



Writing your covering letter

When sending your CV to potential employers, you should always include a well-written covering letter.

A covering letter will allow you to express to the employer how keen you are about the position and why you think you have what it takes to secure the job. A CV alone cannot do this.

Top tips for a great covering letter

Follow our handy hints below to make sure you impress!

1. Tailor the letter to the role and organisation

Don't send a standard covering letter to the employer. You can use a generic letter as a starting point but it must be adapted to suit the role you have applied for. Review the job description and person specification and find out about the organisation. Understand the 'essential' requirements for the job as well as the 'desirable'. Read between the lines for hidden or implied requirements of the job.

Only then should you write your letter, tailored to suit the specific requirements of the vacancy and the recruiting organisation.

2. What to include

Highlight any skills and competencies you have that match those required by the role. If a job description or person specification hasn't already been provided, you can ask for one. This will help to complete both your CV and covering letter. Provide examples or highlight past achievements that show you have the necessary skill-set to succeed in the job.

Make sure that you emphasise your interest in the post and your enthusiasm for working with this employer.

3. Getting it right

Don't rush. The covering letter is an important part of the application process and should be given time and attention to make sure it's right. Your covering letter is your opportunity to catch the attention of a potential employer. It is the perfect chance to demonstrate your writing style and to begin to establish your personality in a way that a CV cannot.

Make sure there are no errors or mistakes in the letter. Check it, check it and then check it again. Then ask a friend or relative to check it for you. Don't rely on spell checker to do this for you.

Presentation matters. Make sure your letter is laid out correctly and follows a logical sequence. Unlike a CV, the covering letter doesn't have to be chronological as you can address specific challenges or requirements of the role. However, it should make sense and have a logical flow. If you decide to post a copy of your letter/CV to the employer, make sure you use good quality stationery (including your envelope).

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