

Cover Letters

Quick Tips

The cover letter is potentially the first document read by the employer. If you do not impress the employer at the start, they will be less likely to read the rest of your application.

WHAT THE EMPLOYER IS LOOKING FOR

In a nut shell, the employer is looking for the best candidate who:

- **can** do the job (has the necessary qualifications, skills and abilities)
- **will** do the job (are you interested in working in this organization)
- will **fit** the team and organisation (personal qualities and values)

GETTING STARTED - RESEARCH

The content of the letter must be tailored to the job requirements and needs of the employer. If you are working with a job ad, identify the key selection requirements and pay close attention to any other information about the responsibilities of the role. Next, research the employer – check out their website to find out how this role fits into the overall purpose of the business. Look for:

- a recruitment or employment section on their site
- advice on how to apply for their jobs
- information about the organization, including annual reports, clients, projects
- statements about their mission, culture and values

Look more broadly on other sites to find out about the industry in general. This background information will help you write an impressive letter and set you up for a potential interview.

IDENTIFY YOUR KEY STRENGTHS

Tell the employer what you can do for them. Look at your resume. Identify your strengths in relation to the

employer's requirements and find examples you can reference in your letter. **Do not** summarise your resume in the cover letter; be selective and target only the highlights in relation to the criteria. Your resume must contain the evidence of all the claims you make about yourself in the cover letter (this is how the two documents work together). This is about showing an employer that you can do the job and will fit with their team. **Tip:** use the key words out of the job ad in your letter – many employers scan documents for relevance.

IDENTIFY YOUR INTERESTS

You must convince the employer that you are serious about working for them. This is where your research kicks in. All employers want to know why you are interested in them; this will assure them that you are likely to stay. Think about what you know about the job and employer and write about what you genuinely find interesting and how it connects to your studies, professional interests and experiences. Do not copy and paste information from the employer's website.

MISTAKES TO AVOID

Don't:

- have spelling, grammatical or other errors
- highlight your lack of experience
- use negative language or sound desperate
- be too generic
- get the employer or business name wrong
- go over one page in length
- include information not relevant to the job
- focus on how you will benefit from getting the job
- fabricate the truth



COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Your Name

Address

Phone number

Email address – needs to be professional, nothing anything offensive, funny, or obscure

Date (4 July, 2018)

Employer Name – if you do not have this information Google it!

Title, Organisation

Phone number

Email address

Dear (insert name) or use *Recruiting Manager* if not known

Re: Application for [Insert Job Title / Reference Number]

PRAGRAPH 1 – Introduction / Purpose of your letter

- Nominate the job for which you are applying. Indicate the source and date of the job ad or information about the job. If cold calling (no job ad), explain how you found out about the organisation and mention any previous contact.
- Highlight your reasons for your interest in the position and for applying to that particular organisation.

PARAGRAPH 2 – Qualifications / Hard Skills

- Outline how you match the requirements of the job, starting with your most relevant qualification/s.
- Include specific information as to why your qualifications are relevant – placements, projects, subjects, achievements
- Demonstrate how your knowledge and discipline related skills will benefit the organisation

PARAGRAPH 3 & 4 – Experience / Transferable Skills

- Highlight how your other experiences are relevant to the job – employment, volunteering, extra-curricular
- Outline significant accomplishments that will make you stand out
- Relate the transferrable skills and strengths relevant to the requirements or selection criteria that you will bring to the role

PARAGRAPH 5 – Close/ Conclusion

- Summarise/reiterate why you are a strong candidate
- Draw attention to other included documentation such as resume and portfolio
- Confirm your interest in attending an interview
- Provide your contact phone number for further enquiries

Yours sincerely,
First-name Surname

NOTE: Please ensure that your cover letter is written in a professional business letter manner i.e. sentences are used to form paragraphs

IDEAS FOR POSSIBLE OPENING PHRASES

- I wish to apply to the position of (...name of job...) advertised in (...paper or website...) on (...date...)
- I am enthusiastic about ... because...
- My background and education qualify me for consideration as a ... in your organisation
- My extensive background in ... has given me the expertise you require
- I believe I could make a valuable contribution to your organisation

IDEAS FOR POSSIBLE ENDINGS / REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW

- I look forward to discussing the position with you personally
- I would be happy to supply you with further information at an interview
- I believe a meeting would affirm my suitability for the position
- I am looking forward to meeting you and learning more about your organisation and the challenges experienced in this role.
- Please find attached my resume and responses to the selection criteria for your consideration
- I will call you next week to arrange a suitable time to discuss potential opportunities with ... (suitable for cold contact letters)