A Checklist of Helpful Tips for Preparing Your Cover Letter

Cover Letter Guidelines

1. FORMATTING & GENERAL INFORMATION
   □ Keep cover letter to one page length.
   □ Proofread your cover letter to make sure it is free of grammatical errors.
   □ Write the cover letter in business letter format.
   □ Write in professional business language even when emailing.
   □ Avoid using “I”; instead start sentences with strong action verbs.
   □ Use only appropriate fonts (Times, Arial, Verdana, etc.).
   □ Keep font sizes 10, 11, or 12 pt. for text. Font size should be consistent throughout the cover letter.
   □ Set margins to approximately 1 inch on all sides.
   □ Single space the letter, but leave blank lines between your contact information, the date, the company’s contact information, the greeting, each paragraph, and the closing.
   □ Sign your letter in blue or black ink if you are submitting a printed copy.
   □ Print cover letter on the same type of paper as your resume.
   □ When including a cover letter with an email, either upload the entire document as an attachment or paste the entire document, including mailing addresses and the date, into the body of the email.
   □ Do NOT use a general cover letter for every job you apply to. Make sure your cover letter is personalized to each position and company.
   □ Start the cover letter with your physical mailing address.
   □ Include the date.

2. CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE RECIPIENT
   □ If possible, include the name of a specific person, with appropriate prefix if known (Dr., Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.).
   □ If appropriate prefix is not known, list person’s first and second names (ex. Dear Taylor Parker).
   □ Include recipient’s job title.
   □ Make certain that you have the correct spelling of the person’s name and title.
   □ Include the name of the company.
   □ Include the company’s physical mailing address.

3. FIRST PARAGRAPH
   □ Show interest in the company. (Do your research)
   □ Identify the position to which you are applying (use the job title from the job posting).
   □ State how you learned about the job opening.
      ○ Ex. “I am applying for the accounting position listed on the LINCS website…”

4. SECOND PARAGRAPH
   □ Use a copy of the job advertisement or description to write this paragraph if possible.
   □ Describe your qualifications in more detail.
   □ Demonstrate that you have knowledge of the company. (Do your research)
   □ Show how your qualifications, experience, and abilities match the needs of the company.
   □ State what you can contribute to the employer’s needs, not what the employer can contribute to your needs.
   □ Use specific examples as evidence of your qualifications. (Refer to job description)
   □ Refer to your enclosed resume.
   □ Do NOT duplicate content from your resume word for word.

5. FINAL PARAGRAPH
   □ Express an interest in requesting an interview.
   □ Provide information regarding how and when you can be contacted (specific contact number).
   □ Thank the recipient for considering you for the available position.

6. CLOSING & SIGNATURE
   □ Include an appropriately professional closing, such as “Sincerely”.
   □ Skip three lines between your closing and your typed name.
   □ If you print you cover letter, sign it in the space between your closing and your typed name.
   □ Include the word “Enclosure(s)” if you will be providing your cover letter and resume (and any other supporting documents) in hard copy or “Attachment(s)” if you will be emailing them beneath a blank line beneath your typed name.

For further assistance contact Folsom Lake College’s Career Services staff located on the lower floor of the Falcon’s Roost.  Career Services Center: (916) 608-6526 or Intern/Co-op: (916) 608-6515
*Make an appointment with our staff to have your cover letter & resume reviewed before applying to jobs.*