



Careers Masterclass

Cover Letters & Application Forms

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Career Masterclass – Cover Letters & Application Forms

What we will cover:

- What is a Cover Letter?
- How should it be formatted?
- What should it include?
- Application forms

**An effective
cover letter
compliments your
CV**

A cover letter is essentially a short, snappy sales document for a never-before-seen product – YOU. Write a cover letter in the same way you write a sales pitch – by explaining the benefits, not the features.

It tells an employer who you are, bringing to life important information about your knowledge, skills and accomplishments. It highlights your unique qualifications for the job.

Your cover letter introduces you to the recruiter in a personal way.

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Suggested format:

- 1 page in length, approx. 500-600 words
- Text aligned to the left or justified and cleanly formatted
- Professional font (Arial, Calibri, Verdana, Times New Roman) and matches the typeface of your CV
- Legible font size, ideally 11
- Avoid underlining
- Single spaced
- Use standard margins

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Structure:

‘Me – You – We’ formula

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Possible structure:

1. **Introduction:** State which role you're applying for and where you saw it advertised. It's good to mention your degree and university here too. You could also briefly mention why you're interested (but make it count!) **(ME)**
2. **Why you?** Use this paragraph to impress with your professional experience to date and explain why you're perfect fit for the job and the company. **(ME)**
3. **Why them?** This paragraph should outline why you're applying to this particular firm. Be enthusiastic, knowledgeable and highlight their unique qualities. **(YOU)**
4. **Closing:** Explain that you feel you could make a contribution to the firm (WE) and thank the reader for their time and consideration. **(WE)**

Number two and three can be interchanged!

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Always check the preferences of the firm, if stated!

Example for Credit Suisse:

- 1) Why are you interested in the position?
- 2) What makes you qualified for this position?
- 3) Why should you get this position?

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Your letter reflects your ability to write and communicate, be sure it is letter-perfect before sending.

- Proofread your letter at least twice – worthy of an interview?
- Ask someone else to proofread it again. Ask the person proof reading your cover letter if they can they pick out three USPs in under two minutes?
- Address it to a named person whenever possible
- Any formatting, spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors will make your letter stand out in a negative way.
- Keep paragraphs short. Too much text and not enough white space is off-putting to the reader and they unlikely to read it
- Track all your correspondence in detail

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Application Forms:

- Many employers ask you to complete an application form rather than a Cover Letter
- They will ask you a set of questions about your motivation and competencies
- Similar principles can be applied when writing it

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STAR Framework :

- **Situation** – *what was the situation?*
- **Task** – *what was the situation?*
- **Action (70%)** - *what did you do?*
- **Result** – *what was the result (measurable if possible)?*

Situation and Task can be the same thing



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