

WRITE AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER/LETTER OF INTENT

Cover letters (also known as letters of intent) are a critical component of a successful externship, internship or job search. They introduce your resume to an employer and are often the first thing they read. It is essential that your cover letter reflects your experience and skills as they relate to the position you are applying for. Highlight what you have to offer the employer in a concise, professional format while also adding creativity, showing enthusiasm, and generating further interest in you as a candidate.

General Tips

- Research the company and study the position description.
- Focus on the needs of the company instead of your own needs and wants.
- Use specific examples and be personable.
- Don't simply restate your resume – expand on it.
- If there are any required qualifications for the positions that aren't included in your resume, address them in your cover letter.

Format

- One page (3–4 paragraphs), 12 pt. font, 1" – .5" borders.
- Always write in a professional and formal manner – no slang or abbreviations.
- Print your cover letter on the same paper as your resume.
- Be sure to have someone proofread your cover letter before sending it.
- Use the same heading as your resume including your contact information.
- You may use a similar cover letter for multiple jobs, however you must change each letter to match the position for which you are applying.

Addressing the Letter

- Address cover letters to a specific person rather than a department or a generic title. Be sure to spell the name(s) correctly. If it's not possible, then address the letter to what the advertisement states (i.e., Hospital Manager, Selection Committee, etc.).
- Make sure you know the gender of the person you are addressing the letter to. If you're not sure, use the full name. If addressing the letter to a woman and you are not sure of marital status, use "Ms."

First M. Last

Street address

City, State Zip

Phone number

Email address

Date

Contact Person, Title

Clinic/Hospital/Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear (Contact Name):

FIRST PARAGRAPH: State the reason why you are writing and the specific position you are applying for. Indicate how you learned about the employer and/or opening, and mention the name of any referring person. Explain briefly why you want to work for this practice/hospital/organization (based on your knowledge/research) and why you are a good fit for the position.

BODY OF THE LETTER (usually two paragraphs): Briefly explain your background (education/experience/leadership) and why you are interested and qualified (knowledge and skills). Summarize some of your strongest qualifications as they relate to the position/position description (be specific and heartfelt). State clearly why you are the best candidate.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Explain what you would gain and how you could be an asset to the position/organization. State that you look forward to an interview and/or talking to someone in more detail about the position and your qualifications. End the letter with an appropriate closing such as "Thank you for your time and consideration" or "Thank you for giving my application full consideration."

Sincerely or Best regards,

{*Signature*}

Your name (typed)