

Cover letter for a faculty position

Adapted from University of California San Francisco (source: <https://bit.ly/3n34i8E>)

Annotated examples can be found here: <https://bit.ly/32kMDRS> & <https://bit.ly/32EmoX5>

Suggested layout for a cover letter:

PARAGRAPH 1

- What position you are applying for, where it was posted, what you currently do and where.

PARAGRAPH 2

- What your area of expertise is, what you have accomplished to this date (details in CV), who you've worked with (details in CV). Highlight your strengths as a candidate for this position, make them want to read your CV.

PARAGRAPH 3 (research)

- For a research position: What is your research vision (details in research statement (RS)), why is this relevant (details in RS), is it fundable (details in RS), does it fit with the position, the department, the institution?

PARAGRAPH 3 (teaching)

- For a teaching position: What is your teaching experience (details in teaching statement (TS)), what is your approach to teaching (details in TS), why I our interested in teaching at that particular institution (details in TS)?

PARAGRAPH 4

- In what other ways will you contribute to the department (service, outreach), what have you done that can demonstrate you will do any of this (details in CV)?

PARAGRAPH 5

- Express enthusiasm for the position, the colleagues, the department, the institution

General advice:

- The cover letter (1-1.5 pages) is meant to be a guide to your application package, so that the reader wants to continue reading your application and knows what to look for in your materials.
- Your cover letter should highlight and summarize your strengths and it should help the reader quickly decide that you are a potential fit for the position. It also should be well written and edited to make sure you come across as thorough and professional.

Questions to reflect on before you start writing your cover letter:

What are your strengths as a future faculty, independently of a given position?

- How can you demonstrate productivity (publication rate, impact factor)?
- How can you demonstrate fundability of your proposed research (previous success at getting funding, past contribution to funded grant proposals in your lab, innovative ideas, relevance of your research for particular NIH funding programs)?
- How can you demonstrate leadership in the field (clear vision for your research, extensive expertise in your area, ability to conduct research independently, recognition by peers, ability to recognize potential areas for collaboration, ability to mentor and manage others)

What are your strengths as a candidate for this particular position?

- How well do you fit the needs of the department in terms of research focus (how well can you tailor your communication to the posting, and possibly to what you found out

about the position through your research/discussions with colleagues at that institution)?

- How well do you fit in as a colleague?