Letters are important contacts with employers.  
Here’s how to make a good impression....

**Dos and Don’ts**

**Do**
- Have someone read your cover letter and give you feedback.
- Keep it brief (one page) and to the point.
- Pay careful attention to detail.
- Include keywords/phrases to fit the job description.
- Address it to a specific person with name, title, organization, and address.

**Don’t**
- Ramble or include redundant information from your resume.
- Include personal information (marital status, age, religious and political affiliations, pictures, etc.).
- Overuse “I” and “My”.
- Include anything that’s not true (shine the best light on yourself, but don’t exaggerate).

**Types of Letters**

**Important Note:** Some job and internship applications will not require a cover letter. Additionally, you may choose to submit a thank you letter or accept a job offer by sending an email message. However, the same principles that apply to physical and “paper” cover letters and other letters also apply to email communications. See a Career Counselor at Career Services to discuss professional email messages.

**Cover Letter (Letter of Application)**

This letter is one of the most important components in your job search. It’s the initial liaison between you and the employer. Its purpose is to market you and your skills. Basic rules:
- Send it in response to an advertised job.
- Personalize it by marketing your experience, education, personal qualities, and goals toward the specific position for which you’re applying.
- Include a sentence referencing your resume, as the cover letter and resume should work together to demonstrate your ability to meet the employer’s needs (e.g., “As you can see from my resume...”).

**Cold Call Letter**

Use this to inquire about current or potential job openings. You’re attempting to uncover vacancies and establish communication with organizations about future employment. Personalize each letter based on your research of the organization. This is a critical element of a proactive job search. Basic rules:
- Use the full name and job title of the reader when possible.
- Ask if a position exists or is expected to exist in the near future.
- Point out your experience and/or academic accomplishments related to the position.
- Enclose a resume and offer to provide additional information.
- State your interest in the organization and why you want to work there.
Follow-up Letter
This is a thank you letter sent after the interview. This letter will set you apart from other qualified candidates. Basic rules:
- Thank the interviewer for the interview.
- Remind him/her of your interest in the position.
- State at least two reasons why you’re uniquely qualified for the job.
- If you overlooked anything during the interview or want to correct a statement you made, now is the time to do it.
- Refer to any information you provided during the application process.
- Offer to provide additional information.
- State that you look forward to hearing from them soon.

Acknowledgment of a Job Offer
Many employers understand you may need time to make a decision. Use this time productively to think about what you need, value, and want out of this job. Basic rules:
- Indicate receipt of the employer’s offer, when it was dated, and what position you were offered within two days after receiving the offer.
- State your interest in the job offer and working for the organization.
- Indicate specifically when you’ll notify the employer of your decision if a date hasn’t been set.
- Follow-up and notify the employer on the date you indicated.

Accepting a Job Offer
Send this letter even if you’ve accepted by phone. Basic rules:
- Indicate receipt of the offer, when it was dated, and what position you’re accepting.
- Convey a positive attitude about your future and opportunities with the organization.
- Express thanks to anyone in the organization who was especially helpful in the process.
- Suggest a starting date if one hasn’t been agreed upon.
- If your address or phone number will change before you begin employment, indicate where you may be reached.
- If you’re relocating, indicate your travel plans and expected date of arrival.

Turning Down an Offer
Basic rules:
- Notify the employer as soon as possible as your promptness will be appreciated.
- Indicate your appreciation of the offer and state why you’re turning down the job.
- Don’t say anything negative about the organization and do state something positive.
- Thank anyone who was especially helpful in the process.

Follow-up After a Rejection by the Employer
This is a hard letter to write, but it’s an important letter. You never know when your paths may cross again. This is the perfect time to contact the organization to request feedback regarding the recruitment process and what you could have done to be more competitive. Indicate your intent to contact them in the follow-up letter and then follow through. If you are interested in working for the employer, this is another important element of a proactive job search. Basic rules:
- Thank the employer for considering you for the position.
- Reiterate your interest in working for the organization and request your resume be kept on file.
- Ask to be notified should future job openings occur.
- Follow up in 3-6 months and inquire about job openings.
What to Include in a Cover Letter

Your Name
Your City, State, and Zip Code
Your Phone Number and Email Address

Date you will mail/submit the letter

Name of Contact Person
Title of Organization
Their Street Address or PO Box
Their City, State and Zip Code

Dear Ms., Mr. or Dr. ______: (Never address "To Whom It May Concern," or "Dear Sir or Madam." If you absolutely cannot obtain a person's name, then use the salutation "Dear Hiring Committee:" or similar).

First Paragraph:
Purpose: To grab the reader's attention and establish interest in employment with the organization.
- Provide an opening sentence that entices the reader to continue reading.
- Name the job for which you are applying and say how you learned of the position.
- Mention the name of the person (if any) who referred you to the organization and position, preferably a colleague of the contact person.
- Mention specific knowledge of the company to indicate your interest.

Second Paragraph:
Purpose: Demonstrate your abilities relating to the position, and your potential value to the organization, by highlighting your key strengths and experiences.
- Acknowledge the skills required for the position in which you're interested.
- State the specific skills/strengths/experiences you will bring to the organization. These skills should address qualities needed to succeed in the position for which you are applying.
- Give examples of your skills and any related work experience (quantified results, accomplishments, and achievements). Explain how these skills will transfer to the position.
- Don’t repeat the information from your resume. Instead, refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application, elaborating on/providing more detail regarding how you meet the job qualifications.

Final Paragraph:
Purpose: Ensure follow-up action and extend your appreciation for being considered.
- You may indicate that you will contact the employer (e.g., “I will be contacting you on Wednesday afternoon to discuss scheduling an interview.”).
- Make it easy for the person to contact you. Even though it is on your resume, you should list a phone number and an email address where you can most easily be reached.
- Thank them sincerely for their time and consideration of your application.

Sincerely,

Sign your name in ink (if submitting a hard copy application)

Type your name
Sean A. Morrison

(406) 123-4567  sean.morrison@umontana.edu  Missoula, MT 59801

August 7, 2017

AWARE Inc.
1055 Sussex Ave
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Hiring Committee,

It is with great pleasure I submit my application for the Program Manager II position with AWARE Inc. in Missoula, MT. I was referred to the position by Ann McDonald, your Human Resources Director. I am very interested in working with at-risk and underserved populations and am impressed with AWARE’s philosophy in providing comprehensive, wraparound services.

In addition to earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, I have taken full advantage of my internship and work experiences to develop essential skills, abilities, and qualities with the goal of becoming a human services professional. As you can see from my resume, I am uniquely qualified for the Program Manager II position with AWARE because I am skilled in performing key administrative duties and have proven competency in providing support for clinical interventions.

Currently, as a Program Assistant Intern at the Poverello Center, I contribute to many aspects of daily operations, such as scheduling staff and volunteers. I assist with training new staff members and volunteers by providing them necessary support in working with difficult client situations. In doing so, I regularly seek out opportunities for professional development for the staff and myself. As many of our clients suffer from mental illness, my duties also include assisting with clinical treatment plans and interventions under the supervision of the Staff Therapist. I am responsible for keeping detailed records, maintaining client treatment plans, and effectively communicating information to the program management team during staffing meetings.

Thank you for considering my application for the Program Manager II position. I know I could be a valuable addition to your professional team at AWARE Inc. You can contact me at (406) 123-4567 or at sean.morrison@umontana.edu to schedule an interview. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sean A. Morrison