

# Cover Letter- What you should know

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CHIEN YING KAO

INTERN

ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL

# A Few Things...

- This presentation should be seen as a guide for your own preparation in your own cover letter writing.
- The objective of this session is to answer these questions:
  1. What is a cover letter?
  2. How should you format your cover letter?
  3. What do you need to put in your cover letter?

And some general tips and advices.

# Before you start writing...

- Consider these questions:
  1. Why are you writing this cover letter? Is this for a job application/research?
  2. Who are you writing to? Medical workforce unit/research supervisor?
  3. What is involved in the position that you are applying for?
  4. What qualities are they looking for in a desirable candidate?

# Cover Letter

- Cover letter works together with your CV.
- Cover letter emphasizes and expands the specific parts of your CV that makes you a desirable candidate.
- Cover letter should be written specifically for each position.  
Nobody likes to read a copy-pasted cover letter and that reflects poor work ethics and lack of effort.
- 3 things to KNOW when you begin writing a cover letter
  1. KNOW who you are and what makes you stand out compared to the other candidates.
  2. KNOW your market- Do your research. What is the hospital like? What are the values of the hospital? What do they look for?
  3. KNOW how you are going to fit into their intern profiles. Put yourself in their shoes, what makes you want to hire you?

# Cover Letter- know your market

- Do your research on the hospitals you want to go to.
  - Find out their values, mission statements, visions (official website)
  - Talk to people who are in the hospitals (interns, junior doctors, even your colleagues in other clinical schools)

Example: Austin Health

Major provider of tertiary health services, internationally recognised leader in health professional education and research in Northeast Melbourne. It is world-renowned for its research and specialist work in cancer, liver transplantation, spinal cord injuries, neurology, endocrinology, mental health and rehabilitation.

Values:

**Integrity** - we exercise honesty, candour and sincerity.

**Accountability** - we are transparent, responsible and answerable.

**Respect** - we treat others with dignity, consideration, equality and value.

**Excellence** - we continually strive for excellence.

# Cover Letter

- Your CV or resume is the sum of all the things you have done in your life. Your cover letter should only show the relevant highlights.
- Generally, it is the first point of contact with a prospective employer.
- Your letter should include:
  - ✓ Brief introduction about yourself and state the purpose for writing
  - ✓ Highlight relevant skills, qualifications and experience (Specific for the role)
  - ✓ Cite real life examples
  - ✓ Personal style
- **Answer the 3 Questions**

# Cover Letter- answer the 3 Qs

- Always go back to these 3 questions:

## 1. **Motivation**

Why do you want to work at this hospital?

*(What does this hospital offer you?)*

## 2. **Suitability**

What can you offer this hospital?

*(Can you do the job? Do you fit the hospital's image, values and goals?)*

## 3. **Edge**

Why should this hospital choose you rather than someone else?

