Cover Letters

PURPOSE OF THE COVER LETTER

1. Used when applying for specific known vacancies or to inquire about possible openings.

2. A business letter that introduces your resume.

3. Explains the reason for sending your resume, and contains additional information not found in the resume.

4. Adds a professional touch to your entire job search.

PREPARING THE COVER LETTER

1. Type it neatly on an 8 1/2 x 11 bond paper (not the erasable kind). For the most professional look, use the same paper used for your resume. Keep it clean and error free. Review it for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

2. Prepare each cover letter individually. Generic cover letters are easily detected and less effective.

3. Address the letter to a specific person in the organization by name if at all possible, even if you have to make a brief long distance call to determine the individual's name.

4. Use action words (as in the resume) to describe your qualifications.

5. Refer to relevant information on your resume, but do not simply repeat the data word for word.

6. Indicate your basic knowledge of the organization, its needs (the requirements of the position you would like to fill), and how your qualifications can meet those needs.

7. Read it aloud before you send it. Get the opinion of friends, a faculty member, or a professional in the field. Does it arouse interest or is it boring?

8. Limit the letter to three or four brief paragraphs.
Guidelines for a Cover Letter

Your present address
City, State zip code
Phone number and/or message number

Date of letter

Individual’s Name
Title
Employer
Street address
City, State zip code

Dear ________:

First paragraph. Indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening (placement center, jobnet, news media, friend, employment service).

Second paragraph. Indicate what you can do for the employer. Mention why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products or services. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have had some related work experience, point out your specific achievements, skills, or unique qualifications. Try not to repeat the same information found in the resume. If necessary, break into two paragraphs.

Final paragraph. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application form that summarizes your qualifications, training and experience. You may state your willingness to provide references or additional information. In closing, indicate your desire for a personal interview. You may want to suggest alternative dates and times or simply advise the reader of your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement or question that will encourage a response. For example, state you will be in the city where the organization is located on a certain date and would like to set up an interview. Or, state you will call on a certain date to set up an interview. Or, ask if the company will be recruiting in your area.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)

Type your name

Enclosure(s) (This refers to the resume, application, etc. which are enclosed)

SPU: Career Development Center
www.spu.edu/depts/cdc.edu