



USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity



IBA
Career Development
Center

IBA CDC in collaboration with **HESSA** presents “how to write effective cover letter guide for our IBA fraternity!”

Cover Letter

How to Write an Effective Cover Letter: A Step-by-Step Guide

Table of Contents

What is a Cover Letter	2
Basic Components of a Cover Letter	2
How to Begin Writing a Cover Letter	2
Cover Letter Best Practices	3
Cover Letter Examples	4
References	

What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is typically a one-page document that is submitted for internships and full-time positions along with a resume. In some instances, individuals with many years of experience will write a cover letter that is two pages in length. Not all applications require or even ask for a cover letter. The purpose of the cover letter is to introduce yourself, highlight your skills and qualifications, express your interest in the position, and make the connection to the reader to why you are someone they should interview for the role. A cover letter is also a chance to showcase your personality and share a relevant story, whereas in a resume it is difficult to share specific stories. The story should be a relevant example that showcases skills related to the tasks/duties of the role you are applying for.

Basic Components of a Cover Letter?

A typical cover letter is structured in four to five paragraphs. An introduction paragraph, several main paragraphs that highlight skills and an example of your experience that match what the company/organization is seeking, and a conclusion paragraph.

How to Begin Writing a Cover Letter?

- Review the position description in detail and research the company/organization. It is really important to understand what skills and experiences you need to highlight in your cover letter. It is also important to know as much as you can about the company/organization so you can relate your background to match that of the company/organization.
- Choose a font that is easy to read and do not use a font size smaller than 10 points.
- Format the cover letter as a business letter. This includes your contact information at the top (like a resume), then the company/organization contact information, then a formal salutation (e.g., Dear Dr....).
- Introduction: spend the first sentence introducing yourself and your interest in the position. Then, share a brief summary of your background and experience. Indicate that this role aligns with your career goals and next steps. This should be a short paragraph (2-4 sentences).
- The main body paragraphs should include key words from the position description. You should also share a short story that is an example of your skills that directly relate to the position description.
- The conclusion paragraph should also be short. Express your gratitude and reiterate your enthusiasm for the position.

Cover Letter Best Practices

- Proofread and edit the cover letter many times.
- Remember, the focus of the cover letter is what you can do for the organization, not what you want from the organization.
- Tailor the cover letter to each and every position. You should write a new cover letter for each position.
- Add transferable skills/soft skills, especially highlight “communication”, “teamwork”, and “adaptability”.
- Investigate the organization’s website, social media, and any news articles you can find online to understand the mission, vision, and successes of the organization.
- Include key words from the position description.
- Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible.
- The cover letter font should be consistent with your resume’s font.
- Convert to a PDF before uploading to an online job portal. Title the document with your name and “Cover Letter”
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Explain why you want to work for that organization. Why that specific organization, not the career field.