

### COVER LETTER

- “[T]he levels of training and experience that applicants use to build their appeal for an interview will vary, but the letters of all applicants reveal their writing ability—how well they use language, organize information, and convey facts with technical rigor. . . . The cover letter itself, therefore, becomes all-important in its own right as a sample of an applicant’s writing.” (Goldbort, *Writing for Science*, 83).

#### **General guidelines:**

- Interpret your résumé for the particular job
- State at the very beginning what job you seek (and how you heard about it)
- Include any special reasons for applying (e.g. career goals)
- Summarize your qualifications for this particular job
- Describe your availability

#### **Expectations to be met:**

- competence in following common work-world practices (formal requirements)
- meet field-specific norms
- readability

**Finally, do not forget that a letter does not just convey information but also exhibits your personality and attitude!**

#### **Common structure to a cover letter:**

Paragraph 1: States clearly the reason for writing and emphasizes key qualifications

Paragraph 2: Highlights relevant educational and professional details

Paragraph 3: Shows a long-term personal interest in the field

Paragraph 4: Formal close

#### **Exercise 1: Cover Letter Discussion**

- A) Based on the above information, what would you expect in a good cover letter? Revise what you already know.**
- B) Read the following letter. Does it meet your expectations? Does it meet the requirements outlined above? Imagine you are Dr. Carlton – what would be your reaction to this letter?**

Dear Dr. Carlton:

I am writing to apply for the Research Associate opening in your Behavioral Genetics Laboratory, posted in the April 18 issue of *Alcohol Studies Quarterly* (Ref #507). My graduate research is on inherited differences in alcohol drinking behavior in mice as a model for understanding the metabolic and neural factors involved. These interests fit well with your program's aims.

On April 8, I defended my thesis on neural sensitivity of lab mice to butanediols for my MS in biology at IUP. On April 14, I delivered a paper on my findings at a meeting of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), in Atlantic City, NJ. Two articles on this work will appear in the May and September 2018 issues of *Biochemistry, Pharmacology, and Behavior* (preprints enclosed). Though I plan to pursue a PhD in biology, currently I seek research experience in a team-oriented academic setting and hope later to integrate work with school.

Animal behavior has been a passion of mine since an unusual summer volunteer experience in the immunology lab of Dr. Edward Boyce at the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in NYC, just before starting college in 1967. In Stony Brook's biology program (BS, 1971), this interest was solidified with such courses as Animal Behavior, Animal Learning, Neurophysiology, Field and Theoretical Ecology, and Non-Human Primate Ethology. I have taught general and cell biology labs as a graduate Teaching Assistant and would enjoy teaching introductory biology and animal behavior courses at ULJ.

Thank you for reviewing my attached CV for a research position in your program. If my background meets your needs, I would welcome an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Goldbort

Enclosures: CV; FASEB abstract; article preprints