

COVER LETTER DOS AND DON'TS

Web Source: <http://www.how-to-write-a-cover-letter.com/Cover-Letter-Dos-and-Donts.html>

DO

- Address your cover letter to a specific person.
- Use appropriate titles, such as Dr., Ms., Mr., for the chair of the search committee, even though you know that several people will read your letter. If the advertisement stipulates that the letter should be sent to the "Search Committee," use "Dear Committee Members" as the salutation.
- Use standard letter format. See the Sample Cover Letter as a reference or consult a good sourcebook on letter writing.
- Be specific about the position for which you are applying. Use the same language that was used in the advertisement.
- Be organized. Think of how you will present your information.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm.
- Research. Know something about the schools where you are applying. Visit web sites to gain specific information that might be pertinent to the positions, particularly if it will allow you to mention courses that you would be qualified to teach or in which you have an interest.
- Vary your letter from school to school although the variation might be minimal. Remember that each school/job is unique.
- Ask your advisor to read a solid draft of your letter and give you feedback. He/she has probably served on search committees before and give you some advice on whether your letter would make the short list.
- Ask someone whom you trust to read the final draft before it goes out.
- EDIT. EDIT. EDIT. AND PROOF. Your letter must be perfect.
- Keep a copy of each cover letter for your records.

DON'T

- Apply for jobs for which you are obviously not qualified.
- Begin your letter with "My name is..."
- Ask rhetorical questions, such as "Do you know why I would be a strong asset to your department?"
- Use exclamation points in your letter.
- Use odd fonts, flashy colored paper, or an unusual format.
- Repeat your entire vita.
- Exaggerate your qualifications or be dishonest.
- Make your letter more than one page.

A FEW PRACTICAL TIPS:

Web Source: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/resourcesfor/soeresources/edcover.html>

1. Keep a record of all correspondence.
2. The letter should be addressed to a particular individual in the district. If that person is not apparent from the website, call the district office for that person's name and title.
3. Use simple, direct language and correct grammar.
4. Use plain bond paper in white, off-white, light beige or light gray. Use the same paper for your cover letters and resumes, and you can use matching envelopes, as well.
5. Strive for a "picture frame effect" with your margins. Business letters are folded in thirds and mailed in long envelopes, about 9 1/2 inches long.
6. Have a friend carefully proofread your letters for errors.
7. Be sure to sign your letters, and make certain your address is plainly visible.
8. Ask for an interview, and include your phone number and email address in your closing paragraph.