

Cover Letters

General overview

- Cover letters introduce you as an employment candidate to an employer
- Cover letters are typically at least one page long, but they can run over one page
- These documents typically include three parts: statement of intent, explanation of qualifications, and restatement of intent

Before starting: Mine the job ad for keywords and think about your experiences

- What are the key elements of this position? What is the employer most interested in?
- How does your work experience align with these interests?

Part 1: Statement of intent

- This first paragraph is often 2-3 sentences long
- State what position you are applying for (I am writing to declare my interest in the open X position at your company.)
- Like a thesis statement, briefly define why you think you are a good candidate. (“I believe A, B, and C make me a strong candidate for this position.”)

Part 2: Explanation of qualifications

- This is the bulk of the letter and can be a few paragraphs long.
- For each paragraph, select a previous or current position/experience and briefly explain the significance of your role. (Show you knew *why* you were doing something, not just what you were doing.)
- Remember to use experiences that speak to the position and the employer’s interests

Part 3: Restatement of intent

- Another typically short paragraph
- Restate why you think you are a good candidate (“My A, B, and C position me well for the role of X at your company.”)
- Indicate further interest (“I look forward to hearing from you soon.”)
- May also introduce your contact information and application package here.