WRITING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER
(Career Service and CWE Handout)

The writing of clear, concise business letters and memos can often mean the
difference in both employment and advancement. No one can tell you exactly
how to accomplish this objective, but perhaps these suggestions will be of some
assistance.

1. Pay particular attention to format, punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Use a dictionary if
needed.

2. Type on good quality bond paper; same color and quality as resume.

3. Your letter should be typed. Occasionally an employer will request a sample of your
handwriting or perhaps ask for your cover letter to be in your own handwriting. If so, be
sure that it is neat and legible.

4. Your letters must adequately state the purpose of your writing, yet be as brief and
concise as possible.

5. Don't waste words. Rewrite, edit, and read aloud for the purpose of clarity and brevity.

6. Ask a person whose judgment you trust to read and critique your letter. Career Services
offer assistance in resume writing and resume critique.

7. Make your letter as warm and personal as possible, yet it must also be business like in
conveying your ideas.

8. Be original; do not duplicate the material in your resume. Highlight experience and
education that is relative to the specific position.

9. Tailor your letter to the specific job requirements listed by the employer.

10. Don't try to impress an employer with your vast vocabulary. Write in simple language and
don't use flowery language or jargon unless it applies to your situation.

11. Be prompt in replying to an inquiry received from an employer.

12. Address your letter to a specific person by name and title. If you are uncertain who to
address, look in library reference materials or call the company and ask the receptionist
for an appropriate name and title.

13. Keep the letter short and to the point. Three paragraphs will usually suffice:
   a. Paragraph 1: State your interest and purpose. Try to link your interests to the
      employer's needs.
   b. Paragraph 2: Highlight your enclosed resume by stressing what you will do for
      the employer.
   c. Paragraph 3: Request an interview and indicate you will call for an appointment.

14. Remember you will not be employed because you need a job, but because the employer
needs your services.
Current Date

Mr. Hal Smith, Manager
International Sales Department
PO Box 57346
Hayward, CA 94543

Dear Mr. Smith,

(Paragraph 1) This is in response to your ad for a salesperson in Sunday's Examiner Chronicle. I was particularly attracted to your position because of my interest in international affairs/travel and because of the opportunity to use my language skills and international working experience.

(Paragraph 2) As my resume illustrates, I have extensive sales experience that would be beneficial to this position. I have always set high standards and consistently achieved my goals. I am highly motivated and would be a top salesman for your company.

(Paragraph 3) I believe I would be an excellent candidate for this position and would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak with you further regarding my qualifications. I will call in a few days to schedule an appointment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jade C. Roman