

Your Guide to... Covering Letters

A covering letter is as important as your CV when applying for jobs. It will be the first thing that an employer will read and gives you space to highlight your key skills and experiences. It also gives you the opportunity to demonstrate to the employer that as well as having the right skills you are also motivated to do the job.



Top Tip - Tailor your covering letter to the job / employer

Recycling is great for the planet but rubbish when it comes to applications!

Employers won't be impressed by a covering letter that looks as if it's the same one you're sending to everybody. Why should they take the time to read your application if you haven't put any time and effort into writing it?

Do your homework on the employer and the job role and highlight your relevant skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities. Back this up with evidence.

Format and Style

The 'style' you use may depend on the type of job, or sector you are applying to, but generally speaking stick to this:

Presentation

- Format your CV and covering letter in the same style – make them look like a package.
- Use a clear professional font such as Arial or Calibri and a readable size (point 10, 11 or 12).

Layout

- Your covering letter should look professional and have a formal business layout - unless you are told otherwise.

Length

- Keep your letter short and well structured - the paragraphs should be logically set out. One side of A4 divided into three or four paragraphs is ideal.

- Always check spelling and grammar before you send your letter – and don't trust spell checking software.

Try to Send it to a Real Person

- Find out who you are writing to and address the letter to that named person. If you don't have those details you could contact the company beforehand to find out who you should send your letter to.

Emailing Applications

- If you are sending your CV by email you should attach your covering letter or do a shortened version of the covering letter and include as part of your email.

Keep a Copy

- Always keep copies of your applications, you'll need these when you are invited for interview.

Some advice

Be Clear and Concise

- Your covering letter should be well written and include concise and positive language.

Research the Employer and Job Role

- Before you start writing anything, be sure you understand what the employer is looking for.

Give Evidence

- Don't just say that you have particular skills or experience, back it up with examples – or point to them on your CV.

Spelling & Grammar

- This is the first example of your work an employer will see, be sure to give a good impression.

Additional help and information

Covering Letter Builder

- Our Employability Tools in Unilife Connect contain a Covering Letter Builder to help you draft your covering letters.

Example Covering Letters

- Check out example covering letters on the careers website to give you a few ideas www.southwales.ac.uk/careers

Get it Checked Out by a Careers Adviser

- You can get your applications checked out by a careers adviser before you send them off – either in an appointment or using the "Ask a Question" online service. Details on our website.

Jo Example
10 Applevue Court
Cardiff
CFXX 2XX

Mrs J Jones
Managing Director
Example Engineering Solutions
Cardiff Industrial Estate
CFXX 8XX

8th October 2024

Dear Mrs Jones,

I am currently undertaking the second year of a BSc (Honours) Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Degree at the University of Example and I am looking to secure a one year engineering placement for 2017-2018. I am applying for the engineering design placement (reference 105982) which was recently advertised on the University Careers Service website and attach my CV.

I am applying to Example Engineering Solutions as the company is recognised as being a leader in the field of manufacturing and control engineering solutions within the UK. After researching your website I am also impressed with the R and D aspect of your work and the range of projects your company has been involved in. Gaining a work placement would give me the opportunity to not only use the latest technology but work with a team of professionals who are experts in the field of plant engineering.

As you can see from the enclosed CV, my degree has provided me with a sound technical background covering modules in mechanics, thermodynamics, CAD, instrumentation and control, manufacturing and materials. I have also undertaken a major 2nd year project which involved design and make of a small hydraulic lift with built in sensors. I was involved in all phases of the development cycle from design through to final prototype product. I achieved 70% grade for this assignment and gained valuable project management experience. I am a quick learner, hard working and flexible, with a professional and responsible attitude.

I can be available for an interview at your earliest convenience. If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Example

Jo Example

Paragraph 1

Introduce yourself and why you are contacting the company. Indicate which job you are applying for and where and when the position was advertised.

Paragraph 2

Show the employer that you have done your research and understand the business and job role. Demonstrate your motivation by explaining what interests you about the employer / job.

Paragraph 3

Introduce your CV and summarise your key skills, knowledge, personal qualities and experience relevant to the job. Give evidence of how you have gained or demonstrated these skills. E.g. course / project work, and previous work experience. Add anything else you feel is important. E.g. Personal / motivational qualities and attitude.

Paragraph 4

End letter in a positive and in polite way. Also indicate your availability for interview.

If you know the employers name use "Yours sincerely", if you've addressed it to "Dear Sir / Madam, then you should use "Yours faithfully".

This document is available in Welsh. Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.

If you require this leaflet in an alternative format please contact the Student Services Department.

Careers & Employability Service • www.southwales.ac.uk/careers

Newport campuses tel: 01633 435290, Pontypridd and Cardiff campuses tel: 01443 482 080.

BG-D 1/17