

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST



GENERAL FORMAT

- ✓ Use standard business writing format and double-space between paragraphs, no more than one page
- ✓ Use one font style throughout the cover letter, font style should match your resume
- ✓ Use formal writing style and Canadian English; spelling, grammar, and punctuation should be flawless
- ✓ Tailor the letter to a specific company or job posting; it takes employers 6 seconds to recognize if it has been tailored
- ✓ Schedule an appointment with ECCS to have your writing critiqued and to receive suggestions for improvement

HEADER

- ✓ Use the same header as you resume; your name should be big and bold, include contact information and address
- ✓ Include the date of the day that you are sending the application
- ✓ Include the company name, full address and the greeting ("Dear Ms. Jennifer Lawrence"). Try to find the name of the person to address your letter to; if you can't, address it to "Dear Hiring Manager"

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

- ✓ Hook the reader in by demonstrating company knowledge and drawing a connection between yourself and them; show the employer that you know what they're about and that you're a good fit for the role
- ✓ Indicate the position and the company that you are applying to and the source of the job posting (e.g. McMaster University's co-op website, company website, indeed, etc.)

BODY PARAGRAPHS

- ✓ Use keywords - both technical and soft/interpersonal skills - from the posting in your cover letter. Many employers use electronic keyword searches to retrieve applications from electronic submissions.
- ✓ Prove/demonstrate your abilities, experience and skills by including concrete and specific examples
- ✓ Consider using bullet points and/or bolding keywords
- ✓ Keep the letter positive, never point out your faults or the qualifications you don't have. Focus on what you do have and emphasize that.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- ✓ Create a nice closing statement that reiterates why you are a great fit for the role and the company
- ✓ Include details on ways in which you can be reached for an interview - telephone number and email address
- ✓ Include a line to thank the employer (e.g. "Thank you for your time and consideration")
- ✓ Double-space after the closing paragraph, type "Sincerely," then double-space and type your full name