

## WHY COVER LETTERS?

A cover letter should accompany every resume you submit for a job. It is an opportunity to tell the employer more about yourself than what appears on your resume. It is important to write a unique cover letter for each position for which you are applying.

To get started, review the position description and identify how the requirements are related to your particular accomplishments. For example:

<i>Position Description</i>	<i>Your Related Accomplishments</i>
<p><b>Legal Advocate Intern for Local Area Non-Profit</b></p> <p><i>Manage incoming calls from local schools, hospitals, law enforcement and other relevant agencies, maintain program participant records, collaborate with full-time staff on relevant projects, provide direct advocacy, support and follow-up to program participants, assist with promoting the mission and goals of the agency through grassroots advertising efforts and assisting with semi-annual fundraiser.</i></p> <p>Pursuing a degree in the social or behavioral sciences, public service and leadership, marketing or related field, at least one semester of related experience, volunteer work is acceptable. Strong written and verbal communication skills, public speaking; ability to work independently; <i>social media knowledge</i>. Preference for MS Access and web development knowledge. XYZ is a non-profit; community based social service agency providing a variety of assistance services to families in need and community education/crime prevention activities in the Houston area.</p>	<p>Answered phone calls, greeted students, updated and maintained files, entered relevant information into databases daily in the Student Life Office at university.</p> <p>Led group project on evaluation of a non-profit for Current Topics in Urban Society course.</p> <p>As part of Student Life Office, assisted in promoting annual welcome back university event by creating flyers, updating social media, and promoting to student organizations.</p>

Now you can write your letter with your particular accomplishments in mind. It is up to you to connect the dots for the employer regarding how your skills and experience match the needs of the company. Remember experiences can come from a variety of sources (paid work, volunteer experience, class projects, coursework, etc.).

## DO'S AND DON'TS

- ✓ Tailor your letter for each opportunity and tell the reader why you are qualified for the position.
- ✓ Check your layout for adequate margins and white space and see if it is centered top to bottom.
- ✓ Ensure the font style matches that of the résumé and is simple and easy to read.
- ✓ Convert the cover letter and résumé to PDF to ensure the formatting stays consistent.
- X Overuse the pronoun “I” or repeat your resume verbatim.
- X Explain why you left your last job or want to leave your present one.
- X Use a form letter and just change the company name.
- X Include your salary requirements, unless asked to provide this information.
- X Inflate or exaggerate your experience or qualifications.
- X Hint that you are interested in virtually any job within that organization

Your Local Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Date of Letter (Date Format: Month Day Year, e.g., October 31, 2017)

Mr./Ms./ Professor First and Last Name  
Title  
Name of Firm or Organization  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Professor Last Name:

The opening paragraph should catch the interest of the employer. Clearly identify the position for which you are applying. Give some brief idea of who you are (a second-year MIS student at UHCL with expected graduation date).

***Paragraph(s) 2(-3)***

Highlight a few of the most salient points from your enclosed resume that are important for the position you are seeking. Your letter should complement, not restate, your resume. Show how your education and experience suit the requirements of the position, and, by elaborating on a few points from your resume, explain what you could contribute to the organization/department. This may include technical skills or other courses that may have prepared you to be a teaching assistant for a similar course, previous experience working (or interest in) working with students.

Additionally, be sure to address why you would like to work for the department. Statements that indicate that you need the salary or job for personal reasons including financial need/hardship are not appropriate.

Indicate what supplementary material is being sent (resume, *additional documents requested by department*). Provide phone number and email where you can be reached. Finally, express your appreciation to the reader for his or her time and for their consideration of your application.

Sincerely,

Hunter Hawk