

# Cover Letters

## What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a summary of the reasons why you are the best candidate for the position. A good letter will entice the reader to read more about you in your resume and will help to get you an interview.

Your written communication skills are assessed by employers in your applications and particularly in your cover letter. Employers may be assessing any of the following:

- How well you structure written information.
- How well and clearly you express your ideas.
- How well you target your communication to your audience.
- Your grammar and spelling ability.
- Your understanding of document formatting.
- Your attention to detail in regards to typos and information.

Cover letters can also demonstrate your analytical abilities. Employers will be assessing how well you have researched the organisation and the position and how you have analysed and addressed the company's needs in the letter.

## 3 things employers want to know

- 1.** Can you do the job? Employers will look at - relevant education and knowledge, discipline related skills and abilities, demonstrated generic/business skills, work experience, talent/aptitude, ability to analyse and think for yourself.
- 2.** Will you do the job? What is your level of motivation, flexibility, drive to succeed, willingness to learn, client focus, confidence, desire to contribute, self-discipline?
- 3.** Will you fit into the company? Do you have shared culture and values, are you a team player, do you have a positive attitude? Your language can also demonstrate how you might fit in with clients and co-workers.

**Include a cover letter with every application you make.** Each letter should be specific to the position and the organisation. Employers recognise standard letters and will know you have not put in the effort they expect.

## A cover letter should:

- Be no more than one page in length (if a position asks you to address Selection Criteria - do this in a separate document).
- State the reason for your interest in the position, organisation and industry.
- Be tailored to suit the position/industry; so you must research the position first.
- Be a marketing tool to draw attention to your skills and attributes, relevant to the position.
- Mention job requirements as in the advertisement selection criteria and link to your skills and strengths.
- Persuade the employer that you are suitable and link your resume to a particular position.
- Emphasise skills, qualifications, experience, strengths, successes that you have documented on the resume which give you the competitive edge.
- State how this position is connected to your career goals or interests and values.

## Tips

- Tell the company why you are specifically interested in them
- Outline important elements from your resume and the selection criteria
- Check spelling and grammar
- ONLY one page
- Attend a consultation with a Career Consultant

## An example of the possible structure of a cover letter is below:

Date

Home Address

Street

Suburb/Town & Postcode

Tel Home/ mobile

Employer Name

Title

Organisation

Address

Suburb/ Town & Postcode

Dear Ms Employer

(Reference No. of Job - if applicable)

### PARAGRAPH 1

1. Nominate the job for which you are applying. Indicate the source and date of the job information. You could also provide details of any contact you have had with the organisation.
2. Mention your reasons for your interest in the position and for applying to that particular organisation.

*For example:*

- The opportunities for growth/professional training provided
- The calibre of the programs run or services delivered by the organisation
- The enthusiasm of the staff/ dynamic team environment (particularly if you have worked there on clinical placement/ work experience)

### PARAGRAPH 2-3

1. Highlight the extent to which you match the requirements of the job. For example, qualifications, experience, qualities and skills.
2. Outline any further points in your favour related to the job.

*For example:*

- Along with my studies, I have acquired professional skills and experiences by working in various paid and voluntary positions over the last four years. In particular my strong interpersonal and communication skills have been enhanced by my role as a volunteer telephone counsellor with Lifeline.
- My ability to manage multiple projects, and my passion for working with young adults will make me an enthusiastic and valuable addition to the XYZ staff

### FINAL PARAGRAPH

1. State your availability for interview and request an appointment to discuss your application. For unsolicited applications, mention that you will contact them by a certain date to follow up your application. Mention the attached resume or CV.

*For Example:*

- This is an exciting opportunity to work on the outstanding programs run by XYZ and I look forward to discussing my skills and experience at interview
- (Cold calling) I look forward to an interview with XYZ to discuss any opportunities you may have for a Social Worker and how I might best assist your organisation. In the meantime, I would be very glad to provide you with any additional information that you may need.

Yours sincerely,

A. N. Applicant

**Attachments:** resume and academic results