

# Cover Letter FAQs

## What is a Cover Letter?

- A Cover Letter is a 1 page document (or longer is specified in the job description), structured in paragraphs, explaining how your experience meets the role criteria and why you would be the best candidate. Many jobs will require you to write a Cover Letter as part of your application.
- If a Cover Letter is required, it is best practice to structure it as a letter.

## What is the difference between a CV and Cover Letter?

- Many jobs will require you to submit a Cover Letter along with your CV. The information in both documents will likely be very similar however the main differences are structure and content:
- A CV outlines the facts - your education, qualifications, skills and job history. A Cover Letter expands on these facts to show how they make you the best candidate.
- Your Cover Letter should expand on:
  - Your experience - tell us more about your roles/responsibilities and what you learnt. Clearly link back to the Job Description.
  - Your research - outline why you want to apply for this role/company/industry.
  - You could also refer to your education/qualifications - why are your subject choices relevant to this role/industry?

## How long should my Cover Letter be?

- Your Cover Letter should be no more than 1 side of A4 (unless the role you are applying for states differently).
- You should aim to write around 3 or 4 paragraphs.

## How should I structure my Cover Letter?

- You should use paragraphs.
- We recommend using a commonly used and easy to read font (like Calibri, Times New Roman and Arial), size 10-12, black text only.
- Try to avoid using 'I' too much as this can seem a bit informal e.g. say something like 'working as part of a team to reach x goal, enabled me to improve my communication and teamwork skills'.

## Should I have a different Cover Letter for each role I apply for?

- You should tailor your cover letter to each role you apply for. We recommend having a template (general Cover Letter) that can be copied and adapted to fit each role you apply for to help save you time.

### **Who do I address my Cover Letter to?**

- You should address your Cover Letter to the recruiter/Hiring Manager reviewing your application. There will likely be contact details for this person on the Job Description or you can research on their website or LinkedIn.
- If you can't find them you can write 'Dear Hiring Manager'.

### **How should I end my Cover Letter?**

- It is recommended that you end your Cover Letter in a formal manner, for example, 'yours sincerely, John Smith'
- It is also good to highlight again in a brief sentence why you think this opportunity will be good for you and that you are excited to hear from them about the next stage of the application process.

### **What details should I include in my Cover Letter?**

- Include key contact details like your name, phone number and email address. You can include other personal details like your home address and your LinkedIn profile.

### **How do I make my Cover Letter stand out?**

- Proofread!
  - Check for spelling and grammar mistakes. Try and get someone (friend, family, teacher etc) to read through your Cover Letter to check for mistakes.
- Structure.
  - Make sure that your Cover Letter is clearly structured and is easy to read. Every word and every sentence should have a purpose, be clear and concise.
- Research!
  - Make sure that you have researched the role, company and industry you are applying to.
  - The role you are applying for will have a job description stating key skills and experience they are looking for in a candidate. You want to try and use their key words within your Cover Letter. For example, if they list communication and teamwork as skills they are looking for, make sure to provide examples of times where you have showcased these skills.
  - Make sure to say why you are interested in this specific company. Talk about the company values, any work they are doing that fascinates you, why this company would be a good suit for you and what you can bring.
  - State why you are interested in this industry. What interests you about this industry? What are your dream roles? How has your work experience/education/skills prepared you for this industry?
- Make sure your experience is all relevant and clearly links to the role/industry you are applying to. Include any experience you have with the company or industry.

- If you have limited experience, highlight your skills and how your skills prepare you for this role.
- Don't be negative about having limited experience - this is okay! Focus on your accomplishments and your passion for the industry.

### **Sending your application**

- Save your CV, Cover Letter and any other relevant documents as PDFs.
- If sending by email, make sure all relevant documents are attached.
- Write a brief outline to the recipient: Dear X, Please see attached my application for X role. If you have any questions, please get in touch. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Sign off...
- Subject line may be specified in the Job Description, otherwise use the job role as the subject.

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