A COVER LETTER IS:

- A necessary companion to the resume.
- The employer’s first impression of you. Students spend hours working on their resume when the cover letter is just as important given that it’s received on top of your resume.
- A complementary tool to enhance your qualifications, does NOT simply restate your resume.
- An attention grabber encouraging the recipient to read everything you have presented.

**COVER LETTER COMPONENTS**

**Introductory Paragraph**

Explain why you are writing this letter while trying to catch your reader’s attention.

- State your purpose – identify the position (and position number, if applicable) for which you are applying.
- Indicate how and where you learned of the opening in the organization whether by personal referral (give person’s name), publication, and employment website.
  - Your listing on BuckyNet indicated you are seeking…
  - I am applying for…
  - My professor, Dr. Steven Wells, informed me about the opening…
- Briefly describe your academic background (degree/year and major).

**Middle Paragraph(s)**

Persuade the employer you are worth an interview by explaining how your skills fit the position. This section can be separated into two shorter paragraphs.

- State your educational and work experience and how they are a “good match” to the needs of the position and organization.
- Highlight your experience and elaborate on your strengths.
- Provide specific examples to back up these qualifications.
- Indicate how you intend to help the employer and contribute to the organization.
- Impress your audience by using the exact wording from the specific job description and your research on the company.
- Tell why you are particularly interested in the position and organization.

**Final Paragraph**

Indicate your intention to follow-up by opening the door for further communication.

- Thank employer for the time spent to review and consider your materials.
- Indicate your willingness to answer further questions or provide additional information.
- Refer the reader to your enclosed resume or other required application materials.
- Let the employer know when and where you can be contacted and give the employer your telephone number and/or email address.
- Suggest an action depending on your comfort level:
  - Request an interview at the employer’s convenience
  - Indicate that you will call the employer to arrange an interview
  - Mention when you will be in the area if the employer is not located nearby

**Note - Do not assume an employer will contact you when the employer receives your cover letter and resume. It is your responsibility is to follow up!**
TIPS TO COVER LETTER WRITING

- Customize each letter to fit the position for which you are applying.
- Write about what you’ll bring to the employer, not what you seek to get from the employer.
- Be brief and concise. Keep it to one page.
- Use the same font, format, and paper as resume.
- Maintain professionalism, yet let your personality show.
- Use active rather than passive voice and do not overuse the word “I”.
- Never confess shortcomings, give a positive slant to your background and experience.
- Address your letter to a specific individual and avoid “To Whom It May Concern”.
- Go online and search the company’s website.
- Call the company directly and ask for a contact person.

123 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53703
January 7, 20xx

John Smith
Communications Director
University Research Park
P.O. Box 431
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing to apply for the Research Assistant Position at University Research Park. I recently saw the opening posted on the Research Park Job Board. I would like to take this opportunity to show how my background in writing and research, as well as my extensive laboratory experience make me highly qualified for the position.

From my experiences both inside and outside of the classroom, I have honed my writing and research skills. In my coursework, researching and writing a variety of pieces for diverse audiences helped me learn to effectively target a piece to the reader. As the Research Assistant for Professor Madison, I gained several laboratory skills essential for this position including, DNA extraction, polymerase chain reactions, and gene sequencing.

I was very impressed to see the amount of high quality, innovative research that is conducted at University Research Park. It is exciting that the park is home to over 126 companies, because it allows for both depth and breadth in the type of research conducted. In addition, I was impressed with the collaborative environment that University Research Park promotes on local, national, and global levels.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I can be reached at 608-123-4567 and via e-mail at bbadger@wisc.edu. I will contact you in the next two weeks to confirm that my materials have arrived.

Sincerely,

Buckingham Badger