



Academic Cover Letter

Your cover letter is your first chance to make an impression on the hiring committee and explain your CV. Use this opportunity to showcase your writing ability and persuade the hiring committee that you are the most qualified candidate for the position. Use professional, assertive language and avoid hedging. Print your letter on department letterhead, and enclose a business card.

1. Getting Started:

- A. Analyze the advertisement and focus your cover letter on those aspects that are most important to the institution. For example, if you are applying to a research institution, emphasize your research history, current research, and research interests.
- B. Visit the institution's website and examine the faculty members' research areas.
 - I. Look for a connection between yourself and the existing faculty.
 - II. Connect yourself to the department, the college, and the university. This will not only demonstrate that you have taken the initiative to conduct your own research, but it will also show how you will fit in as a colleague.

2. Organization:

- A. Your cover letter will include several sections, including the following:
 - I. An introduction that tells your audience who you are and your purpose for writing the cover letter.
 - II. A paragraph that describes and summarizes your dissertation.
 - III. A paragraph that describes your teaching.
 - IV. A paragraph in which you mention your other research.
 - V. A closing paragraph that requests an interview, provides contact information, and expresses gratitude for the committee members' time and consideration.
- B. Each paragraph should include a clear topic sentence and proceed to address the relevant section of your CV. Use transitions between paragraphs.
- C. Write for more than one audience. Remember, there are primary and secondary audience members.
 - I. Who is reading this?
 - II. Who is on the committee?
 - III. What type of institution is it?
 - IV. You will get an idea of who is reading by visiting the hiring university's website
- D. The cover letter should be no more than two pages long.
- E. Remember that the cover letter is meant to complement and expand on your CV, not to repeat it.
- F. Follow the correct formatting requirements for a business letter. (**Refer to the Formatting the Business Letter resource.**)
- G. Remember that the cover letter introduces interview talking points, so when you write something in your cover letter, be prepared to expand on that subject in the interview.

3. Content:

- A. Introduction: Your introduction should introduce yourself to the reader and preview the content of your cover letter.



- I. Introduce yourself and connect to the job advertisement. State your name, and your reason for writing the cover letter.
 - II. Describe your academic status, including the degree you are pursuing or have completed, and when you expect to graduate or defend your dissertation.
 - III. Briefly describe what you have been teaching and your research interests.
- B. Research: Your first body paragraph should briefly describe your dissertation and your research.
- I. Start the paragraph by describing your research interests.
 - II. Describe your dissertation, emphasizing how your work is unique and why it is important.
 - III. Give your projected defense date and include your committee chair's contact information so that he or she can confirm that you are on schedule.
 - IV. Include a summary of your publications and current research.
- C. Teaching: Your second body paragraph should describe and summarize your teaching experience.
- I. Include the courses that you have taught, as well as any that you have developed or improved.
 - II. Provide examples of techniques you have used to engage students, including supplemental tools and technology. Be specific.
 - III. Explain how the teaching strategy worked, drawing upon students' comments. Show how you can incorporate both contemporary and traditional methods to provide a teaching style that matches students' learning styles using available technology.
- D. Conclusion: Your conclusion should indicate your availability for interviews, provide your contact information, and express your gratitude for the reader's time and consideration.
- E. After the complimentary closing, include the enclosure notice for additional documents.