Quick Guide: Cover Letter Assistance

Writing a Cover Letter

A cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. Its purpose is to interpret your resume and add a personal touch. A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression by demonstrating your ability to write clearly and effectively. A new cover letter should be written and tailored to each job posting you apply for.

- The **opening paragraph** should state why you have sent your materials. When you are responding to a specific posting you should reference the posting and how you became aware of it. This is also where you would ‘name drop” if you were referred to the posting by another employee of the company.

- The **second paragraph** is about you. This is where you will tell the employer how you are qualified for the position. You can mention specific achievements and skills that are relevant to the position. After reading this paragraph, the employer should be curious about your resume and all of your achievements and qualifications.

- The **third paragraph** will talk about how you are a good fit with the company. In this paragraph you can show how much you know about the company and their goals. Match their goals with your accomplishments in order to make it clear to the employer why you should be considered for the position you are applying for.

- The **fourth paragraph** of your cover letter is where you wrap everything up. You should tell the employer what action you are going to take next (such as following up and a time frame). You may include your phone number in this paragraph as a way to be contacted for additional information.

See [Cover Letter Guidelines](http://www.uis.edu/career/goals/launch/coverletters.html) and [Cover Letter Sample](http://www.uis.edu/career/goals/launch/coverletters.html) under “Tools for Cover Letters” at http://www.uis.edu/career/goals/launch/coverletters.html

Use Optimal Letter Module in Optimal Resume

This letter module is accessible on your homepage in Career Connect under “ONLINE TOOLBOX” running down right side of homepage.

Job seekers can select from a variety of letter types, including:

- **Cover letters**
- **Application letters**
- **Networking letters**
- **Rejection letters**
- **Withdrawal letters**
- **Broadcast letters**
- **Acceptance letters**
- **Follow-up letters**
- **Thank you letters**

- Job seekers create letters section by section with clear, helpful instructions and examples along the way. It’s easy to cut and paste existing content into Optimal Letter or create new letters from scratch, and all letters are automatically spellchecked. Optimal Letter generates letters in several formats, including Rich Text, Plain Text, PDF, HTML, and email. An innovative Letter Stylist makes it easy to preview various letter presentations and select an attractive format.
- Optimal Letter saves time and helps job seekers manage all business communications from a single online location. (Source: https://www.optimalresume.com/optimalletter.html).

Cover Letter Samples also available to review in Career Library:

| R 437 | 2006 | Cover Letter Almanac | Adams |
| CL1001 | 2008 | Knock ‘Em Dead Cover Letters, 8th Ed. | Yate |
| CL1001.1 | 2008 | Knock ‘Em Dead Cover Letters, 8th Ed. | Yate |
| CL 1002 | 1999 | 101 Best Cover Letters | Block, Betrus |