

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION & ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

BUILDING THE COVER LETTER

A Cover Letter serves as a one page brief introduction to the employer. The objective is to catch the attention of the hiring manager by showing why you will be productive quickly. This is done by highlighting specific skills and experiences which will enable an accelerated and successful transition into the new job.

A Resume showcases your skills, experiences, academics and professional training - all customized to the job of interest. The Cover Letter supplements the Resume to make an intentional connection between specific skills and the job qualifications. It will be uploaded during the application process in the Application Tracking System or sent via email if the application process is via email. The Cover Letter layout mirrors a standard business letter, one page only, with the following sections:

Your Name and Address

Standard practice is to place your name and address at the top of the Cover Letter. Placement is often centered at the top of the page. Another option is placement along the left margin. Email address and phone number should **not** appear in this section, but rather at the bottom of the Cover Letter in the signatory section.

Date

Skipping at least 2-3 lines from the Name and Address section, and along the left margin is the Date, written formally, such as: June 1, 2022.

Employer Name and Address

Skipping at least 2-3 lines from the Date section, the Employer Name and Address is written within 2-4 lines. The main address can be found on the website, if not in the job description. Do not worry about finding the exact address. Many companies have multiple addresses. If there is confusion, choose the main or home address. If the instructions are to send application materials directly to a named individual, ensure the individual's name appears in this section.

Title of Position

Skipping at least 2-3 lines from the Employer Name and Address, the title should be positioned along the left margin. It is standard to designate the title bolded, written as: **RE: Customer Service Manager.**

Letter Salutation

Skipping 4-5 lines from the position title, and along the left margin, the letter opening can be reflected as:

- Dear (Name of Company) Recruiter and Hiring Manager, (preferred option if there is no contact name)
- Dear Hiring Manager,
- Dear (Name of Contact), (if contact name has been provided)
- **NOTE:** "Dear Sir or Madam" is outdated. Avoid using and replace with the above suggestions.

First Paragraph of Three

Skipping 1 line from the Letter Salutation, begin the paragraph along the left margin OR using an indented style, move one indent across. This paragraph is no more than three sentences to include the position title, your enthusiasm for the role and company, and recognition of your ability to be productive quickly. The following sentence is attractive to end the first paragraph: “Based on my skillset, experience, and passion for Customer Service, I will be a productive resource from Day 1.”

Second Paragraph of Three

Skipping 1 line and following the letter paragraph style from the first paragraph, this section should be a summary of the distinct relevant experience, skills and expertise that relates to the position. This paragraph should **show what sets you apart from other candidates**. It is important not to repeat word for word bullets/phrases from the Resume. The Cover Letter is giving you the opportunity to be more intentional, selecting 2-4 specific skills and experiences, and briefly describing each alignment to the job. Be careful not to write a novel. A good guideline is to write 2-3 opening sentences followed by 2-4 skills and/or experiences bullets representing why you will accelerate quickly into the role.

The Closing - Third Paragraph of Three

Skipping 1 line and following the letter style from the first paragraph, this section should be no more than 3-4 sentences which refers the reader to your resume, once again expresses your keen interest, and makes the offer to supply additional material and evidence at any time.

Signature Salutation Section

Skipping 2-3 lines from the Closing Paragraph, and aligned with the left margin, the salutation may read: “Sincerely,” “All the Best”, “Regards”. Then:

- Skip 2-3 lines and place your name.
- Skip 1 line, and place your phone number
- Your email address should be placed immediately below the phone number
- If you have a LinkedIn profile, the link may be placed below the email address. **Please note:** LinkedIn profile links are seen within a few cover letters, not the majority – do not feel the pressure to include it.