



## COVERING LETTERS

Like your CV, your cover letter is an opportunity to impress your potential employer with your skills and how well you would fit in with their organisation.

The covering letter is an opportunity to 'sell' these skills and demonstrates how professional you are and the preparation you have placed in applying to them. You want to make a big impression and here is the opportunity to do so.

How you format the cover letter (content and presentation) is important; even when you are submitting your application via email or online. It is important to ensure that the grammar and spelling is correct. I often find it is better to print off the letter and read it as though you had received the letter yourself. Another option is to allow another person to proof read for you.

In principal your cover letter is a formal business letter, which includes a formal salutation, closing and signature. It is normally formatted in paragraph form and each cover letter is aligned and adapted to each application you make.

By aligning your letter it demonstrates your preparation and also allows for you to demonstrate your qualifications and skills that match the role you are applying for.

Having considered the above, how do you set the letter out and what should you include?

The letter consists of 3 main areas and each one represents a paragraph.

### **Paragraph 1 – What is the reason for you writing the letter?**

- When responding to a specific job listed, let the organisation where you saw the job advertised / who told you about it etc. Include the job title in this paragraph. The first paragraph is also your opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm and how you believe you would fit into the position with your experience and qualifications.
- If you have identified an organisation you would like to work with, you may want to enquire about job opportunities with them. As the letter is not in response to a specific opening it is important to highlight your specific job objective and one which captures the reader's attention.
- The final type of covering letter is about 'networking'. Here you are writing to obtain information from an individual / organisation and need to have that clear and specific, again so that it gains the readers attentions and drives a response to you.



In all of the above situations, if someone has recommended you contact the organisation. Ensure you provide the name of this contact and the context in which they have referred you. By doing this, it encourages the reader to keep reading.

**✚ Paragraph 2 – What do you have to offer the organisation you are applying to?**

- Having seen the job advertised and read it through, you will now understand what the company is looking for and what, if any, experience / qualifications they require. In paragraph 2 you have the opportunity to tell the organisation what you can offer in relation to the specific role.
- Focus on what you can offer the employer, rather than what they can offer you. Doing this will allow you to express your potential to fulfil the needs of the employer. Provide evidence of what you know of the organisation (looking online to research the company, reading their financial level in a relevant journal etc.). Researching the company allows you to align your skills to that of the job spec and those used in the company.
- Highlighting your educational achievements and skills such as problem solving, demonstrates to your potential employer what skills are transferrable and relevant to the advertised position.

**✚ Paragraph 3 – How will you follow up on the application with the organisation?**

- Closing your letter on a positive note by reiterating your interest keeps the reader interested. Don't forget to put your contact details on and the preferred method of contact so that you can be contacted.
- If you have already been introduced to the company, you can informally instruct the potential employer of your intention to get in contact by telephone in xxxx days to agree a mutually convenient time to meet. The important thing here is to ensure that you do make the call when you say you will call. Some employers advertise without any contact details, so you may not always be able to call them. Doing the research will allow you to adapt your close accordingly.
- If you do not live in the area of the job, the final paragraph allows you to highlight when you will be in the area to meet.
- The final area to consider in paragraph 3 is about how references can be obtained and the availability of you portfolio, certificates or examples of work to support your application.

**Considering the above, 'What other considerations should you be aware of for the Cover Letter?'**

A cover letter should;



- ✚ Be no more than 4 paragraphs and on one side of A4 paper. Where necessary, adjust the margins.
- ✚ Use a basic font (Arial, Calibri, Verdana or Times New Roman work well). Your application may be read by a tracking system and these work best with simple font / formatting. Ensure that the font matches that of your CV.
- ✚ Have a space between each paragraph, after the introduction and before the close.
- ✚ Ideally be in 12 point font size and be a margin size of 1. This can be adjusted if you need to condense your letter onto one page. I would highly recommend going no smaller than 10 point font size.
- ✚ Always be proof read before sending or uploading. Adjust accordingly where needed.

If you would like our assistance on cover letters please contact [info@graduatedawn.com](mailto:info@graduatedawn.com) or call Christine on 07711562407.