Guidelines for Writing Cover Letters

1. **Write to a Particular Individual**
   Never address a letter, “To whom it may concern”, no one needs junk mail
   Always try to address a letter to a specific person, by name and title
   Women should always be addressed as Ms., unless you know otherwise
   When a name absolutely cannot be found, skip three spaces and begin your letter
   with no salutation

2. **Provide an Appropriate Opening**
   State the reason for your correspondence
   Refer to any prior contacts if appropriate
   Refer to advertisement, where and when you learned about the position
   Mention that your resume is attached

3. **Personalize Your Content**
   Don’t send the same form letter to everyone:
   “Yes, Dave Smith, you have won one of the following useless and cheap prizes”
   The content of the letter should reflect specific knowledge of the employer i.e.
   - Major Products and Services
   - Industry Ranking
   - Future Plans
   - Competitors

4. **Target Your Skills and Experience**
   Your cover letter should reflect knowledge of the position and employer’s needs
   Emphasize skills that are most compatible with the needs of the employer and the
   requirements of the position
   Present any relevant background information that may be of particular interest to
   the employer
   Try to use similar phrases and terminology that is in the job description

5. **Define the Next Step**
   Be assertive and confident, not aggressive or arrogant
   Clearly indicate what you will do next:
   “I will contact you on … to verify receipt of this correspondence.”
   “I will contact you on … to discuss possible opportunities to contribute to …”
   It is not recommended that you close the letter and leave it up to the employer to
   contact you, it really is not their responsibility
   Use specific date as the contact time (and actually contact them) such as
   “I will contact you on January 12, 2000 to…”

6. **Make Absolutely NO Errors**
   Review the letters carefully for typographical, grammatical, or other errors
   Have one or two others proof your materials as well

7. **Use an Appropriate Format and Stationary**
   Standard business correspondence style is acceptable
   Use good quality resume paper that matches your resume
   A 9 ½ by 13 inch envelope is acceptable, this avoids folding the resume
   Use address labels (typed, not handwritten)
NOTE: Always send a Thank You Letter after every interview. Refer to last page of this packet.