



## COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

### Cover Letter Purpose

The purpose of sending a cover letter is three-fold:

- 1) to introduce yourself and explain why you are writing
- 2) to share some of your skills & experience that make you valuable to them
- 3) to alert them to the fact that you will be calling to set up a meeting

In general, your cover letter:

- should be quick, short and to the point – people don't have time to read long letters!
- should be conversational in tone
- should prompt a person to want to read your resume and meet you
- should be no more than three paragraphs on one page
- shouldn't be too short (ex., "In response to your ad for an administrative assistant, please accept my enclosed resume")
- can be slightly creative as a way to inject a bit of your personality and background
- If you are emailing your cover letter and resume, the subject line of your e-mail should reflect the purpose of your letter (ex., "*Film Student Seeks an Internship*," "*Film Student Seeks a 10-minute General Information Meeting*," "*In Response To Your Ad for an Administrative Asst.*")
- When attaching a document, always use PDF format as 99% of employers can read PDFs
- When attaching a resume, entitle the attachment using your name (ex., *JDoeResume.doc*)

### Cover Letter Content and Structure

- 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: state your name, that you're a student at UT, and explain why you're writing
  - (seeking an internship; asking for a general info meeting; response to an ad you saw posted for a job; etc.)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: who are you?
  - summary of your background, talents, and special skills
  - why you would be valuable to this person and/or company
  - accomplishments
  - what you're passionate about
  - what you have to offer
  - capture the essence of who you are
- 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph: the wind-up!
  - "Attached please find a copy of my resume. I will call your office in one week to schedule a meeting with you."
  - "Thank you very much for your consideration."

### Cover Letter Format

Like your resume, if you want to be taken seriously, your letter needs to look professional:

- Simple, professional-looking font (Times New Roman)
- Good quality 8-1/2 x 11 paper
- Limit your paper to white or off-white
- Typed in proper letter format (note: hand-written cover letters are thrown away)
- No spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors
- Poorly formatted letters are likely to land in the trash
- Should be addressed to someone – not “to whom it may concern”
- Make sure you have his/her gender correct (Terry, Pat, Alex, Robin, Michel?)
- Verify the spelling of the person’s name and title



## **RESUME GUIDELINES**

*Resumes ARE NOT your life story.*

*Resumes ARE a limited representation of your employment history.*

*A good resume MAKES someone want to meet you to learn more about you.*

### **General Resume Notes**

- Don't lie or exaggerate – people check!
- Professional looking
- Should be one page at the most!
- No fancy fonts or multi-colors
- Displaying information in columns and with bullet-points is easy to read
- No spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors
- Don't lie or exaggerate – people check!
- This is not the time to be cute & creative – just the facts
- You should customize your resume to the position you are seeking
- Update your resume after each time you secure a new position
- Limit your experience to 10 years worth of credits/employment to avoid age discrimination
- Don't send your resume on a CD or DVD: it's too impersonal
- Did I mention, don't lie or exaggerate? People DO check!

### **Professional Resume Order**

- 1) Name
- 2) Contact Information
- 3) Career Position Sought
- 4) Experience
- 5) Special Skills
- 6) Education

#### **Name**

- List your name, usually centered on the page, in a font point at least 2 points larger than the body of the resume

#### **Contact Information**

- List only your email address and your cell phone number: do not list a mailing address

### **Career Position Sought**

- List the job title you seek if you know what career path you are seeking; if you don't know, don't list anything (ex., Office P.A., Camera Assistant, Set P.A., etc.); when seeking an internship, you need not to list anything

### **Experience**

- List your employment history or the employment positions of which you are most proud or have had the most success
  - when indicating the time frame of employment, do not list months, only year(s)
  - if you **bold** certain text for emphasis, bold the **position**, not the company (people are more interested in what you did than for whom you worked)
  - most people in entertainment know the responsibilities of an Assistant. However, if it's a job you feel they may not know, then bullet-point at least three specific job responsibilities.
  - When describing job responsibilities, try to use "success words" such as *improved, increased, oversaw, supervised, enriched, promoted, etc.*

### **Special Skills**

- List any special skills, talents, or abilities

### **Education**

- Education is the last thing on your resume and should include only the university name, the degree type (BA, BFA, MA, MS, etc.) and the area of study (Radio-Television-Film, Business, Public Relations, etc.)
- Do not list the year in which you graduated or intend to graduate (i.e., age discrimination)
- Do not list awards, scholarships, classes, GPA, etc.