

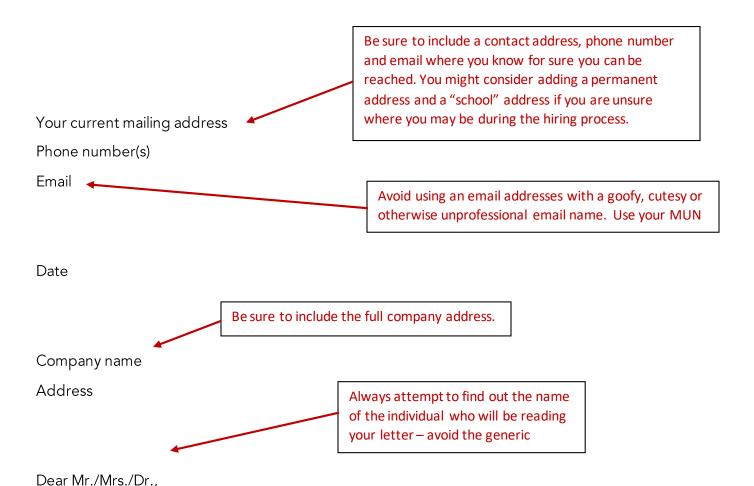
WRITING COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter is often your first line of contact with a potential employer and it is very important that you make a good first impression. Each letter must be tailored to fit the specific job you are applying for and should never be a generic "one-size-fits-all" read. Your letter should immediately engage the reader by highlighting one or two of your most impressive accomplishments or achievements.

The following is a list of Do's and Don'ts that you should always consider when crafting a cover letter:

- **Do** begin with a brief introduction of you and your resume and explain why you are applying for the position and where you heard about the job.
- **Do** write with an enthusiastic voice and explain why you are excited to be applying for the position.
- **Do** explain why you are an ideal match for the position by drawing attention to those specific qualities or experiences that are of particular relevance to the position.
- **Do** mention specifics about the company to show that you have done your homework and are eager to join the team.
- Don't simply create a summary of your resume by re-iterating lines directly from it.
- **Don't** make any grammatical mistakes or spelling errors! Errors indicate that you are not detailoriented and will get your application quickly tossed in the recycling bin! Have it proofread several times.
- **Don't** use elaborate or decorative font types and be sure that the document formatting is consistent from line to line.

The next page contains a template for a standard cover letter. If desired, you may choose to use a cover letter template from Microsoft Word, so the layout could vary slightly.



<u>First paragraph</u> – State your intent – including the job applied for, location, and where/how you found out about the position, i.e. where it was advertised.

<u>Second paragraph</u> - State why you are applying for the job. Emphasize that you have an interest in the company and the industry and state what you know about the company. This is important because it indicates to the employer that you took the time to do some research and are genuinely interested in the job. Do not quote vague statements or repeat information directly from their web site. Information related to the company's current projects, future plans, etc., is appropriate.

<u>Third paragraph</u> – Here is where you describe what you have to offer to the employer. This section of the letter should highlight the key skills or experiences you have that meet the requirements of the advertisement. Tell them something about your career that will immediately gain their interest. Only provide them information related to required experience or skills, as stated in the job description. THIS SECTION IS NOT A COMPLETE RESUME SUMMARY!!

<u>Closing</u> - The letter should close with a request for an interview where further elaboration will be made on your interest and qualifications, as outlined above.

