

University Centre
Peterborough



Cover letters

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Agenda

- ▶ CVs purpose
- ▶ The 20 second rule & your target audience
- ▶ Front page
- ▶ Personal profile
- ▶ The key skills and expertise section
- ▶ Education Employment
- ▶ Achievements & interests, references
- ▶ Easy read

What is a cover letter?

- ▶ Personalised introduction and supports (not duplicates) your CV
- ▶ Highlights why you're an ideal candidate
- ▶ Usually
 - ▶ 3-4 paragraphs on one page of A4
 - ▶ the body of an e-mail with your CV attached OR
 - ▶ a videoed cover letter
- ▶ Advised that you provide a company specific cover letter/cover email when applying for a role



“If the CV can be described as a foot in the door, then the cover letter could be described as that vital first impression of the person at the door.”

Keith Corbin, HR
Management,
Thomas Cook

Preparation: do your research

- ▶ Who will be receiving and reading your letter
- ▶ The skills and experience mentioned in the job description
 - ▶ The key words (see CV module)
- ▶ The company and its culture
- ▶ Their competitors and market position
- ▶ The sector and any recent news or trends
- ▶ The organisation's current and future aims



The basic content

Your cover letter should address the following:

- ▶ Which role are you interested in and why
- ▶ What are your most relevant skills and experiences
- ▶ How can your skills and experiences be of benefit to the employer
- ▶ Requesting an interview



Addressing




Addressing: a specific recipient

- ▶ Look at the job description
- ▶ Telephone the company & ask (or speak to HR)
- ▶ The company website - identify the manager of the role's department, or HR department.
- ▶ LinkedIn or Social Media pages - find the staff listed within the organisation
- ▶ Lastly, find the most senior person possible within the company; normally the CEO or director.

NB: it can be considered 'lazy' / shows lack of initiative to use "To whom it may concern" or "Sir/Madam".

Signing off

- ▶ Yours sincerely
 - ▶ use when you have the name
e.g. Dear Ms. Green
- ▶ Yours faithfully
 - ▶ use when you do not have a
name e.g. To the HR Manager

Sincerely, Truly, or Faithfully?		
	to an unknown person	to a known person
	Dear Sir, [blah blah whatever] Yours truly, John Doe	Dear Mr. Jones, [blah blah whatever] Sincerely yours, John Doe
	Dear Sir, [blah blah fishcakes] Yours faithfully, Fred Bloggs	Dear Mr Jones, [blah blah fishcakes] Yours sincerely, Fred Bloggs

Paragraph content

Paragraph 1

- ▶ Explain why you are writing this cover letter: the position you're applying for, where you saw it advertised and when you are available to start.
- ▶ Consider if you can add detail about a personal contact or something insightful about the company to personalise your introduction and show that you have researched the employer.

Paragraph 2

- ▶ This section will explain how you are suitable for the job, what is attracting you to this type of work, why you're interested in working for this company and what you can offer the organisation. It cannot be a copy of your CV and should mirror the skills and language used in the job description.
- ▶ Can you support your statements with examples
- ▶ Are you matching your statements against their requirements

Paragraph content

Paragraph 3

- ▶ Explore your relevant experience and how your skills match the specific requirements of the job description, summarising your additional strengths and how these could benefit the company.
- ▶ Power words: https://careerservices.uni.edu/sites/default/files/docs/resume_verbs.pdf

Paragraph 4

- ▶ Reiterate your interest in the role and desire for a personal interview. You may wish to add any dates/times that you are unavailable for interview.
- ▶ Thank the employer and say how you are looking forward to receiving a response.

Easy read



- ▶ Is the content clear, focused and the match between you and the role is obvious
- ▶ Keep the layout clean, clear with white space
- ▶ Stick to the point, be concise and effective in your communication
- ▶ Only use imagery if appropriate
- ▶ Avoid using bright paper or coloured text
- ▶ If submitting a video cover letter, watch the video back to make sure the sound, the background noise and surroundings appropriate
- ▶ Ask someone to proofread your document for typos, spelling, grammar etc.
- ▶ Check that the formatting is consistent throughout the document

Final checks

- ▶ Is it tailored to the role and company - mass mailshots are unfocused and obvious- employers will notice!
- ▶ You have included your CV either
 - ▶ (a) **behind** your cover letter if posting or
 - ▶ (b) as an attachment if uploading/emailing

Letter layout

	Your address line 1
	Address Line 2
	Address Line 3
	Phone
	Email
Addressee name	
Address job title	
Company address Line 1	
Company address Line 2	
Company address Line 3	
dd/mm/yy	
To/Dear [name or their job title],	
RE: Job Title you are applying for	
Paragraph 1...	
Paragraph 2...	
Paragraph 3...	
Paragraph 4...	
Yours sincerely/faithfully,	
<i>signature</i>	
Your Name	

Online layout

Subject line: Job title, Reference Number (if given)
- your first and last name

To/Dear [name or their job title],

RE: Job Title you are applying for

Paragraph 1...

Paragraph 2...

Paragraph 3...

Paragraph 4...

Or a shortened version of the paragraphs

Yours sincerely/faithfully,

Your Name

Phone Number

Email

Example cover letters/helpful info

www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-lettersLinks to an external site

www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/graduate-cover-letter-template/

www.grb.uk.com/careers-advice/graduate-cover-letter

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-cvs/271393-covering-letter-essentials-for-graduate-vacancies>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/get-a-job/covering-letter>

Following up

It is a necessity:

- ▶ It demonstrates initiative, confidence and proactivity
- ▶ It gives the employer/recruiter a personal connection to you

Be prepared when you call

Plan so that you are focused

- ▶ Introduce yourself and ask the employer for a few minutes.
- ▶ Check the application has been received
- ▶ Be engaging and specific in your discussion - highlight certain points made on your cover letter.
- ▶ Ask the employers if they have any questions for you- be prepared to answer any questions that may arise



Follow-up example

- ▶ “Hi. This is _____ calling. On _____, I applied for the _____ position in your company. I’m calling to make sure you received my CV and reiterate my interest in the position.”
- ▶ Think about the questions the employer may ask you, prepare and practice potential answers until they sound natural.

Alternatively

- ▶ Send a brief, follow up email (Received CV? Reiterating your enthusiasm for company and role)
- ▶ NB This has less impact

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