

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Cover Letter Tips

- ✓ **Always include a copy of your resume.** A copy of your resume should always accompany your cover letter. Make sure they are both on the same type of paper. Also, be sure to indicate "Enclosures" at the bottom of your cover letter if you are including transcripts or other application material.
- ✓ **Avoid overusing "I".** Your cover letter should not look like an autobiography. You should focus on how you are going to be able to meet the employer's needs and not on writing a life story.
- ✓ **Be confident.** Try to avoid using phrases such as "I believe" or "I feel." Try to use stronger phrases such as "I am confident" or "I am positive."
- ✓ **Be determined, not desperate.** You should never sound desperate or beg for a job in your cover letter. You should never mention anything about how much you need money to pay off your credit card bills by the end of the month or make your car payment on time.
- ✓ **Briefly elaborate on your resume.** Try to incorporate one or two of the most relevant items from your resume, but don't overdo it. Try not to rewrite your resume in letter form for your cover letter.
- ✓ **Customize your cover letter.** Your cover letter should be specific to the requirements of the position for which you are applying. If you're answering an ad or a job posting from elsewhere, try to tie the wording of your cover letter as closely as possible to the wording of the ad or job posting you are responding to. Also, be sure to address the letter to a specific person rather than a general "to whom it may concern."
- ✓ **Keep it relevant.** You should not include personal information such as age, marital status, religion, etc.
- ✓ **Know the company.** It never hurts to do a little research on the company to which you are applying. Try to include something about the company that interests you or that may even have prompted you to apply for the position.
- ✓ **Market yourself to the employer.** A cover letter should be your personal marketing tool to sell yourself to a potential employer. It should contain your best attributes that could complement their company.
- ✓ **Proofread.** You want to make the best impression with your cover letter. Having a cover letter full of typographical errors will certainly not make for a good impression. Make an appointment to have your cover letter critiqued by a Career & Professional Development Center Advisor.
- ✓ **Sign it.** Be sure to sign your cover letter in ink.
- ✓ **Stay simple.** A cover letter should be no longer than one page. It should be approximately 3-4 paragraphs.
- ✓ **Type it.** Your cover letter should never be handwritten.
- ✓ **Use standard format.** Your cover letter should be in standard business letter format. It should look professional. Don't bold, underline or italicize anything that is not consistent with good English grammar.
- ✓ **What can you do for the company?** You should always explain what you can do for the company and not what the company can do for you.

Sample cover letters are available in The Red Book (www.calu.edu)

Be sure to upload your cover letter on [Hire CALYou](#) (A free, online, one-stop career portal for CALU students, alumni and employers)