

COVER LETTERS FOR ACADEMIC JOBS

Purpose of a cover letter

- Connect your skills and experiences to the position for which you are applying.
- Show that you are familiar with the university (or company) and demonstrate that you are a good candidate for the position.
- Demonstrate that you understand the conventions of formal academic communication.

Content:

- Position for which you are applying and where you found out about this position
- When you expect to have your Ph.D. in hand
- Teaching: experience and philosophy
- Research: experience and future plans
- Enclosures
- Tailor the content to the position. Write a different cover letter for each institution!

Organization:

- Emphasize (by location and space) what is most important for the position for which you are applying
 - Teaching
 - Research
- 1.5-2 pages
- University letter head
- Follow standard business letter structure

Tone:

- Academic, Professional, Confident, Human
- Express your interest in the position by **showing** that your experiences and skills are uniquely suited to the position and the institution.

What not to do:

- Do not sound like a graduate student. Present yourself as a colleague.
- Do not tell the search committee that you are a great person and a good fit. Show them.
- Do not repeat information on your CV. Develop relevant parts.
- Do not send the same letter to multiple schools. Tailor each letter.
- Omit personal details like age, physical characteristics, and marital status
- Omit irrelevant experiences and skills

You will often be asked to submit application materials by email.

- Convert all documents to pdfs so that the formatting will not change.
- The email is not a cover letter. Write a short polite note indicating
 - ... the position for which you are applying
 - ... that your application materials are all attached.

The 1st paragraph should mention:

- The position to which you are applying and where you found out about it

- Your status (candidate or ph.d.) and the university
- Dissertation title/ major research project

Internal Paragraphs should include

- one paragraph about your teaching experience showing how what you do in the classroom is unique and effective
- one paragraph summarizing the topic, thesis, and contribution of your dissertation.

The final paragraph

- List of requested enclosures
- Polite and confident “I look forward to hearing from you soon” and/or “Thank you for your consideration”

Resources

- www.theprofessorisin.com
- The OWL at Purdue: International Student's Job Search: Tips and Terms
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/640/01/>
- Duke Career Center: Cover Letter
<http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/online-tools-resources/career-center-skills-guides/cover-letter>
- ND Career Center: Resumes vs. CVs & Cover Letters
<http://careercenter.nd.edu/for-undergrads/international-students/resumes-vs-cvs-cover-letters/>