



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

## Career Services

*Division of Academic Affairs*

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### ***Questions to Keep In Mind When Writing A Cover Letter:***

#### Introductory Paragraph:

- What position are you applying for? How did you learn about the position?
- Did someone refer you to the position? If so, mention them by name.
- What do you know about the company that might demonstrate your knowledge?
- Why are you interested in “X” company? Briefly give examples explaining (1-2 sentences).
- What are your specific qualifications, i.e. degree, years of experience?

#### Body Paragraph(s):

- What qualities were mentioned in the job posting? Address these with examples of your own skills and experiences. The body paragraph(s) should speak to the employer’s needs.
- Do you have a unique experience to share? What skills do you have that are relevant, but also make you an exceptional candidate? Do you have cultural or technological experiences?
- How can you sell yourself? What makes you the best candidate?
- Can you expand on your resume? Try not to just repeat what is already in your resume, but if you feel you can expand on an experience in a meaningful manner, do so.

#### Ending Paragraph:

- Who will contact whom? Let the employer know that you intend to follow up with them.
- Restate your interest and thank the employer for their time, without apologizing, at the end of your letter.
- Don’t forget to express your interest in interviewing for the position.

#### More to Keep in Mind:

- Make your cover letter personal to the company. Employers know a template letter when they see one and are generally unimpressed by them. Express not only who you are, but also why you would be perfect for *their* company.
- Find out who will be receiving your letter and title it to a specific person, rather than “to whom it may concern”, as this will prove your interest in the company and willingness to do research when necessary.
- Keep your words positive! You want to demonstrate to the employer that you are an optimistic person who will show not only yourself, but the company as well, in a positive light.
- Keep it simple. Try to keep your statements to the point and do not repeat your skills and qualifications unnecessarily.
- Have someone else read your cover letter over. They might catch a grammar or structure error that you missed. Ask friends, family, and advisers or try stopping by the Writing Center to have your resume checked for language.
- Spell check. Spell check. Spell check.