

# SOJC COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

Created by UO SOJC Student Services

Dear (name of person in charge of hiring, avoid gendered titles Mrs./Mr.) or  
Dear Hiring Manager/Committee,

## INTRO

This paragraph tells the reader why you are writing, including the specific position for which you are applying, and expresses your enthusiasm. If you have a connection within the organization, you should mention them here and clarify your relationship or how you know them. Include a brief introductory sentence that tells the reader what you plan to discuss in the body paragraph(s) of your letter, this will function like a thesis statement for your cover letter. In this statement, you should address your fit with the organization and position based on your skills and experience.

## BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

The body of your letter should focus on two to three specific stories that address your skills, strengths or experiences that qualify you for the position. These should connect your stories to requirements in the job description, organizational culture etc. In other words, do your research before determining which skills, strengths or experiences to discuss. You should be familiar with the mission, vision, and values of the organization you are applying to, this information can typically be found on the organization's website. You should also be familiar with their social media content, any recent news, or major projects and events that are happening within the organization which can often be found through a Google search, the organization's website, and/or their LinkedIn page. Be sure to clearly connect your own experiences and values to the organization. With each skill, strength or experience you discuss, you should do the following: describe or state it, provide detailed, supporting evidence to back up your claim (an example of when you have used a skill or strength successfully) and relate it back to the position for which you are applying. The reader should walk away knowing what you can do, why they should believe it, and how you plan to contribute to the organization. You should use the same formatting and style as your resume (fonts, colors, text size, etc.).

There are several common pitfalls people encounter when writing a cover letter. First, avoid simply regurgitating your resume. This happens when you speak generally about your experiences or simply rehash your resume bullets. Instead, focus on a specific portion of an experience so you can provide detailed evidence of the impact or outcomes your experiences had on other organizations and how these experiences will allow you to be successful in the role you're applying for. When possible, your supporting evidence should include quantifiable results. The second major pitfall occurs when you do not adequately connect your experience to the targeted position or organization. Be sure to demonstrate that you have researched what the organization is looking for and can deliver it. Finally avoid vague and passive language like "I have excellent time management skills" without providing evidence of how you implement that skill.

## CONCLUSION

Your last paragraph should reiterate your interest and summarize your key points. Be sure to emphasize organizational fit by demonstrating that you have done research and thank them for their time. Sample cover letters are additionally available for an example of a conclusion.

Sincerely,

*SOJC Student*

SOJC Student

