



**POLYTECHNIQUE  
MONTRÉAL**

TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY

Career Counseling Department

# COVER LETTER

**WHEN APPLYING FOR A JOB, YOU SHOULD ALWAYS ATTACH A COVER LETTER TO YOUR RÉSUMÉ.**

Your main objective should be to *clearly demonstrate how your qualifications match the needs of the employer as set out in the job/internship description or on their company website.*

**A strong cover letter should:**

- ⇒ Be **customized** to match the position and company you are applying for.
- ⇒ **Explain** how your skills, knowledge and personal qualities match the needs of your desired position. Be clear about why your qualifications are relevant—don't leave the employer guessing. Explain why you will be an asset to their team.
- ⇒ **Leave no doubt about your motivation.**
- ⇒ **Demonstrate your professionalism and your communication skills.**
- ⇒ Clearly state **how you can help the employer reach their objectives.** Make an effort to use their vocabulary!
- ⇒ Not exceed one page (except for academic positions).

**FAQ** ***Do employers actually read cover letters?***

Not initially. However, if your résumé is selected for further consideration, the employer will definitely read the cover letter, especially if it is specific and original and focuses on you and the position.

***I don't know what to write. Where do I start?***

Ask yourself relevant questions and answer them directly and honestly. Why are you interested in the position and the company? Why do you believe you'd make a good candidate? What have you achieved that clearly demonstrates what you have to offer to the company? Read our tips for writing a résumé on page 2.

***Should I send the cover letter as an attachment or include it in the body of the email?***

We recommend combining your résumé and cover letter in a single PDF and attaching it to the email. The body of the email should be a summary that grabs the employer's attention and makes them want to read your résumé and cover letter.

***What if a cover letter isn't explicitly requested, or if writing isn't my strong suit?***

The cover letter enhances your application when it is well written. If your cover letter contains spelling mistakes or is poorly structured, or if its content is too general and uninspiring, it can lower your chances of getting hired to zero. Therefore, you should take your time to properly work on your cover letter and get it proofread. Seek out assistance if you need help writing your letter.

## FORMAT AND CONTENT OF A COVER LETTER

City, date

Addressee's name (if known)  
Role or position at the company  
Company name  
Full address

**Subject: Application for the position of \_\_\_\_**

Dear Sir/Madam, (if you don't know who the recipient is)  
Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, (if you know who will be receiving your application)

### **First paragraph - Introduction**

Get straight to the point. Spend time polishing your introduction. It should grab the employer's interest. Provide a summary of yourself, explain why you're interested in the company and state why you're applying for the job.

### **Body paragraphs – Explanation of how your qualifications match the employer's needs**

This is the heart of the cover letter. Clearly explain how your qualifications are relevant to the position you're applying for (tasks and responsibilities). Demonstrate why you're the right person for the job.

Give specific examples of the skills you've developed in your past internships, jobs, special projects and extra-curricular activities that could be useful in your new position. **Questions to ask yourself:** *What unique skills do I offer? Where have I applied these skills? What specific results have I achieved with these skills?*

Highlight how your interests, personal qualities and values align with the position and the company. Explain how these assets can contribute to the company's objectives. If relevant, you can also explain your view of the current challenges facing the industry in which the company operates. **Questions to ask yourself:** *Thinking about the position and company, what do I offer in terms of interests, values, experience and achievements that can make me a valuable candidate? What qualities do I have that make me a competent and valued employee and co-worker?*

Refer to the qualities that set you apart as a candidate throughout the letter. Don't forget that other applicants are in a similar position. Make an effort to talk about your achievements and skills that would be useful for the company.

### **Final paragraph – Closing and expression of interest**

End your letter with a closing greeting and express your interest in meeting the employer for an interview.

Electronic signature (recommended)  
Your name  
Telephone  
Email address

Attached: Résumé