



Illustration by Priscilla Fung

# How to write a cover letter

Learn how to write a cover letter that can stand out to an employer and encourage them to think about your application.

# Value of cover letters

A cover letter helps sell you and your application to potential employers, explaining why you are the best candidate for a job. It can show why you're a good fit for the company, highlight your attributes and display your experience. There are two types of cover letter:

- Specific to an advertised opportunity
- Speculative where there is no published job, you're just introducing yourself

Most employers will ask for a cover letter along with your CV. If an employer does not specify whether to attach a cover letter to your application, it is always useful to provide one anyway. An effective cover letter adapted to suit the company you're applying to will make it clear you're interested in the job.

Cover letters should complement your CV, but not duplicate it. It allows you to expand on your CV and include additional information about yourself. For example, explaining your availability for an interview or exploring the skill you gained from a project, which will make you suitable for this role.

## Sending your cover letter

Cover letters can be written in an email or attached to an email or online application with your CV. It is good practice to send a cover letter in a PDF or Word .doc format. This will allow employers to open and view your application on multiple computer operating systems.

## How to write your cover letter

### Layout

If you are sending your cover letter as an attachment, include your contact details and date of application at the top of your letter. Some roles may have a reference number on the job description, you should include this too.

You should try to find out the name of the hiring manager or recruiter to address the letter to, if you are unable to find this information then "Dear Hiring Manager" is appropriate.

Keep it short, clear, and precise. No longer than an A4 page and try to keep it to maximum 400 words.



## Section 1: About you

Begin by mentioning the position you are applying for. Where did you see it advertised?

Discuss who you are, why you're writing and the reason you're applying. Introduce yourself, your college, your course, and year of study.

### Typical phrases:

- I am writing to apply for the role of...as advertised on...
- I am currently studying a BA degree in...at London College of Fashion...

## Section 2: About the company

Think about why you are suitable for the job. What made you want to apply for this role, with this company or freelancer?

Is it their collaborations, their values, the opportunity to work on particular projects, something interesting that they've featured in – do your research! What can you offer the organisation?

### Typical phrases:

- What particularly attracted me to this role was...
- Your recent work in...
- I believe our values align because...

## Section 3: Applying your skills

Apply your skills and highlight your relevant experience. What skills and experience do you have, from university, work and hobbies, that make you a good fit for the role?

This should 'sell' why they should invite you for interview, covering all the requirements listed on the job description. Summarise your strengths and explain how these could help the company or freelancer. Make sure to name drop companies you worked for previously and add context to their company type if they are not well-known or international.

### Typical phrases:

- I currently work at...giving me skills in...
- Through my work with...
- My course module in...has deepened my knowledge of...
- I can bring...to your team



Images: LCF Graduate Futures Careers Fair 2022, photography by Emmi Hyppa.

## Section 4: Wrapping up

This closes your cover letter; your last chance to show you suitability for the role. Why should they interview you?

Summarise your case and how you feel you might benefit from the experience. Finish by professionally and courteously thanking the employer for their time. Attach your CV for their consideration and let them know you are looking forward to hearing from them, to show that you are waiting for an interview. If relevant, mention your availability for interviews in the future and include your contact details.

### **Typical phrases:**

- My experience in..... in line with... makes me the ideal candidate...
- I believe my skills and experience in...would add value to your team by...
- I am available from...
- I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for considering my application...

## Section 5: Sign off

Sign off your letter formally with your name.

### **Typical phrases:**

- Yours faithfully, (if you don't have a contact name)
- Yours sincerely, (if you do)
- Kind regards,

## Top Tips

- Read the job description and give examples that reflect your experience. Keywords in the job description can help you show the specific or transferrable skills that you have.
- Research into the company or freelancer. Is there any current news about them? Mention their values, customer target market or any innovative ideas you could introduce to them.
- Include personal story-telling and genuine connections to the role or company. They will want to hire someone who is enthusiastic about the role and knowledgeable about the company.
- Give concrete examples, do not just say "I can work under pressure" explain how.
- Review your cover letter when you have finished to check spelling and grammar. Always read it twice to eliminate simple mistakes.