

Cover Letter Writing

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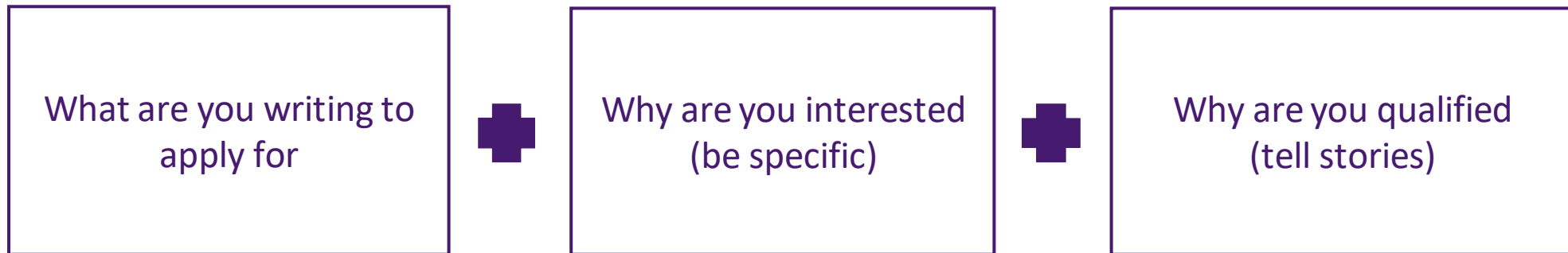
Northwestern Career Advancement

December 16, 2022

Job Search Myths

- I need to have all the qualifications to apply
- In a difficult market or competitive pool, I must have broad experience
- The candidate with the most experience gets the job
- The employer/department knows where I fit best in their organization.
- Communication versus Application Process

What employers want to know



Introduction – Introduce Yourself

- Clearly state the position title (and employer) to which you are applying
- Share how you found the role and a bit about yourself (you can mention connections you have)
- Do not begin with “Hi, my name is...”

What are you writing to apply for



Why are you interested (be specific)



Why are you qualified (tell stories)

Introduction Sample

I am writing to apply for the Patient Care Technologist at Care Advisors. I feel a strong connection to Care Advisors' mission to use automation to improve patient access to care for people who may experience barriers when enrolling in benefits. The opportunity to use my prior knowledge of software development to improve access to healthcare is very intriguing to me. In addition, the opportunity to help Care Advisors' CRM future connect people to the care they need only increases my enthusiasm for the organization.

Showcase Your Interest

- Consider the employer's mission, vision, values
- Mirror language and phrases from the posting
- Integrate information gained during networking conversations or employer events
- The introduction isn't the only place to demonstrate your interest

What are you writing to
apply for



Why are you interested
(be specific)



Why are you qualified
(tell stories)

Body Paragraphs – Provide Evidence

- Select 2-3 examples (stories) that demonstrate desired skills/qualities
- Expand in more detail than your resume can provide
- Consider projects, jobs, volunteer experiences, leadership
- State skills directly

What are you writing to
apply for



Why are you interested
(be specific)



Why are you qualified
(tell stories)

Body Paragraph Sample

In addition to my previous experience, I have worked on health-related technical projects in my current role. Just last year I built an SQL database in collaboration with a team of three other student engineers and designers using data on New York City hospitals' basic location information and performance reviews. With this database I was able to perform simple queries using SQL code to instantly answer questions such as which hospitals in the city have the highest-rated overall nurse satisfaction rate and which have the lowest. I hope to build on these software skills to further help answer questions and solve problems about access to healthcare at Care Advisors.

Conclusion

- Express your **thanks for consideration** to the employer
- If space is available you can **restate your interest** in the role/employer
- Summarize key skills abilities
- If the employer asked for something specific related to **logistics or preference** include it here
- Sign your letter with your **full name**, handwritten signature is optional
- If contact info is listed in the header no need to restate

Conclusion Sample

I would love the chance to demonstrate how my passion for making an impact through technology would make me an asset to Care Advisors. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Willie Wildcat

Tailor Your Materials

- Utilize **skills** from the **posting** that demonstrate you are qualified
- Mirror **phrases, values or other descriptors** that show your alignment with the company
- Consider which examples make the most sense for the industry and role
- **You don't need to include everything from your resume in your cover letter**

Formatting Basics

- Use the same **font, heading and margins** as your resume to create a consistent “brand”
- Unlike a resume it is **NOT necessary to fill a full page**
- Address to **specific person** or employer specific committee/title
“Search Committee” (“Recruiting Team”, “Hiring Manger” and avoid
“To whom it may concern”
- When available include the **employer address** and **date submitted**
- **Avoid use of templates**

Final Tips/Resources

- Optional cover letters - always submit
- Be confident in your skills and avoid “I believe I could...” or “I think I would be...” instead use “My strong interpersonal skills will allow me...”
- Proofread one last time
- <https://www.northwestern.edu/careers/jobs-internships/cover-letter-writing.html>