

Covering Letters

What is a covering letter and when should I use it?

- If you are applying for an advertised vacancy, which requires a CV, and covering letter the letter informs the employer what job you wish to apply for (they might have several vacancies) and should also inform the employer where you saw the vacancy advertised or if you are making a speculative approach.
- A covering letter introduces you to the employer and informs them of your interest in a particular area of work
- If you are making a speculative approach to an employer it is a way of showing that you have researched the company and can see how your skills would be desirable as a prospective employee.

How do I write a covering letter?

- Keep your letter to one side of A4, plain, white paper and use black ink.
- Unless a handwritten letter is requested, a word processed letter looks more professional
- Use a clear font - Verdana, Trebuchet and Arial are good choices. Ones that simulate handwriting can sometimes be difficult to read when sent as an attachment.
- If a handwritten letter is requested, make sure it's clear, neat and smudge-free with no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Aim for no more than three or four paragraphs with complete sentences that are not too long.
- Make sure you've got good, wide margins 2.5cm-3cm and put two line spaces between each paragraph.

- Make sure your letter has both your address and the prospective employer's address at the top.
- If known, address the letter to a named person; use the name as it appears on the advertised vacancy. If no particular name was mentioned and you cannot identify the named contact use Sir or Madam.
- If the letter is addressed to a named person, end it with 'Yours sincerely'. If not, use 'Yours faithfully'. Follow this with a 5 line space and type your name in full
- Finally add your signature between yours faithfully/ sincerely
- Keep a copy of any information you send an employer as it could be a while before you are invited to an interview, especially if they keep your details on file for future vacancies

Some useful reference point for letter writing.
www.workthing.com/career-advice/cv-writing
www.speakspeak.com/html/d_resources.htm