

Cover Letter Guide



What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a chance to introduce yourself to an employer and connect four key attributes; yourself, your skills, the company, and the position you are applying for. It should mention not only why you think you are a good fit for the position, but why you think the position is important for the company and how it lines up with your values and the company's values.

Cover Letter Guidelines

A cover letter should be one page unless otherwise specified on the job advertisement. It includes your contact details, an introduction, body, and a conclusion. It should total about 3 or 4 paragraphs when complete.

Your cover letter should be written using professional, industry-specific language and proofread carefully. Spelling and grammatical errors in your cover letter are often a red flag for an employer and will limit your chances of being invited for an interview. Remember that your cover letter is often the first impression you make to a potential employer. Ensure that your writing is clear, confident, and persuasive.

Tips for Writing an Effective Cover Letter

1. Review the job advertisement carefully and research the company.
 - a. Pay attention to the key skills emphasized throughout the posting.
 - b. Review the mission statement, vision, current programs/projects, and values of the organization.
2. Write down your top skills for the position.
 - a. Make a list of at least 3 top skills for that position. Then place them in order based on their value to the employer.
 - b. Think of examples for how/why these skills would enable you to succeed in the position.
 - c. Ensure you are not repeating everything that is on your resume.
 - d. Reference aspects of the company (as listed above), which can show the employer you have done your research.
3. Review the format of our cover letter templates to get more ideas on how to form a cover letter.
 - a. Keep in mind that certain employers may have specific requirements for a job application. If these differ from the format described here, then it's best to contact them beforehand and follow their preferred format.
4. Remember to connect all four attributes together.
 - a. Do not just simply mention them, show how each one impacts the other.
 - b. How do your skills connect to yourself, the position, and the company? Etc.
5. Book a peer review session with the Career Zone on mysuccess.lakeheadu.ca
 - a. These sessions can help you develop and/or edit your cover letter.
 - b. Peer reviewers are trained to notice issues and successes in cover letters and other job application documents.