Cover Letter Format

- One (1) page document
- Create in Microsoft Word (MS Word)
- Page Size: 8.5” x 11”
- Font Style: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, or Tahoma
- Length: 4 or 5 brief paragraphs
- Font Size: No less than size 10 and no more than size 12
- Consistency: Use one Font throughout, no bold or italics

Cover Letter Sections

Header

Name, Address, phone number and email

Greeting

If possible, write to a specific person. If contact is unknown, “Dear Hiring Manager” or “To Human Resources”

Paragraph 1—Introduction: What position you're applying for, how you learned about it, why it interests you, and a statement about what you can do for the company.

Paragraphs 2 & 3 etc.—Specific example(s) relating to critical responsibilities and competencies listed in the job description that you can speak to. Make sure to explain clear connections between your skills and experience to the position you want, so the employer sees you understand the job, their needs, and how you fit.

- Note: If you're changing careers, provide a statement about what led you to transition back to school and seek a job opportunity in a new field or industry.

Final paragraph—Summation: What you can do for the employer and why you would like to work with them. Finally, ask for an interview. For example: I hope to have an opportunity to speak with you to further discuss my experience and qualifications.

Closing: Sincerely, Kind Regards, Best, Respectfully, followed by exact name on your resume
Additional Requirements

- Always avoid clichés ("I am a hard worker"). Highlight your strengths ("I have advanced technical skills"), but always follow up statements about your competencies with a specific example. Show, don't tell.

- Avoid common phrases such as “My name is (should not be stated as you are signing this letter with your name” “I am” (Same as My name is), “I am willing to work at your firm”, “I am willing to apply for your position, “Please let me know if I can get this job or a chance to talk to you”

- Proofread – not just spell/grammar check! Check for tenses! Make sure to set your computer language to U.S. English.

- Use the job description and company/team description as a guide for what to focus on in your cover letter (everything should be relevant to the job and company).

- Your cover letter should be tailored for each job you apply for. Remember to include specific information about the company, and why you would be a good fit for the position.

- Remember your cover letter is not a resume. Use your cover letter as a mechanism to highlight a relevant skills, you think the employer must know about you (in the tens of seconds that you have their attention!)

- Remember that stories are Context—Action—Results (CAR) (and if the results weren't great, focus on your approach and process and what you gained from the experience).

- The overall tone of your cover letter should be "this is what I can do for you / this is how I will add value to your company in this role."