

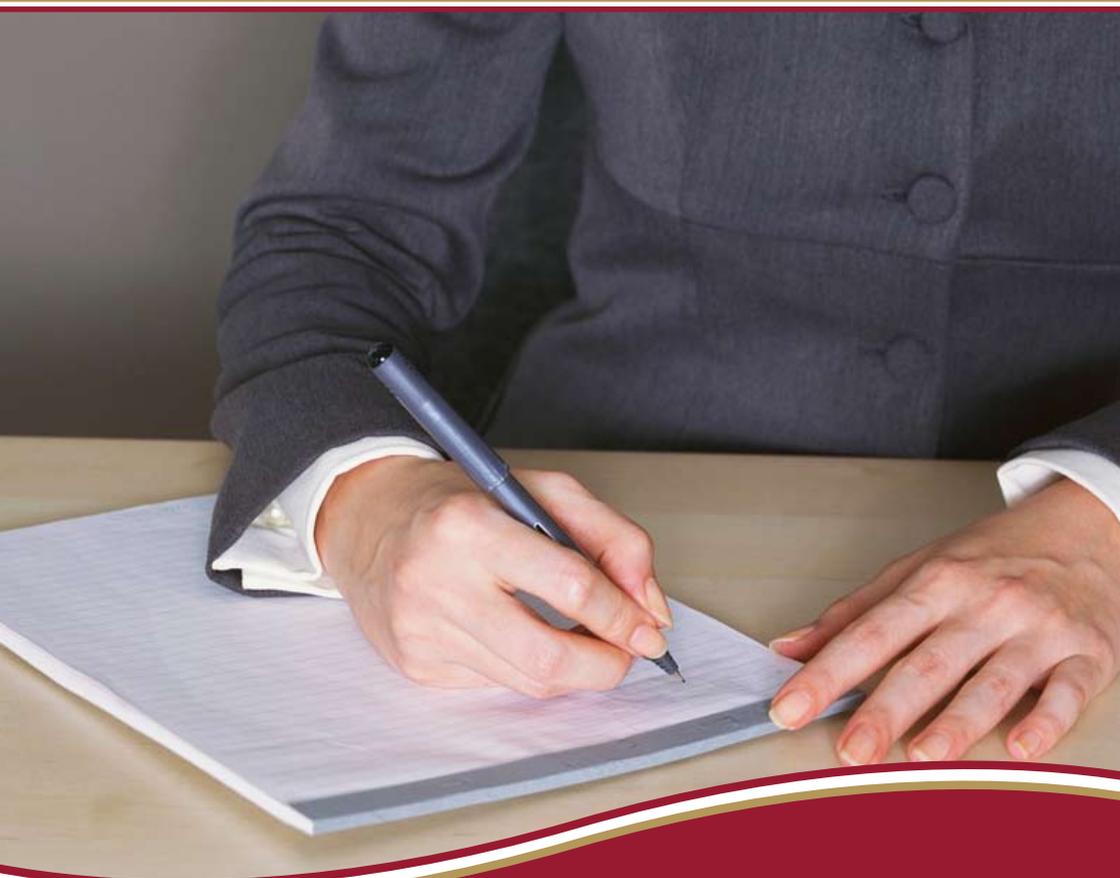
UNIVERSITY of DUBAI



جامعة دبي

## COVER LETTER WRITING TIPS

*Building Your Career Tools*



INTERNSHIP & CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER



## WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a document sent with your resumé to provide additional information on your skills and experience. A cover letter typically provides detailed information on why you are qualified for the job you are applying for. Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the specific organization and highlight your most relevant skills or experiences. Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining a job interview and having your resumé ignored, so, it makes good sense to devote the necessary time and effort to writing an effective cover letter.

A cover letter should complement, not duplicate your resumé. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resumé and add a personal touch. A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression. There are three general types of cover letters:

- The application letter which responds to a known job opening.
- The prospecting, unsolicited letter of enquiry which asks about possible positions.
- The networking letter which requests information and assistance in your job search.

Your cover letter should be designed specifically for each purpose outlined above as well as for each position you seek. Do not design a standardized letter and send it to every potential employer (you know what you do with junk mail!).



## KEY AREAS FOR COVER LETTER WRITING

- What position are you applying for?
- How did you learn of the position or company? What do you know about the company?
- Why are you perfect for the position? What sets you apart from the crowd?
- Who will contact who?
- Request a meeting or personal interview.
- Mention that you will contact them to schedule a personal meeting.
- Explain how they can reach you.
- Thank them for taking the time to consider your application.

### Tips

#### **Customize to Fit**

Take the time to customize your cover letter to fit the employer's requirements. Before you start writing, review the criteria for the position and make a list of what the employer wants. This list might include specific areas of expertise, years of experience, technical knowledge, transferable skills and personality traits. Then, incorporate these items into your letter, demonstrating, by giving examples from a previous job perhaps, that you have the desired qualifications.

#### **Meet the Employer's Needs**

Write the cover letter with the employer's needs in mind, not your own. Don't describe what you want, but explain what you can do for the employer. Don't assume that the employer will read between the lines of your resumé and dig out the relevant information. They won't. To get their attention, you have to actively describe how you can meet their needs.

