

# COVER LETTERS

## FOR RMO MEDICAL POSITIONS

### SHORT, SWEET AND STRATEGIC

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# Session Objectives

- Discuss the reasons for writing a Cover Letter (CL)
- Summarize content aspects of an effective CL
- Professional presentation, format and core necessities in CL's
- Some useful phrases

# Purpose of cover letters

## To market yourself as effectively as possible

Show how well you “fit” the advertised position description, matching your skills directly to the job tasks and responsibilities

- While your CV lists information about you that assists the employer to know if you have suitable qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience it does not give much information about your approach, attitude and some of the so called “soft skills”
- Some examples of the above are: problem solving cognition skills and critical thinking relating to clinical reasoning, communication skills, interpersonal style and professional approach and tone
- Your cover letter highlights the best of your CV, expands on your key skills and attributes
- Your written expression and attention to detail reveals much about you (the hidden agenda)

# A critical perspective

- Don't write a CL that is a short "rehash " of your CV

YOU want the job, drill down to the direct reason you should get it. This is a key statement in your CL

- CL's show what you can offer to the organization and your FIT
- CL should not be general, do your research about the hospital. Relate your specific strengths and interests to the hospital and community

# Recruiter perceptions

- Perception is the way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted
- Research evidence about order of presentation effects shows that while first evidence or information presented (**Primacy Effect**) creates an early impression, the most recent information (**Recency Effect**) stays in the short term memory as an order of presentation effect.
- In other words, your first sentence or two should grab the attention of the reader and motivate them to keep reading. In advertising this is known as “the hook”
- The final sentence or two should REINFORCE that you are the right candidate
- All the content is important but **the beginning and end of the CL seems to have the greatest impact**

# Strategic sweet content

- **Think strategically about what you can offer that FITS the tasks and responsibilities of the role in your application and target the information**
- Have you been given a **written feedback comment** in a term assessment that highlights your skills, professionalism, patient-centred approach, or any other very positive aspect of your work? If YES, this can be quoted in your letter together with the unit identity. It needs to be short, to the point and well expressed
- Do you have a strong background plus additional training courses or experience in the specialty area for which you are applying? eg. Medical school elective
- Another example: Have you undertaken **medical teaching training** (such as a workshop) and used the skills to mentor and teach students and been recognized by the Medical School?
- Have you been chosen for a **leadership role**? If yes, why? What qualities do you bring to the role?

# Important core aspects to consider and where you can give short evidence

- Attention to always using aseptic techniques ( even more critical in these days of COVID 19) **SAFE PRACTICE**
- Your ability to be flexible and resilient, show leadership when necessary and co-operating with and respecting team members
- Your well-developed **HANDOVER** communication skills. **ISOBAR**, being well organised
- Problem solving and clinical reasoning.
- Patient centered practice and empathic communication with patients and their families
- “Dig” into your experiences as an intern for demonstrated examples and then choose the most powerful

# No single correct format and style but keep it professional

- There are various websites , lots of advice and sample letters eg SEEK
- It's wise to follow the convention of a clean clear format and presentation including core essentials such as contact details and accepted salutations and formalities.
- Don't be tempted to copy letter samples and just change a few details
- Recruiters can easily spot general letters not well targeted to their hospital
- Do your research into the hospital and show you have done it by, for example, commenting that you look forward to visiting a particular specialist unit, naming it and relating your interests to the work of the unit

# Some Basics: Length and Format

- Roughly 1 page maximum( 200 to 250 words ) unless **exceptional** reason to extend to another page for one or two sentences or dot points
- Plain business English ( no slang or jargon ) using a standard font ((12) Arial, Times or New Roman). No fancy page borders or colours, look professional
- No lengthy complex paragraphs
- Dot points to draw attention to important information but don't overuse
- Spacing, spell check, correct grammar
- Get someone suitable to check. **Little things can make or break your CL in some instances**

# FORMAT and style of CL's

Your address, email address, phone number

- Ms Rose Jones
  - Recruitment Manager
  - Smith Health
  - DATE
  - Subject: Application for Senior RMO Position
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- Dear Ms. Jones ( If you cannot find out the name of the contact person, you can write "Dear Sir/Madam ")

# A few useful phrases to set the tone

- I wish to apply for the above position and write to introduce myself
- My name is----- and I have included this cover letter and resume for your attention
  
- I read with interest ---
- As my resume indicates I -----Most recently I have successfully works as ----
  
- Thankyou for your time and consideration
- Yours Sincerely
- Yours Faithfully ( if you don't know the name of the recruiter/ manager) best to be more formal

# Different cultural backgrounds

- **There are different conventions in various cultures so be sure to write a CL that suits the cultural conventions of the job location**
- In some countries it is convention to “undersell” yourself as that is considered polite.
- In others it is acceptable to sometimes “overstate” your skills and talents in a way that is perceived as clever self marketing.
- Think about the various personalities of recruiters as well. Stick to the requirements of the position description and address objectively while at the same time giving a sense of your personality that fits with team work and productive doctor patient interactions. Highlight your successful adaption to the Australian health system

# Summary

- Keep it short, sweet and strategic
- Sweet is using clear appropriate salutations, professional formatting and correct spelling plus the position details and your contact details
- Strategic is targeting the information to fit the position and researching the hospital, its population makeup and any special programs available