



Training & Employability

Writing a Covering Letter

Covering letters are important because they help you to sell yourself to the employer. They should give a quick flavour of who you are and why you want the job.

Every covering letter should be tailored to the job and company you are applying for. It is important not to just regurgitate your CV, use the covering letter to show enthusiasm and personality.

Format

- If it is an actual letter, you need to format and structure it as if it is a formal business letter. Be sure to include your contact details
- If you are sending it as an attachment to an email, keep the formal business letter format. Save and attach it to the email as a PDF. This preserves your formatting, looks really neat and can be opened on any computer
- If you are sending it in the body of an email, be sure to be clear in your subject line what the email is for, e.g. *Application for [job title] – [your name]*. Include the same information as you would a letter in the email
- If you are applying through a jobs board, you can do a shortened version along similar lines, keeping it to a sentence for each point

You can use the example Covering Letter template. **Keep it to one side of A4.** They will be seeing lots of letters and won't be able to sift through lots of pages.

What to think about

Research

- Who is going to read your letter?
- What skills and experience are mentioned in the job description?
- What are the company's aims and values?
- What has the company recently achieved or been involved in?
- What is going on in this sector at the moment?

These things are important to think about so you can write a tailored letter and demonstrate how you will fit in with the company.

What to include

Who is it to and what is it for?

- Always try to address the letter to someone personally. Look out for a name on the job advert or research the head of department
- State the job role and where it is based (if relevant)

Highlight your most relevant skills and experiences

- Say a little about yourself
- Detail how your skills and experience match the job description e.g. mention how many years of experience you have working with customers, if it is a customer service role
- Expand on your CV by giving a few specific examples of successes you've had

State why you want the role

- Why are you interested in the role?
- Why does this company interest you? Does it have a particular aim you really care about? Or a previous success you were interested in?
- Write about what you hope to get out of the role e.g. being able to work in a particular sector or opportunities for career progression
- Let the employer know how enthusiastic you are to work in the role

Signing off

- Finish strong - this is your last opportunity to emphasise your enthusiasm

"I am excited to offer my expertise..."

"I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about what I can contribute..."

"I really value the mission and values of this organisation and would be excited to join the team"

- End professionally

"I look forward to hearing from you"

"Yours sincerely,"

"Regards,"

"Best,"

Top Tips

- **Check check check!**

It's important to go through and check for typos, tone and flow. Have someone else read it for a fresh pair of eyes. It can also help to walk away and come back a bit later so you are refreshed

- **Show confidence**

We can all find it hard to sell ourselves. Use positive language to highlight your achievements and your firm belief that you are right for the role. You need to stand out!

- **Be professional but show personality**

It's important to be formal enough that you are taken seriously but this is an opportunity to sell yourself! Think about words like...

Passionate

Excited

Thrilled

Eager

Fascinated

Delighted

Driven

Inspired

Motivated

Dedicated

- **Have a few figures or examples ready**

Including specific numbers, stats or examples of what you've achieved can be an easy way for an employer to see your potential within their company