# THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

## **Quick Tip Sheet**

CENTER FOR CAREER AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Cover Letter

#### What is a Cover Letter?

The cover letter is a crucial part of the application process. There is no such thing as a "form" cover letter. Each letter you write should be unique and targeted to a specific employer and position. The cover letter is a place for you to expand on and highlight the great experiences you've had that are relevant to the job. One or two of your most impressive examples will suffice. Your cover letter also allows the employer to gauge your writing skills. While a perfect cover letter won't necessarily get you a job, a poorly written cover letter will certainly keep you from getting an interview.

#### Step 1: Preparation

Before writing your cover letter it is important that you get some information in order. First, it is well-worth sitting down and making a list of the most important qualifications stated in the job listing. Then, look over your résumé and high-light experiences, courses and projects that meet these criteria. Based on the job description key words and what you know about the job, what is the company looking for in a candidate?

Job Qualifications	Experience	Coursework/Projects	Degree/Credentials

#### Step 2: Create your heading

#### Add your Resume Header HERE!

	Date	
Contact Person's Address		
Title/Name		
Company		
Street		
City, State, Zip		
Dear,		

### **Step 3: Opening Paragraph (Brainstorm and prepare responses)**

- 1. Why are you writing this letter? What's your objective in contacting this person?
  - Include exact job title and job ID number
- 2. How did you discover the job was available?
  - Job board, internet, placement center, professional meeting, referral, person in hiring firm, career fair, recruiter, etc.
- 3. Present how a position within this organization would greatly enhance your career path and how your capabilities will be an asset to the organization.

#### Step 4: Middle Paragraph (Brainstorm and prepare responses)

- 1. What do you have that matched those needs?
- Reference the experiences, courses, projects, skills, approaches, and abilities you listed on the first page
- 2. Determine the highest priority to the company and give examples how you meet those qualifications.
- 3. Create a few short statements that include keywords from the job description.

### **Step 5: Closing Paragraph (Brainstorm and prepare responses)**

- 1. How should they contact you (email/phone)? Will you be proactive or reactive?
- 2. How can you show your gratitude for their consideration?



