Cover Letters:
Often, your first line of communication with an employer is the cover letter. This letter serves to introduce yourself, your qualifications and your interest in a position.

Step one: Begin by free writing about two essential questions.

1. What skills and experiences have I had that would be useful to them?
2. Why them?

Paragraph 1: Use this first sentence to grab the readers attention and make this paragraph as specific as possible to the position you are applying to. No one really loves reading them, be kind by making it interesting.
• State the position you are interested in, or your area of interest, and how you learned of this position. If you were referred to the position by someone known to both yourself and the company, state that connection here as well.
• Briefly introduce yourself, state the position you are interested in, summarize your education and degree.
• Do not be generic in these sentences, but as clear and specific as possible.

Paragraph 2: Describe the skills you have which are relevant to the position. Explain how you developed these skills and highlight those most of interest to the employer.
• Describe how your background matches the requirements of the position, give specific examples.
• Demonstrate that you have acquired a knowledge about the position and the employer, and again make connections to your own personal experiences.

Paragraph 3: The thank you!
• State that you have attached or included your resume and would welcome an opportunity to further discuss the position.
• Thank the employer for their time and consideration, let them know that you are happy to provide any additional information they may request.
Roy G. Biv
148 Concord St.
Manchester, NH 03101

September 1, 2016

Mr. John Smith
Art Director
Company That Makes Art
135 Art Drive
Candia, NH 03063

Dear Mr. Smith,

Use this sentence to grab your reader’s attention! Wordsmith this sentence to be specific to the opportunity to which you are applying. Give an additional 1-2 sentences stating how your skills will be helpful to their organization. Do not be generic in these sentences, but as clear and specific as possible. State the position you are interested in, or your area of interest, and how you learned of this position. If you were referred to the position by someone known to both yourself and the company, state that connection here as well. Briefly introduce yourself, summarize your education and degree.

Describe your skills which are most relevant to the position, using their job description to start with the most critical first. Explain how you developed these skills and highlight those which are of the most interest to the employer. Describe how your background matches the requirements of the position, give specific examples. Demonstrate that you have acquired a knowledge about the position and the employer, and again make connections to your own personal experiences.

State that you have attached or included your resume and would welcome an opportunity to further discuss the position. Thank the employer for their time and consideration, let them know that you are happy to provide any additional information they may request.

Sincerely,

(your signature here)

Roy G. Biv
(321) 555-1243
roygbiv@email.com
Q: Do I really need to write a new letter for each job I apply to?
A: Yes! The people who read these letters and scan your resume go through piles of these each day, they will spot a generic cover letter very quickly and will judge you for it. If you send a generic letter it says to your potential employer that you didn’t have time to research the company and that you don’t care enough to spend the time writing a letter specific to them. Always compose a new letter for each new position you apply to!

Q: Do I need to include the mailing address information if I’m sending it digitally?
A: Yes, this is a good habit to get into. Although you are not sending it in the mail, formatting your letter in this way shows that you are knowledgeable about business practice and that you took the time to research the company.

Q: If I have more information, can I go on to a second page?
A: No, the goal of the cover letter is to condense your experience and expertise into one simple introduction. A quick read of your cover letter should leave employers wanting to know more about you and your experiences.

Q: What type of language should I use on my cover letter?
A: Whenever possible, use words that are specific to your industry in order to sound knowledgeable about the field. When writing about skills and experience, use action verbs such as: adapted, advised, analyzed, assisted, communicated, completed, coordinated, defined, delegated, demonstrated, developed, enabled, established, expanded, expedited, facilitated, fostered, guided, implemented, improved, introduced, maintained, mastered, observed, organized, performed, persuaded, presented, recommended, reviewed, solved, structured, supported, tested, trained, utilized and so on. In a letter, you may write in first person - but avoid getting too conversational or casual.

Q: Is it ok to add some visual interest or design to my cover letter?
A: As a visual artist, it reflects well on you if your documents are well designed and have strong visual layouts. However, all letters and correspondence are meant to be professional. Avoid using more than 1-2 colors, and keep all colors very neutral. Do not include drawings or illustrations, but keep the design all about the content of your letter. It would be a good idea to match the layout of your letter to the layout of your resume, since they will usually be presented together.

Q: What format should I save my cover letter in?
A: It’s a good idea to have it ready in a number of formats - a .pdf, a .doc and even a plain text format. Everyone wants something different! It is also not a bad idea to have a scanned image of your signature available, for when you send letters via email or employment websites.

Q: Can Career Services proof read my cover letter for me?
A: Yes! That is what we are here for! Email or call to set up an appointment to go over your cover letter.
COMMUNICATION:

A large part of any job application is communication. You will need to communicate to potential employers to find positions, when you apply for a job, during and after interviews and many times in between. Communication with employers will come in a variety of formats, but all types of communication require the same professionalism.

Professionalism means...

- Always speaking and writing in correct English - no abbreviations, no slang, texting lingo, and no emoticons.
- Addressing people formally (Mr./Mrs./Ms. or Sir/Madam) and presenting yourself formally by using your real, full name.
- Spell checking, grammar checking and having someone proof read for you, or practicing what you will say in front of a friend
- Presenting yourself as having high standards for conduct (behavior) and ethics
- Keeping your cool in stressful situations
- Being knowledgeable and current on industry information and vocabulary

Email communication:
It is important that you keep all language businesslike and professional, no matter how frequently you email. Never use casual language or texting lingo in your emails, and always remember a formal greeting and signature.

General email tips:

- Always write your emails on a computer, not on your phone. Phones have a tendency to alter formatting in unpleasant ways, may auto-correct words to the wrong words, and will encourage you to use casual language. It is ok to wait to reply to an email message until you have time to do it correctly!
- Always proof-read your emails and do a quick spell check. Never use emoticons or texting lingo.
- Choose the email subject carefully, think about what will get the employers attention and inform them as to your purpose for writing.
- Always be clear and concise in your email correspondence, keep your emails as short as possible without excluding any important information.
- And finally, send all emails from a professional email address - your NHIA email address is a good choice! First-nameLastname@nhia.edu might get an interview and eventually a job, but HotMamaXXX@email.com and AnimeR-ulzzz@email.com will not!

If sending a cover letter and resume via email:
In many cases you will attach both a cover letter and your resume to the email itself, do not copy and paste your cover letter text into the email. By doing this, you will have less formatting errors. In the body of the email, simply leave a formal introduction that will direct potential employers to the attachments as well as clarify which position you are seeking. Try to match your level of formalism to the organization. For example, if they include a dog as an employee on their website, you may be able to get away with a more relaxed writing style.

For example:

“Dear Mr. Smith,
I am writing in response to your advertised position at Art Inc., number #673A: Illustrator. My education at NHIA, experience (insert highlight here), training, and experience (insert key skill) are a good match to the posted qualifications required for this position, I have attached a cover letter and resume for your consideration.
Thank you,
Roy G. Biv
Illustration/Design
http://gallery.roygbiv.com
roygbiv@email.com”