



Cover Letter Guidance

Many employers ask for a Cover Letter so let's look at what this means for anyone making a job application. Remember it is an opportunity to sell yourself.

- What is a Cover Letter?
- How should I put it together?
- What should I say and how long should it be?
- How different is it from what I say in my CV

Here is guidance as to what it should look like and how to get your message to the potential employer.

Different types of cover letters

There are three popular types of cover letters,

- Application cover letter
- Speculative cover letter
- Networking cover letter

The most frequently used is when submitting your job application. We shall look at all three types and offer guidance on each.

Application cover letter is sent with a cv and written for a specific job. It highlights your main skills and qualification.

Speculative cover letter is sent when you're inquiring about open positions at an organisation you are interested in.

Networking cover letter is sent when you're asking career-related advice and job opportunities within your work community. Usually more casual and shorter since they are often sent to friends, former colleagues, mentors and contacts.

Each cover letter should be **customised to its audience and personalised to you reflecting your character**. Most people, including hiring managers and recruiters, can tell if you have written a generic cover letter and might think it's a lack of genuine interest. Best to use a template as an outline and fill it in with information that is unique to you, the company and position.

How should I put it together?



Start by researching the organisation and the role you are applying for.

- *What does the organisation do?*
- *Who are its competitors?*
- *Who is its target audience or customers?*
- *What does the role involve?*
- *What are the essential skills in the role description?*



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Once you have the answers you will be able to make it clear in your cover letter how your skills and abilities match up with what the employer is looking for. It also shows that you have a real interest in the specific role and organisation.

What should it say and how long should it be?

1. Show honest interest and enthusiasm

Introductory paragraph: state why the organisation and job interests you. Include a sentence that conveys your passion for what the organisation does, show why you want this opportunity, specifically.

2. Share relevant skills and experience

Tell them about your skills and experiences that match the job requirements. For instance, when applying for a job that needs a specific skill, tell them when you have used this or similar skill to deliver good results (avoid just copying from your CV).

4. Include a clear call to action

Consider what you want to happen next and include a request at the end of the letter. You might ask the reader to review your cv, schedule a call or agree to meet with you in person or virtually.

You can also state that you will follow up with them in a specified amount of time, so they have an incentive to respond to your letter.

Check that it meets the needs!

Ask a friend or one of the WJCS advisors to check your cover letter. Does it reflect the requirements in the job advert? Is it specific to the organisation you're applying to?

Keep your letter to one page ideally between 400-800 words. Is your grammar correct and are there any typo's. The best approach is to take your time. Consider writing your cover letter as though you were trying to advertise a friend's skills to a potential employer.

[See Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[See useful Links](#)

[See Example Cover templates](#)



Frequently asked questions

Is it okay to not send a cover letter?

Unless a job posting specifically states that they don't accept cover letters, including one may help your application. Your cover letter can make the difference between you getting the role over another candidate. If applying on-line through a company portal, you can attach the cover letter at the end of the on-line process as additional information.

Do employers care about cover letters?

Employers care about cover letters because they're a chance to understand you better. Having a cover letter is valuable for applications to large organisations because they may sort candidates by only considering those with cover letters. Equally, small organisations may highly value your cover letter to learn more about you.

What do employers really want in a cover letter?

Employers want to see how your skills and achievements apply to the role. Writing a cover letter can highlight your enthusiasm and let recruiters know why you're the ideal candidate. Employers reading your cover letter want you to tell them what you can bring to the role.

How can I avoid some common mistakes on cover letters?

Here are some tips to avoid common mistakes when writing your cover letter:

Be concise. Cover letters have the best effect as a single page in length. Aim to have between 400 and 800 words to keep your letter relevant and concise.

Mention the role. Cover letters are an opportunity to market yourself as a great candidate for the role, so mention how your unique qualities make you a contender.

Edit your letter. Sometimes, when people are applying for many roles, typos and small mistakes can be easy to miss. Taking the time to review your cover letter before submitting it may make all the difference with the recruiter.



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How do I explain a gap in my working history?

A cover letter is the perfect opportunity to explain any gaps you might have in your CV. Because although your CV will show the times you weren't working, it won't explain why.

