

Tailored Cover Letters (& High Impact Seed Letters)

Your address
City, State, Zip
Date

(Ms. or Mr.) I.M. Hiring
Title
Name of the Company
Company Address
City, State, Zip (*If you don't know all the information in this section, it's okay - just skip that line of information*)

Dear (Ms. or Mr.) Hiring or To the Hiring Team at (Company Name):

Your opening paragraph should arouse interest on the part of the reader and make you stand out. Give the employer a reason to keep reading right away, and answer *why* you are writing the letter. Do not say in the first paragraph that you are looking for a job – this is obvious and boring. Give information to show your interest in their company, highlighting research you have done and what makes you a strong cultural fit with their mission and values. Doing this research includes looking the company up online for press releases and fully reading their website. Also mention where you heard about the opening as well as appropriately “drop names” of people you know in the organization who would vouch for your work or strength of character.

In a cover letter, your middle paragraph should provide the recruiter with your specific qualifications for this job. In the description, they likely provided a thorough checklist of what they need a person to do in this role in the form of a qualifications, duties, or skills sections. In this paragraph, tell them precisely (and concisely) how you meet those needs and through what experiences. Always refer to the job opening when writing this middle paragraph – if you don't, your cover letter won't be worth reading. In some instances, you may not have a job description to work from; you may be very interested in working for a particular company which doesn't have a position opening that fits your skills or qualifications. In this case, you would be writing a seed letter. Seed letters are essentially cover letters tailored to a position that may not exist or isn't advertised, thus planting a “seed” for your employment or internship. There are a few key differences and they are *all* located here in the second paragraph. In the case of a seed letter, use this second paragraph to comprehensively discuss your professional and technical skills in full, as you never know what will be their internal need. Be absolutely sure to unpack your brain to develop a thorough skills list before sending out seed letters! You will want to present your skills with the most breadth and depth as possible. In both cover and seed letters, your middle paragraph should also mention any relevant accolades and/or experiences from your life. Remember: don't be arrogant, but don't be meek either.

In your closing paragraph, refer the reader to your general qualifications described in the enclosed resume or other materials. Then ask for action and briefly reiterate your interest and great fit. Ask for an appointment suggesting a time when you will contact the individual or company if that is possible (try not to pick a Monday or Friday). Remember that applying for a job is not completed until you actually DO the follow up piece!

Regards,

[Your Signature Here]

Type your name here

Important Notes:

- If emailing your materials, skip the addresses and get right to the greeting, using the body of the email for your cover letter *instead* of sending it as an attachment.
- Communications to companies should be written with the reader in mind. Ask yourself if you are answering the questions: Am I giving the recruiter what s/he needs to be interested in how I fit *their* needs?
- Cover letters should take less than two minutes to read! Read yours – does it make the cut? If not, trim it down.
- Ensure your resume is in great shape, so you don't become memorable for a great cover letter followed by a mediocre resume.
- A Career Services representative will be happy to review a cover or seed letter if you are actively seeking. In which case, write your tailored cover letter using the advice above, get a copy of the job description you are applying for (if it exists), and email Jaclyn-wooten-york@utc.edu and Irene-hillman@utc.edu to request a cover letter review appointment, attaching both documents to your email. We understand the time sensitivity of such a request and we will accommodate you at our very earliest convenience.

UTC College of Business, Decosimo Success Center, Author: Irene J Hillman