#### **Actively Sell Yourself**

State why you should be hired. Be assertive about your qualifications and assure the employer of your capabilities.

#### **Use e-mail for cover letters**

Keep your cover letter short and include it in the email message. Don't send as an attachment unless the employer specifically requests one.

#### **Keep it Simple**

Get straight to the point and write short, targeted letters. Each letter should be one page, or less. Each paragraph should contain three or four sentences, at most.

#### **Keep Copies**

Keep copies of all your cover letters, so you know what you sent to whom.

## COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Date

Contact's Name

Contact's Title

Organization Name

P.O. Box, Dubai

United Arab Emirates

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (person's last name only),

**Ref. Application for the position of [Give job title and reference number, if any.]**

Paragraph 1: State immediately the position you are pursuing and how you came to know of the opening [e.g. newspaper, giving date, website etc]. If you have an alumnus, family or other contact in the organization, you can mention that here as well. Tell the employer briefly (one or two sentences) why you are interested in this position.

Paragraph 2: Highlight the skills and experiences you have that would make you successful in the position. For example, if you are a new graduate with limited experience, talk about classes you have taken, activities you have been involved in, summer experiences you have had. You do not have to have directly related experience, but think about the skills you have gained from what you have done and how those could relate to the duties of the position you are applying for. [Make the links for the employer]. You do not want to repeat your resumé to the employer in this paragraph, but this is the place to highlight relevant accomplishments that will make the reader want to learn more, and which in turn will lead them to your resumé. The goal is to show the employer that you have confidence in your ability to succeed in the position.

Paragraph 3: Demonstrate that you have done some research about this organization. Go to their website and talk to alumni or other contacts that may currently work for the organization. This research does not have to be extensive, but it shows that you have taken some time to think about this position and put some effort into this letter. This makes a very good impression on employers. It shows that this is not a standard letter, where only the address and contact name is changed for each position.

Paragraph 4: State that you would welcome a personal interview to further discuss this opportunity. If you need to explain anything out of the ordinary on your resumé, this is the place to do it. You might mention that if you do not hear anything from the potential employer in two to three weeks' time, you will call to follow up this letter to see where they are in their process. Finish by thanking them for their attention and express a desire to meet them sometime in the near future.

Sincerely,

Your signature (leave 4 blank spaces for this)

Your name in print

## COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Date: 21st January, 2010

Mr. Mohammed Saeed  
HR Manager  
ABC Company  
P.O. Box 14263, Dubai  
United Arab Emirates

Dear Mr. Saeed,

**Ref: Application for the post of Customer Sales Representative**

I would like to apply for the above post advertised in today's Gulf News as I am confident I have the necessary experience and qualifications to successfully fulfill the requirements for this job.

My long-term experience in the service industry has taught me how to meet and exceed each customer's expectations with service that sells. I have assisted all types of customers in all types of settings. I realize that acquiring and maintaining loyal repeat business as well as spreading the word of your business through these loyal patrons is of the utmost importance in every company. Positioning a company for better exposure and greater marketability is a task that I have performed with success many times.

I am an excellent trainer who achieves ongoing success with his teams by building morale, maintaining teams' self-confidence, and training them to build the sale by improving their people skills. It would be a pleasure to interview with you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Amin Faris

## E-MAIL COVER LETTER – [Points to Note]

When applying for employment via email, copy and paste your cover letter into the email message, or write your cover letter as an email.

### **Sending your Resumé**

If the job posting asks you to send an attachment, send your resumé as a PDF or a Word document.

### **The Subject Line of your Message**

Make sure you list the position you are applying for in the Subject Line of your email address, so the employer is clear as to what job you are applying for.

### **Include your Name**

Include your name with your contact information, so it's easier for the hiring manager to get in touch with you.

### **Send a Test Message**

Send the message to yourself first to test that the formatting works. If everything looks good, resend to the employer.

### **Double Check Your Letter**

Make sure you use the spellchecker facility on your PC, and check your grammar and capitalization as well. They are just as important in an email cover letter as in paper cover letters.

## **SAMPLE EMAIL COVER LETTER WITH RESUME ATTACHED**

Subject Line of Email Message: Student Assistant Position

Email Message:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am interested in the above position in the Campus Office that you have advertised for this summer. I have office experience from my current job as an assistant in the General Education Department. Over the past six months, my experience has included basic office duties and working with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel to assist in preparing class presentations for faculty members.

I believe, my good work ethic, attention to detail, and my respect for confidentiality would make me a very suitable candidate for this position.

I have attached my resumé for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Sara Rashed

Contact Details

Email

Home Phone

Cell Phone

P.O. Box

City

## USEFUL BOOK REFERENCES

- The Damn Good Resumé Guide: A Crash Course in Resume Writing / by Yana Parker, Ten Speed Press, ISBN: 1580084443.
- The Guide to Basic Cover Letter Writing / by Public Library Association, McGraw-Hill, ISBN: 0071405909.

## USEFUL LINKS

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobsearchglossary/g/coverletter.htm>

<http://www.accent-resume-writing.com/covertips/>

<http://www.your-career-change.com/cover-letter-mistakes.html>

<http://www.cv-expert.co.uk/cover-letter-content.html>

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