Writing a cover letter

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a short and specific letter that should always accompany any resumé or other applications documents. A cover letter introduces yourself and highlights relevant skills, qualifications and experiences you have that will make you suitable for the role.

Top 5 tips for writing a cover letter:

1. Tailor your cover letter to every position
2. Ensure your resumé is positive in tone (don't include your weaknesses)
3. Highlight your key skills/qualifications
4. Where possible always address a specific person
5. Your cover letter must not have any spelling or grammatical errors

Cover letter structure:

Your address
Suburb State Postcode
Phone/mobile number
Email address

Date

Name of contact
Title (eg. Manager)
Name of organisation
Address
Suburb State Postcode

Job title and/or reference number

Dear Mr/Ms (full name). If name is unknown Sir/Madam

Opening Paragraph

Introduce yourself and explain why you are writing. If responding to a job advertisement, include the position title and where you viewed the advert. If you are submitting an unsolicited application briefly outline your current employment circumstances.

Middle paragraphs

Highlight the skills, expertise, qualities and employment experience you have included in your resumé that you believe are most relevant to the requirements of the position. Make sure you demonstrate how you meet the selection criteria.

Include other factors that highlight your key general skills (eg. communication, initiative, teamwork) through your experiences in voluntary or community roles.

Briefly cover your current area of study, your planned finishing date, your major or any outstanding academic results. Also include any courses you have successfully completed.

Show that you know or have researched something about the organisation and the position.

Closing paragraph

Confirm that you have included your resumé and other documents as requested.

Finish on a positive note, thank the employer for their time and express an interest in attending an interview.

Close

Yours sincerely

(include your signature)

Your name

Formatting and layout

- One A4 typed page
- Use 10-12 point standard fonts (eg. Arial, Times New Roman)
- Write in plain business English (avoid abbreviations or slang)
- Have a clear structure – one main idea per paragraph
- Ensure there is plenty of white space between paragraphs
- 100% accurate spelling and grammar

Cover letter checklist

1. Make sure there are no spelling mistakes or grammatical errors
2. Make sure you have tailored your cover letter to the specific role and have mentioned all the relevant skills you have
3. Make sure the cover letter is well laid out, easy to read and printed on clean, white paper in a standard font.
4. Make sure you've provided specific examples of your achievements and how you've used the skills you've mentioned.
5. Get feedback from the AUU Employment Services team