Covering Letters

When you send a CV or application form to an employer you should always send a covering letter with it (unless specifically asked not to do so).

The content of the covering letter is as important as the content of your CV. Employers tend to read covering letters first, so your letter should give a favourable impression of your suitability for the job thus encouraging them to read the CV.

The covering letter should be word processed and no more than one side of A4 in length.

A covering letter should generally follow this basic format:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dear (title - Mr/Ms etc) and Surname

**PARAGRAPH 1**
State why you are writing (e.g. for a job that has been advertised or speculatively to see if the company has any specific opportunities) and what you are doing at the moment (e.g. course, institution, when you will graduate).

**PARAGRAPH 2**
Say why you are interested in that company in particular and that specific vacancy. Show that you have researched the company and are familiar with their products or services.

**PARAGRAPH 3**
Match your most relevant skills/knowledge to the job and give examples of any relevant experience. You can refer to those sections of your CV which particularly support your application.

End on a positive note and state when you will be available for interview.

Yours sincerely (if letter addressed to named person)
Yours faithfully (if letter addressed Dear Sir/Madam)

Signature (but also print or word process your name underneath for legibility).

**Covering Letters - General Points**

- Use one side of A4 paper.
- Space your letter evenly over the whole page.
- Word process your letter unless specifically asked for handwriting.
- Try to address your letter to a named person in the company.
- Give brief evidence to show you meet the employer’s criteria.
- Say why the job and company appeal to you.
- You can use your letter to mention special circumstances e.g. a disability.
- Use a business letter format.

Finally, Careers Service staff can offer help and advice on Covering Letters.

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