

# tip sheet



## COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are included with your resume to introduce you to prospective employers. Cover letters should not be general, instead they should be customized for each employer and the job posting you respond to. Cover letters are used to highlight how your achievements, skills and work experience speak directly to the requirements of the position.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE

**Header and Greeting:** Include the date, your name and contact information. Where possible address your letter to a specific person, or the job title of the recipient for example “Hiring Committee” and do not assume the gender of the recipient in your salutation.

**Opening:** Introduce yourself and explain your reason for writing, including how you found out about the position. Use the opening to express your interest in the position and your understanding of the employer, their business goals and hiring needs specific to the position.

**Body:** Sell your talents, experience and achievements; and don’t repeat details that are included in your resume. Instead, express how your achievements, skills and work experience are a “match” for the requirements of the position and how your energy, enthusiasm (personal attributes) would contribute the success of the organization.

**Closing:** Thank the recipient for taking the time to consider your application and provide a telephone number that they can call for further information.

### WRITING TIPS

- Be confident, positive and focussed
- Don’t exaggerate your qualifications and achievements
- Write in a professional tone, and be concise, accurate, and polite Proofread your letter thoroughly
- When sending your application via email, copy the text of your cover letter into the body of the email

### FORMATTING TIPS

- Select “Letter” size (8.5” x 11”) paper, and have all your margins at 0.75” in the page settings
- Use a simple block format with left flush margins and ragged right margins, and do not use full justification
- Keep the letter to 1 page and your paragraphs short and to the point
- Use the same font style and size as in your resume
- Remember to sign your cover letter if you are sending it by fax, regular mail or dropping it off in person
- Don’t use coloured paper, photos, clip art or graphics

