COVER LETTERS
The importance of a strong, well-written cover letter cannot be overstated. A cover letter is used to introduce yourself to a potential employer and provide insight into your resume. It should highlight key skills and abilities relevant to the qualifications in which the employer is interested. A cover letter should be concise and present a clear idea of what you can offer the employer. It demonstrates your ability to communicate in writing and organize your thoughts in a cohesive manner, both of which are pertinent to most positions.

Cover Letter Structure
One page (two pages are acceptable for academic positions)
3-5 paragraphs; No more than five sentences per paragraph
Use key words, action words, and adjectives describing your skills
Be sure each cover letter is specifically tailored to the position you are applying for
Mention contacts and referrals (if applicable)
Always address to an individual; do not use “To whom it may concern” or “Dear Human Resources”

Getting Started
• Your return address at the top of the page
• The date will appear two lines below the return address (make sure to write out the date; don’t abbreviate)
• Include company contact information (contact name and title, address, and phone number) two lines beneath the date
• The salutation will fall two lines below the addressee information
• Begin with “Dear Mr. ” or “Dear Ms.”, followed by the person’s last name

Introduction Paragraph
The introduction paragraph should:
• State your specific interest (include the job title you are seeking)
• Use strong statements that will motivate the employer to read further
• Use a reference to previous discussions or contact - give specific dates to help the reader remember
• Establish common goals and relationships
• Be concise (2-4 sentences)
• Catch the reader’s attention

Body of the Letter
The body of the letter should:
• Be one to three paragraphs
• Be no longer than two to five sentences per paragraph
• Make use of keywords
• Be written using short but complete sentences
• Show how your background matches the employer’s criteria; emphasize your functional skills
• Use a specific example of your skills (if applicable)

Closing Paragraph
The closing paragraph should:
• State that your resume is included for review
• Name the action to be taken – (offer specific date of action)
• Thank the recipient

Dear Ms. Westwood,

I was excited to see that CARE International is seeking candidates for the Mental Health Specialist position. Dr. Barbara Watts, Senior Health Specialist at CARE made me aware of the position, and recommended that I submit my application. I am confident that my previous experience as well as my skills in behavior change communication and program development would prove useful in the position.

In May 2015, I will complete my Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with an emphasis on drug and alcohol dependence. While studying for my degree, I completed a six month internship at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). During this internship, I assisted in developing a specialized rehabilitation program that was successful in decreasing the number of reported alcohol and drug users in Baltimore City. In addition, I have worked in West Africa with the Peace Corps developing health promotion programs and facilitating mental health workshops in poverty stricken areas.

I believe that my skills and work experience in mental health would be a good match for the Mental Health Specialist position at CARE International. I have enclosed my resume and look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in the near future. I plan to follow up two weeks after the position closing date. In the meantime, I can be reached at (410) 955-5555 or via email at jhopkins@jhu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Hopkins

John Hopkins
Enc: Resume

1876 W. Terrace St., Apt #3
Baltimore, MD 21218

January 3, 2015
Sheila Westwood
Human Resource Manager
CARE International
343 Mifflin Ave
Atlanta, GA 94876

Dear Ms. Westwood,

In May 2015, I will complete my Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with an emphasis on drug and alcohol dependence. While studying for my degree, I completed a six month internship at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). During this internship, I assisted in developing a specialized rehabilitation program that was successful in decreasing the number of reported alcohol and drug users in Baltimore City. In addition, I have worked in West Africa with the Peace Corps developing health promotion programs and facilitating mental health workshops in poverty stricken areas.

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Sincerely,

John Hopkins

John Hopkins
Enc: Resume

http://www.jhsph.edu/careers
Sample Cover Letter for an Academic Position

January 14, 2015

Dr. James Gerontology
Department of Epidemiology
Emory University School of Public Health
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Dr. Gerontology,

I am writing in response to your notice in the November issue of the Journal of Epidemiology regarding the position of Assistant Professor of Epidemiology in your department. I am currently a doctoral candidate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and expect to complete all requirements for the degree by March, 2015.

My dissertation deals with the evaluation of access to health care in the metropolitan Philadelphia area. Through my association with the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE), I interviewed 80 mothers participating in various parent education programs. From the qualitative data I gathered, as well as from quantitative data collected by NAHSE, I am evaluating the efficacy of the programs. In addition, the qualitative data have led me to challenge cultural assumptions about health care practices and to consider issues surrounding the mainstream definitions of seeking medical treatment. Since the populations I have studied are largely poor minorities, I am examining the role of social norms and the family experience of these parents.

As you can see from my CV, I have been most fortunate in my graduate student career to have had ample opportunity both to teach and to do research. As a teaching assistant and as an instructor of my own courses, I have been afforded a great deal of experience with a wide range of courses, including Qualitative Methods, Outcomes Research and Environmental Induced Illness; a list of my teaching interests can be found on my CV. The anonymous reviews by my students have been consistently laudatory, citing my knowledge, teaching style, and enthusiasm as highlights of the courses. I am committed to working with students and have maintained professional relationships with many of them years beyond the classroom.

My research interests are as varied as my teaching. I have engaged in organizational research for the past three years with Dr. Chad Everett at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. One article stemming from this work, "Comparing Community Health Centers, Hospital Outpatient Departments, and Physician Offices," has recently been published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). In addition, I have worked extensively with Professor Jane Arbor, formerly of Bryn Mawr College and currently of the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill School of Public Health. This work has included my master’s project on quality health care for the medically under-served in North Carolina. Recently, I independently conducted research on female crack addicts in rehabilitative programs, a project which I eventually hope to address in a series of short papers.

I have been an active member of the academic and social communities at both Schools of Public Health at Johns Hopkins and the University of North Carolina. I have served on numerous committees and have been a vigorous and enthusiastic participant in university life. My involvement spans groups as serious as the University Academic Planning and Budget Committee, the Provost’s committee to which only two graduate students are appointed each year, and as whimsical as the annual talent show, which I originated and continue to run each year.

I believe that I would be an asset to your department and university and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the assistant professorship with you further. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

T. L. Candidate

T. L. Candidate