

Covering letter tips

When you send your CV in to an employer it is very important to send a covering letter in with it, whether you are responding to a job advert or just sending it in on the off chance there are any jobs (speculative letters).

Your covering letter is the first thing an employer sees of you so it needs to stand out from the crowd.

When writing your covering letter you should:

Customise your letter to the position. Make sure you pick out the parts of your CV that relate to the job you are applying for.



For example: A person applying for a job waiting tables might have worked in a pub for 3 years and waited on tables for 1, but the covering letter will mention 'waited tables for 1 year' and highlight the skills they have gained which will help them as a waiter, such as friendly and able to listen to orders carefully.

Show that you've done your homework. The covering letter offers the perfect opportunity to show what you know about the company to which you're applying and how it fits in with your experience. This may help give you an edge over other applicants.

Outline why you are attracted to the specific opportunity. *For example: If you are applying for a job waiting on tables, indicate that you are passionate about the hospitality industry, that you have a lot of experience of this sector etc.*

Highlight your unique selling points. *For example: Four years' experience in the hospitality sector has given me a great insight into the inner workings of a restaurant.*

The covering letter puts flesh on the bare bones of the CV. Use this as an opportunity to expand on the statements and facts in your CV.

Style

- Use one page of A4 paper and write four or five paragraphs.
- Address your letter to a named person, even if you have to contact the organisation to ask who deals with recruitment.
- Include your contact details and the employer's (including their title e.g.: Mr, Mrs etc).
- Make sure your grammar and spelling are perfect.

- Use a professional tone.
- Link your writing style to the industry, e.g. covering letters for a job as a waitress will be less formal than those for an internship at a bank.

- Don't use lined paper, coloured paper, fancy fonts or paper with punched holes!

Spell-check and then double-check your spelling and grammar. Spell checkers won't pick up *form* instead of *from* or *ant* instead of *a*.