

Example Academic cover letter for a lectureship - Analysed

Dear Prof Patel,,

I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Lecturer in Microbial Macromolecular Systems at the Institute for Structural and Molecular Biology (ISMB), University College London/Birkbeck College). I believe this post represents an excellent opportunity for me to develop my academic career and I consider myself to be an eminently suitable candidate with highly relevant research and teaching experience.

I did my undergraduate degree in biology at the University of Birmingham where I had my first taste of research. Looking at the role of auto antibodies in inflammatory diseases sparked my interest in immunology. For my PhD, I moved to UCL and looked at the immune response in patients with latent Mycobacterium tuberculosis (TB). My first postdoc was at the University of Cambridge.....continuing with description about his career.

I have published X papers (see Appendix in my CV) and recently gave a talk a Gordon conference on.....

Infection and Immunity. My current work looks at Cell envelope associated components of Mycobacterium tuberculosis (M.tb) have been implicated in stress response, immune modulation and in vivo survival of the pathogen. Although many such factors have been identified, there is a large disparity between the number of genes predicted to be involved in functions linked to the envelope and those described in the literature. To identify and characterise novel stress related factors associated with the mycobacterial cell envelope, we isolated colony morphotype mutants of Mycobacterium smegmatis (M. smegmatis), based on the hypothesis that mutants with unusual colony morphology may have defects in the biosynthesis of cell envelope components. On testing their susceptibility to stress conditions relevant to M.tb physiology, multiple mutants were found to be sensitive to Isoniazid, Diamide and H2O2, indicative of altered permeability due to changes in cell envelope composition. Two mutants showed defects in biofilm formation implying possible roles for the target genes in antibiotic tolerance and/or virulence. These assays identified novel stress associated roles for several mycobacterial genes including sahH, tatB and aceE. Taken together, these results suggest that the M.tb homologues of a majority of the identified genes may play significant roles in the pathogenesis of tuberculosis. I am now keen to develop my academic career further in a highly rated research institution where there are opportunities for future career development. With a reputation for academic and research excellence, I believe that joining this department will expose me to a vigorous research community which will allow tremendous cross-fertilisation of ideas. I would also be interested in getting involved in your joint degree programmes and in your e-learning initiatives, which is an interest of mine.

I currently offer supervisions to students covering the pathology Tripos at Cambridge. I do day to day supervision of PhD and summer students. I find it rewarding and stimulating teaching students and would happily contribute to your teaching. I believe improving communication with the student body is paramount.

In summary, I would like to reiterate my interest in the position and would be extremely grateful if you would consider my application positively. I am convinced I would bring a great deal to the department.

Yours sincerely,

There is no point making general assertions about your beliefs, interests or principles, however relevant, unless you can back them up with evidence of where you have put your words into action.

This is tempting to write but doesn't say anything specific about you or any details with which they can assess you against the other candidates. In this paragraph you just need to say which job you are applying to and (it's useful to quote job reference number) and you can also say what your current role is.

This may sound impressive but on its own, it doesn't say how you have really contributed to your field., Give them details of your main research contributions and why they has changed the field rather than stating the number of publications

Your cover letter might also be read by non-specialists who need to get excited about how your work might help their department. Just highlight the key areas of research which link best to your target position and which really establish your academic credentials.

This is too vague and could apply to any HEI you are applying to. You need to tailor to the specific department you are applying to and show you have done your homework on them in terms of research and teaching.

This is promising in that it shows you have done some research but it needs to have more details to show evidence of your genuine interest, e.g. .what e-learning have you done?