margaret Street, Houston, TX 47587 • RichardWilliams@gmail.com • (770) 625-9669

[Today's Date]

[Hiring Manager's Name] 123 Company Address Company's City, State, Zip Code (xxx) xxx-xxxx hîring.manager@gmail.com

Dear [Mr./Ms./Mx.] [Hiring Manager's Last Name],

from resumegenius.com, https://resumegenius.com/cover-letter-templates/basic-simple-templates

Cover Letter: Body and Conclusion

Introduction

o **Introduce yourself, what you are applying to, and how you found the position** (e.g., *Indeed, HigherEd Jobs,* a referral). Start by summarizing your abilities and why you are qualified to apply.

• Expression of Interest

O Bring in your research on the institution. Why are you excited to apply for this position? How is this institution unique? What aspects seem like a great fit for your skills and experiences? You want to better this place with your abilities.

Skills, Experiences, and Accomplishments

- Show the readers why you are perfect for the position through stories, experiences, leadership, past jobs, community service, classes, and accomplishments. Link them to the mission, values, and job description. What can you do for the employer?
- If for graduate school, you can also mention teaching and research experience, future research interests, and any presentations or published work.
- o If for **medical residency**, mention current and past medical experience, service, and research, as well as your career goals.
- Present yourself as a future member of the team with language like, "At Kentucky State University, I will..." OR "I am excited to help Kentucky State University grow by..."

Summary and Send-off

- Summarize your abilities and excitement to work at this institution. Thank the readers and express a final word of excitement to hear back.
- Offer to make time for an interview.
- Sign off like a letter. Use a respectful closer like "Sincerely," "Best regards," and "Thank you." Follow the closer with your name and your signature between them (if able).

<u>Fourth Paragraph—FOLLOW-UP</u> In the closing paragraph, indicate that you are very interested in an interview. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

(Your Name Typed)