

Below is a standard outline for cover letters that you can follow for a first draft. I encourage you to get your cover letter critiqued by a career counselor, academic advisor, or internship coordinator.

Your Name  
Address  
City, State, ZIP

Month, Day, Year

Employer Name  
Title  
Company  
Street Address  
City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr/Ms/Dr/ \_\_\_\_\_,

**First Paragraph: Why am I Writing?**

- State why you are writing. Are you responding to a position advertisement or inquiring about an opportunity to work in someone's lab, etc.
- Indicate how you learned about the position if you heard about the position from a contact associated with the lab/ agency/organization, be sure to point that out.
- Demonstrate briefly your knowledge of the company/agency/organization by mentioning how your skills and experience match the position/organization interests. This will give the employer a preview of the rest of your letter.
- Communicate your enthusiasm about the position.

**Second/Third paragraphs: Who Am I and Why Should You Hire Me?**

- Use the position description, or your knowledge of KSAs required for the position, to organize these paragraphs. Your goal here is to match your skills to the employer's needs.
- Describe your experience or specialized training that would be of interest to the employer
- Mention specific qualifications listed in the job posting and explain how you meet those qualifications.
- Be specific about your qualifications and skills. Describe how you gained important skills and provide examples of when you have used them in a related position.
- Do not (!) simply restate your resume; provide specific examples that elaborate on your resume.
- Explain how you would fit into the position and organization. Demonstrate that you've researched the position and the organization!

**Closing Paragraph: My Next Step?**

- Close your letter by explaining why you are interested in the job and why you make an excellent candidate for the position.
- Express your interest in further discussing your background and the position. You can refer them to your resume at this point.
- Explain that you intend to follow up to make sure all your application materials were received and state when you plan to follow up.
- Include a statement expressing your appreciation for the employer's time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name: