

COVER LETTERS

Purpose

- Cover letters are part of your application pack (together with your CV and/or application forms)
- A good cover letter is able to effectively convey your career interests, what you have to offer and demonstrates your knowledge and interest in the employer or opportunity
- It enables you to express yourself in a way that one is not able to in a CV

Tips

- Always write a cover letter unless an organisation specifically asks that you don't
- Your letter should be in business letter format and not more than one page
- Use clear, simple language and industry specific keywords
- One size does not fit all. CUSTOMISE your cover letter for each opportunity by providing targeted evidence of your suitability for a particular position/opportunity
- Focus on objective (factual) rather than subjective information and descriptions
- Build your motivation by drawing on evidence from your CV (concrete, measurable outcomes or achievements, where possible) to show well-established skills and competencies
- Use your cover letter to present information that is difficult to explain or include in your CV. Address gaps, inconsistencies and weak points in your application in a positive way
- If space is a problem, make minor adjustments to font size (minimum 11 point font) and/or margins
- PROOF READ! Ask family, friends or other suitable people for feedback on the content
- Don't forget a thorough spell and grammar check

Avoid

- Clichés
- An overly formal writing style
- Starting too many sentences with 'I'
- An autobiographical summary of your life and values
- Including lengthy descriptions of the company you are applying to or companies you have worked for
- Simply repeating information presented in your CV
- Focusing excessively on any one particular achievement or job
- Using your cover letter to explain why you left previous jobs/companies



COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Your Address (max 3-4 lines)

Your Phone Number/Email

Date

Company Representative's Name
Company Representative Title/Designation
Company Address

Dear [Company Representative's Name or Company Representative's Designation or Sir/Madam]

[State purpose of letter] Re: Application for ... [opportunity/vacancy description or reference number]

Paragraph 1:

- State where you are at now (e.g. final year student studying XXX, or graduate with XXX qualification), what you are applying for, why, and where you came across the advert
- Indicate if you are attaching additional documents in support of your application (e.g. CV and transcripts)

Paragraph 2

- Motivate why you are applying to a particular organisation
- Research the opportunity/company well so that you are able to motivate your 'good' fit
- Don't tell them what they know already, but show what you know about the organisation through your research and what attracts you to them
- Give *specific*, not general reasons for why you are interested in the particular position and company

Paragraph 3

- Show that you meet the basic requirements in terms of qualifications, skills and experience
- Describe how your career interests, aspirations and personal attributes have led to your interest in and suitability for the opportunity
- Use specific examples from your CV (facts and figures) to show what you have accomplished and have to offer
- Show how your attributes/accomplishments will benefit the job/area of work/company you are interested in

Paragraph 4 (only if appropriate and space allowing)

Outline any difficult issues you may want to flag (disability/illness etc.) It is entirely your choice whether you want to disclose this information in a cover letter or explain in an interview

Closing paragraph

State your appreciation for the time and consideration given to your application, and your optimism in receiving a positive response

[Close]

Sign off with "Yours sincerely" if you know the person's name or "Yours faithfully" if you don't (and have addressed the letter to a particular job designation/department)

[Your signature]

[Your typed name]



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