*(What is special or unique about you?)*

# Cover Letter- format and tone

- **Tone:**

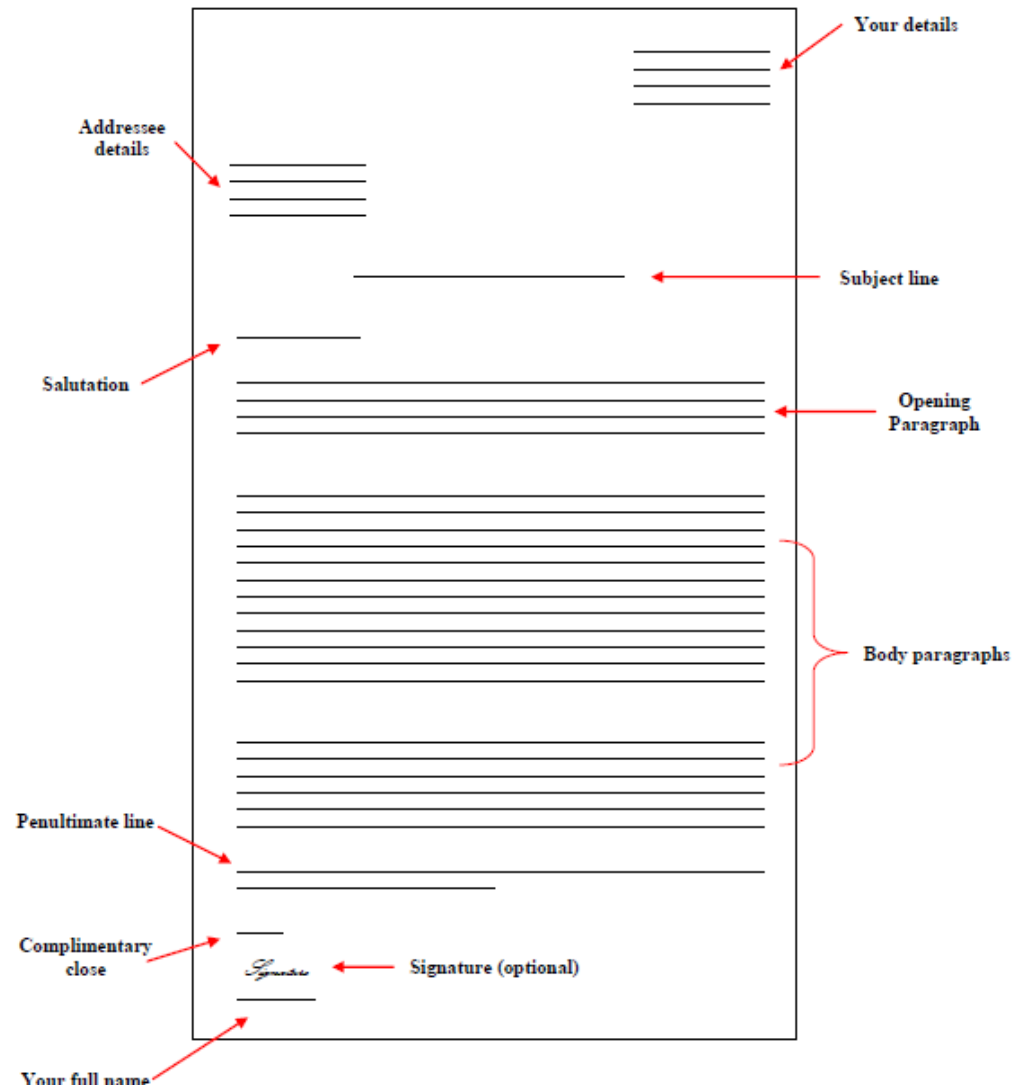
- Professional and succinct
- Written in first person ('I')

- **Format guide:**

- ONE Page
- Your details: name, address, telephone number, email address
- Date
- Title, name and position of person whom the cover letter is addressed to (see PMCV intern guide and individual hospital websites for this information)
- Directly under name of person receiving letter should be the address of their address (i.e. hospital address)
  
- Bolded, centred subject line: e.g. **'Re: Medical Internship Application 2016'**
- Salutation: 'Dear \_\_\_\_'. Always start off your letter as 'Dear \_\_\_\_' and not 'To'. Use their title and full name – i.e. 'Dear Dr John Smith'.
- Body paragraphs
- Complimentary close: several accepted variations. 'Yours Sincerely', 'Sincerely', 'Regards' are all acceptable. 'From' is not.
- Good formatting and leave adequate spaces between different elements of the letter.



# Cover Letter- format cont'd



# Cover Letter- content

## **Motivation - Why you want to work for *this* hospital:**

- You've spent X years of your clinical training there
- You were impressed by the quality of the teaching, particularly in X & Y
- You have heard about (X & Y) from friends working there
- Staff's commitment & positive staff relationships, particularly in Dept X
- Note the research/ programs/ activities you would like to be involved in

## **Suitability/ Edge- What you can offer *this* hospital:**

- Specific skills/knowledge you have developed
- Relevant experience (e.g. paid/voluntary work or extra-curricular activities)
- Your particular interest in X which is relevant to this hospital's research/programs/activities
- Your personal commitment and willingness to work to the best of your abilities

# Cover Letter- tips

- Accurate layout, grammar and punctuation
- Details matter
- Keep sentences short and only mention achievements that directly relate to the content of your letter
- If you did a past clinical placements at the particular hospital, ALWAYS mention this. Mention names only if relevant and you've established good relationships with the senior medical staff.
- Your research and journal contributions/interests and how they relate to that of the hospital
- Past employment/volunteering history and how that helps in your application (especially things relating to multi-disciplinary teamwork, reliability, responsibility etc)
- Mention hospital values and/or mission statement; how have you tried to demonstrate these values throughout your degree?
- Your future career aspirations (be careful with this, always say you'll keep an open mind) and how these will be furthered by going to hospital X

Thanks for your attention

Good luck 😊