

## Tips on writing a cover letter

So why do you need to write a cover letter? Keep in mind that although your resume contains information about your experience, education and job tenures, a cover letter can make the difference in whether or not your resume makes it through the first round of short listing.

It's the document that will get you an interview and an audience for your writing sample. A hastily written letter is unlikely to get attention.

- Write your cover letter to identify how your skills can be of benefit to Mater Health Services and what strengths you will bring to the role
- Include information that clearly defines your level of education
- Always clarify which area of the hospital you are interested in working
- Identify areas where you excelled, or were particularly interested in pursuing a career
- Prepare a cover letter with no more than three or four paragraphs, if possible. The paragraphs should:
  - identify yourself and capture the attention of the hospital's hiring personnel by showing your interest in the position/graduate program
  - generally explain how you can use your abilities and experience to help the organisation
- Be assertive and promote the skills you possess to fulfil the job requirement.

### DO'S

- Address your cover letter to a specific person.
- Use appropriate titles, such as Dr, Ms and Mr. If you know that several people will read your letter, address it to the group, e.g. "Dear recruitment panel members".
- Use standard letter format. See the *Sample cover letter* as a reference.
- Be specific about the position for which you are applying. Use the same language that was used in the advertisement.
- Be organised. Think about how you will present your information.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm. Be positive and use positive language.
- Research. Know something about the hospital and organisation. Visit websites to gain specific information that might be pertinent to the position. Are you aware of the hospital's Mission and core Values?
- Ask someone whom you trust to read the final draft before it goes out.
- EDIT. EDIT. EDIT. AND PROOF. Your letter must be perfect.
- If the letter is addressed to an individual it should farewell with "Yours sincerely" and if addressed to a group or committee you should say "Yours faithfully".
- Keep a copy of your cover letter for your records.

### DON'T

- Begin your letter with "My name is..."
- Ask rhetorical questions, such as "Do you know why I would be a strong asset to your department?".

- Use exclamation points in your letter.
- Use odd fonts, flashy coloured paper, or an unusual format.
- Repeat your entire resume.
- Exaggerate your qualifications or be dishonest.
- Make your letter more than one page.

## Sample Cover Letter

**Jane Smith**

123 Melbourne Street

Brisbane

QLD 4000

M: 0400 000 000

E: janemith@smithmail.com

[date]

**John James**

Staff Development Coordinator

Mater Health Services

123 Example Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr James

**Re: Graduate nurse program**

As a new graduate nurse from the University of Queensland, please accept my application for Mater Health Services 2010 mid-year intake graduate program. I am an enthusiastic candidate with all the skills necessary to join this program and contribute to patient care at the hospital.

During my clinical placements at West Ham Hospital, Loganville Aged Care Home and North-West Regional Hospital, I learned a range of nursing skills on the job, while also developing the ability to think on my feet and problem-solve. I especially enjoyed my rotation on the emergency ward and hope to one day specialise in this area.

I work well as part of a team, communicate well, and have excellent attention to detail. I strive to offer the best customer service to patients and always ensure safe practice on the job. The deputy director of nursing at West Ham Hospital was especially impressed with my skills on my placement there and offered me a professional reference.

I received excellent grades at university, including the Florence Nightingale Award for my marks in pharmacology. I achieved high marks in all my subjects and have an excellent academic record (see transcript attached).

I'm eager to find out more about the new graduate program and the employment opportunities at Mater Health Services. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[sign here]

**Jane Smith**