



College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a formal letter that complements a resume or other position application materials. It is important for this document to not replicate your resume, but to still highlight your accomplishments, strengths, and transferrable skills focusing on what you've learned and how you will add value. A cover letter is an important part of the job search process, and should be tailored to the position which you are applying. They are typically one page and 3-4 paragraphs. Save your cover letter as a PDF before sending.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE BUILDING YOUR COVER LETTER

1. What are 3 reasons why you'd like to be in this specific position at this organization compared to others like it?
2. What is the organization's mission statement and/or values?
3. How can you tie in your past experiences to fit in with the position description the organization is looking for?
4. How does this job and company align with your vision for yourself in the future?
5. Write in the oval below what related experiences would demonstrate your fit for the job. Examples: Internships, co-op's, volunteering, past work experience, clinical/field experience, group project experience, leadership and campus involvement. Refer to the job description and what you know about the organization and/or field.



FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Mailing Address | Phone Number | Email Address | LinkedIn Customized URL/Online Portfolio

(You want your header to look similar to your resume)

Date

Name of Contact Person, Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State ZIP

Job ID # (if Known)

Dear (Contact person's name, hiring manager, selection committee, or position):

Opening Section: Who You Are & Why You Are Applying

- Name the job for which you are applying and how you learned about it
- Briefly highlight your education, skills, and experience
- If appropriate, mention the name of the person who referred you to the organization

Second Section: Your Skills & Qualifications

- Discuss the skills and strengths you bring to the job, and explicitly connect them to the tasks of the position
- Provide brief examples of a few related achievements or experiences, discussing how it can transfer to the position
- Even if you haven't done the exact things the job entails, you can show your preparedness through transferable skills

Third Section: You & the Company

- Demonstrate that you've researched the company by incorporating information such as their mission statement, motto, services or products and relating it to your previous experience, goals, and why you are interested in working for them
- State why you would be a good fit for the organization, emphasizing how you can help the organization reach its goals
- Some organizations may have a focus on helping employees grow, but overall focus on what you offer, not what you want

Closing Section: Wrapping Up

- Very briefly restate any important themes, creatively tying them together into a cohesive conclusion
- State that you are available for a personal interview at your reader's convenience
- Make it easy for the person to contact you: list your email address, as well as your phone number. Even if this information is on the resume, list it here again, as you do not want to make the employer search for a way to contact you
- Thank the reader for their time

Sincerely,

Your Name (sign if printing)

Your Name