Instead, use your cover letter to be honest and positive about the gaps in your work history. These can be due to the pandemic, travel, family/medical, taking care of children, sabbatical, relocation or education. In many of these cases you will have developed transferable skills. For example, caring for a young family or elderly relatives demonstrates great skills in organisation, planning, problem solving, decision making, resilience and communication.

Also, being proactive about your reasoning for any gaps is vital to ensure future employers don't jump to any conclusions about your work ethic.

How do I explain my lack of English skills?

Be honest about your level of English if it's not your first language and the reason, but also emphasise what you're actively doing to develop these language skills and your commitment to continuing to learn. Don't forget having multiple language skills is a real asset for many organisations.

Useful links

[Free cover letter template | reed.co.uk](https://www.reed.co.uk)

[Free Cover Letter Templates | Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)



Example cover letter templates.

For inspiration, here are some primary cover letter templates you may use to write your own cover letter:

Example 1

[Your name]
[Email]
[Address]
[Phone number]

[Hiring manager's name]
[Hiring manager's company name]
[Company address]

[Today's Date]

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms **[Hiring managers name - if not known, simply Sir/Madam]**

I would like to communicate my interest in the [position] posting with [company name] that I found on [how you found out about the position]. While reviewing your company website, I noticed that your Company is an [compliment them on awards, philanthropy, innovation, being an industry leader]. I am particularly interested in working with you in [specific area/department] because I also find [what you find interesting or inspiring about the company] to be the most important factor in [marketing and business].

My keen [skills] are well demonstrated in my over [how many years you've worked] in [areas you've worked in]. Currently, I work as a [position], focusing on [important projects] where my attention to detail and [other skills] were essential to the success of my team and [project, challenge, task].

I have acquired an understanding of [concepts or responsibilities required in job description], as well as how to meet and exceed [goals, standards] set by the companies I have had the pleasure of working for.

I believe I am prepared to handle the exciting challenges this position presents, and I hope you allow me to further discuss my qualifications with you in an interview. I have attached a copy of my cv to this application for your review. Please let me know if you require additional information.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully,

Applicant name and signature



Example 2

[Your name]
[Email]
[Address]
[Phone number]

[Hiring manager's name]

[Hiring manager's company name]

[Company address]

[Today's Date]

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms **[Hiring managers name - if not known, simply Sir/Madam]**

I live locally and have noted that you are extending the Doctors Surgery to offer a range of new community health services. I have extensive experience in customer support, service and administration and feel these could be of use to your Organisation. I attach my CV for your consideration. My experience working in pensions has required me to be diligent, accurate and effective in all work. I have had to resolve many problems where confidentiality is essential and often offering support when dealing with sensitive situations. Over the past two years, my main achievements have been:

- Arranging, organising and facilitating external Auditors visits to site for audit.
- Ensuring company product, process and procedural documentation is compliant with Regulations

I have a comprehensive knowledge of administration procedures, am well organised and deliver good results to the business and team. I have good IT skills and am comfortable meeting and working with people.

I would welcome the opportunity to come into the surgery to talk to a member of your team. I trust that it will be acceptable to you for me to call in the next few days to see whether this is possible.

Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully,

A N Applicant and signature

**Example 3**

[Your name]
[Email]
[Address]
[Phone number]

[Hiring manager's name]

[Hiring manager's company name]

[Company address]

[Today's Date]

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms **[Hiring managers name - if not known, simply Sir/Madam]**

I wish to apply for the role of **[Job Title]**, currently being advertised on reed.co.uk.
Please find enclosed my CV for your consideration.

As you can see from my attached CV, I have over **[period]** experience in the **[Sector]** industry, and I believe the knowledge and skills built up during this time make me the right/perfect candidate for the role.

In my current role as a **[job title]** at **[employer name]**, I have been responsible for **[Insert a quantifiable and notable achievement/s - e.g., a x% increase in revenue]**, which when coupled with my enthusiasm and dedication **[insert skills relevant to the role - usually found in the job description]**, has helped the business to **[measure of success]**.

I am confident that I can bring this level of success with me to your organisation and help **[company name]** build upon their reputation as **[state their position in market - learned through your research]**. With my previous experience and expertise, I believe my contribution will have an immediate impact on the business.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my application further.

Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully,

[Your name and signature]