COVER LETTER WRITING: TIPS AND FORMAT
OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

PURPOSE:
The cover letter is used to introduce yourself to the employer and to illustrate your interest in the listed position and company. This is your opportunity to highlight specific details on your resume and demonstrate how they transfer to the job you want.

FORMATTING:
FONT: Use a consistent style of font on ALL documents sent to the employer (resume, cover letter, reference page).

MARGINS: ½" – 1"

CONTACT DETAILS HEADING: Keep your heading consistent across all professional documents (resume, cover letter, reference page). Doing so showcases your attention to detail and helps the employer keep your documents together.

SALUTATION:
Use the employer's preferred title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.). If in doubt, write out the full first and last name of the individual, or use a general title (for example, "Dear Hiring Manager") if a specific name is not known.

DO NOT use "To Whom It May Concern" when addressing potential employers. This is vague and conveys little interest in the company or position.

TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:
- Limit your letter to 1 page.
- Use examples! Don't just tell the employer that you have a specific skill or quality. ***Show*** them through your use of examples and purposeful language.
- Avoid general statements (e.g., "I am the best candidate"). This is vague and gives little information.
- Do NOT use the same generic cover letter for each position to which you apply. Base the cover letter off of each individual job listing, and tailor your use of examples and experiences to the specific job.

YOUR NAME

Date of Letter

Name of Individual Receiving Letter
Title of Individual
Name of Company/Organization
Street Address
City, State and Zip Code

RE: Position Title

Salutation: Use the employer's preferred title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.). If in doubt, write out the full first and last name of the individual. If the individual's name is not known, use a general position title such as "Dear Hiring Manager". Avoid "To Whom It May Concern".

First Paragraph: Get to the point. State why you are writing, the specific position you are seeking, and how you learned of the position. If you have been referred by someone inside the organization, include the individual's name. Offer your education, background, skills, and experience for their review.

Middle Paragraphs: Think about what specific experience, talents, and abilities you have that are important to the employer and to the position for which you are applying. Connect your experience and skills to the listed qualifications desired as outlined in the job description. Discuss what the employer is looking for and show that you fulfill their need with examples from academics, employment, volunteerism, and other significant experiences. Give concrete, concise examples to demonstrate your ability to perform the job. Showcase your transferrable skills. Follow a general model:

YOU NEED (refer to the job description) + I HAVE (specific highlights from your resume) + HERE'S MY EXAMPLE…

Concluding Paragraph: Reiterate your interest. Thank the employer for taking time to review your resume and consider your application. Indicate that you are looking forward to meeting with them to learn more about the position and about how you may contribute to their organization. Ask to learn more about the position and provide your contact information (phone number and professional email address).

Closing ("Sincerely", "Best regards", "Respectfully", etc.)

Handwritten Signature or Typed Signature in Italicized Font

Typed Signature