



Cover Letter Guidance

Purpose

This document provides guidance for use of a cover letter in the recruitment process. This is intended to be consistent with the DOP&LR Director's Recruitment Initiatives.

What has changed?

- The use of a cover letter is limited to job classes range 14 and above.
- In lieu of a cover letter requirement, supplemental questions may be used as a screening tool. Supplemental questions should be limited to no more than 5 questions addressing the most important position-specific competencies that are listed in the position description.
 - Work with agency recruitment staff to develop questions and scoring.
 - May use a variety of question types including narrative, yes/no, and multiple choice.
 - A writing sample can be requested, if for a compelling business reason supported by the position description.

Why are we implementing these changes?

- Feedback from applicants shows that our application process is too burdensome and time consuming.
- Feedback from applicants shows that our cover letter requirements have become excessive and daunting for entry/clerical and journey/technical level positions.
- We commonly see first time applicants applying for entry/clerical and journey/technical level positions. We want to avoid applicants becoming discouraged and abandoning the process due to excessive screening questions and other requirements.

What are the benefits?

- Easier application process, especially appropriate for entry level positions.
- A streamlined, objective pre-selection scoring process.
- Supports a more legally defensible selection process.
- Provides for an easier method to compare candidates.

Use of a Cover Letter

- Optional for job classes range 14 and above.
- Thoughtfully consider if you need to use a cover letter, even for positions where it is allowed.
 - Cover letters can create a barrier for applicants.
 - Should not be used to 'exclude' candidates, but to gather information.
- Consider using a brief, directed cover letter where a candidate is instructed to address a few specific topics (i.e. Your cover letter should detail why you are interested in this position and what you bring to the position OR Your cover letter should address the following 4 objectives).
- Create a scoring rubric prior to posting, providing points based on specific skills and experience related to the tasks of the position.

- Avoid subjective scoring on grammar, punctuation, flow, etc. unless you are an expert in the English language. Obvious spelling errors are fine.
- If used, cover letters should account for no more than 30% of the total points in the pre-interview criteria scoring.