

## Cover Letter Hints and Tips

A covering letter should be attached with your CV when applying for a role and aims to outline your motivation, suitability and what you can offer to an employer. It should either accompany a CV as a physical printed version or should be in the form of a strong covering email if sent online.

A covering letter will determine whether an employer will continue to read your application or lose interest.

### Top Tips Before You Start

- A covering letter is **more personal** than a CV.
- Read the job advert and understand its specifications and requirements before writing a covering letter.
- Research the company to show that you know their core values and ethics.

### Format and Layout

- **One Page** - Three to five focused and relevant paragraphs to the role.
- **Create Your Own** – Create your own covering letter rather than using one from online to avoid looking copied and unprofessional, and so that your covering letter doesn't lack relevance when addressing a specific employer.
- **Skills** - Be positive and highlight what you can bring to the company to show you are a missing asset. Present your skills clearly within your paragraphs.
- **Email** - If the covering letter is emailed, insert the content into the body of the email (without the postal addresses), as an empty email does not look professional and may be identified as spam or junk.
  - An alternative approach if both the covering letter and CV are inserted as attachments is to state this in your email with the role you are applying for.
- **Adapt Your Writing Style** - Reflect the tone used on the company's website and advert, e.g. do they use formal language or have a chattier approach?

### Step-By-Step Guide

- **Addresses** - If the covering letter is to be printed, insert your address into the top right corner of an A4 page and the employer's name and address in the left corner.
- **Date** - Write the date of writing beneath your address.
- **Named contact** - Have a named contact and address them by surname. You can find the named contact and employee responsible for recruitment by:
  - Looking in the advert, their website or LinkedIn.
  - Contacting the company directly to ask who you need to address; this demonstrates confidence, initiative and interest in the company – sometimes the Director is to be addressed in a smaller business.
  - Use 'Dear Sir or Madam' if a named contact cannot be found.

### First Paragraph

- State why you are writing and where you saw the role advertised.
- If you are contacting an employer about an unadvertised role, explain that you would like to gain experience in their business, and demonstrate that you have carried out research and understand what they do.
- You can include your graduate status and degree.

### Second Paragraph

- State your key strengths, skills and experiences that you can bring to the role according to the job requirements.
- Do not repeat everything from your CV and try to expand on several examples to emphasise your suitability.
- Space is limited in a cover letter, so you need to immediately present your appropriateness for the role and talk about the skills that have been asked for.

### Third Paragraph

- Explain why you would like to work for the company.
- Do not describe completely what the company does, as they already know this and want to learn about you!
- You may want to add your future career goals and explain unclear points in your CV.
- Summarise any additional strengths and explain how they could benefit the company.

### Final Paragraph

- Summarise and conclude your letter by thanking the employer for their time and consideration and reiterating your interest in the role.
- State when you are available to start and show your flexibility for the role.
- Indicate that you would like an interview, such as saying you are looking forward to hearing from them soon or look forward to meeting with them to discuss your application further.
- Finish with 'yours sincerely' and a signature if the employee name is known and 'yours faithfully' and a signature if not.

**And remember to proof read and check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors!**