
Writing an Effective Cover Letter

Usually required as part of every job application, a cover letter should accompany your resume for each job you apply for. A good cover letter allows you to introduce yourself and summarise your suitability for the role. Your cover letter should be specifically customised to the job you are applying for.

Purpose

An application letter allows you to introduce yourself and allows you to express your suitability, experience, enthusiasm and your interest in the company to which you are applying to.

While your resume outlines experience and achievements formally, an application letter can be a little less formal and should entice the reader to review your resume.

An application letter should clearly identify what job you are applying for and describe a little about your relevant experience, making sure you address the selection criteria written in the job advertisement.

Personalisation

Your cover letter should always be addressed to a specific person. If this information is not in the job advertisement, you can usually find this through research or simply by calling the company to find out whom you should address your application to.

It is very important to provide or refer to any information specifically requested in a job advertisement that might not be covered in your resume, such as availability date, or reference to an attached writing sample. This information may be part of the interview selection criteria, and if you haven't satisfied the initial application process, you will not proceed to the interview stage.

Promotion

A cover letter should not contain any irrelevant information and should be less than a page in length. It needs to be easy to read and promote your strengths and assets in a way that would interest employers in interviewing you.

Application Letter Checklist:

- Address the application letter to a specific person.
- Refer to the position title and job reference number (if applicable).
- Briefly introduce yourself (1-2 sentences).
- Address the selection criteria in the job advertisement.
- Address information specifically requested in job advertisement not included in resume (ie. starting availability).
- Content should be to the point and simple.
- Keep the length under one page unless otherwise specified by the employer.
- Double check spelling and grammar.

A cover letter with all of these requirements will be more effective and will increase the chance of your application making it through to the interview stage of the recruitment process.