

## Cover Letter – 10 Tips

### What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a career marketing tool designed to introduce you to a potential employer. It gives you the opportunity to tell more of your story in a narrative format, as well as provide direct evidence of key skills that align with a specific job opening.

### Basic Principles and Tips

1. Read the job application requirements to see if a cover letter is required alongside your resume.
2. Be thorough, yet concise. It should be a maximum of 1-page.
3. Follow basic professional writing standards, paying attention to sentence structure, spelling, and grammatical errors. It needs to be error-proof.
4. Uniquely tailor each cover letter to the position, addressing your letter to a specific person when possible. If not, it is acceptable to use “Selection Committee” or “HR Manager” as the contact person.
5. A cover letter allows you to tell more of your story; it should not simply repeat your resume.
6. Identify the top 3 skills and responsibilities of the job and describe how your skills and experiences align with these skills and responsibilities (use the Pre-Alignment Grid worksheet as a guide).
7. Be careful using cover letter templates. Employers can tell when a letter reads like a generic template.
8. Your cover letter should demonstrate that you are a good fit for the organization and the role for which you are applying. Your cover letter should answer the question, “Why should we hire you?”
9. The cover letter is a great way to “connect the dots” between your past skills and experiences to the targeted position.
10. A good format is 5 paragraphs: 1 – Introduction. 2-4 – each paragraph highlights a key skill you possess related to the position. 5 – closing (See Cover Letter sample letter as a guide).