

Fact sheet - How to nail that cover letter

A cover letter is a short letter that accompanies your resume when you apply for a role. It's often the first point of contact and can give a hiring manager a sense of who you are and highlights your skills and experience before they review your resume.

Your resume and cover letter should complement each other. Where your resume is best formatted in a succinct manner and presented in an easy-to-read format using bullet points to break down information a cover letter is shorter and sharper: a single page is best.

Think of your cover letter as more of a conversation opener – you're speaking to the person responsible for the role you're applying for, expressing your interest in the job and demonstrating why you are a good fit for it.

The language in a cover letter is more personal so you can write in the first person, which might read as, *I'm a dedicated and driven nurse, with a strong commitment to supporting disadvantaged communities.*

A cover letter provides you the opportunity to describe your skills and experiences in a way that gives some insight into you as a person and your career.

Where to start

- Start with a brief introduction about yourself and why you're writing.
- Mention the job you're applying for and your interest in it.
- Highlight relevant skills, experience and qualifications you have that relate to the job.
- Think about two or three key points in your resume and explain these in a way that links them to why you'd be a great fit for the role.
- Give examples of your skills or mention how you've used them – you might need to do this in more detail if the job advert requests that you address selection criteria.
- Note that your resume is attached. To finish, you can say that you'd welcome the opportunity to

meet to discuss the role, or that you're happy to provide more information.

Don't forget

- Always take the time to create a cover letter especially for the role you're applying for – it shouldn't be a generic letter.
- Your cover letter should be engaging – you want to capture the interest of the person reading it so that they also review your resume to find out more about you.
- Don't forget to show how your skills and experience are a good match for the role.
- Write for the environment you're applying to: if it's a more informal workplace or a creative type of work, don't be afraid to inject some personal style into your writing to stand out.

Quick tips

- It's best to avoid complicated or flowery wording - use clear, concise language.
- Avoid overly long sentences – so try reading it aloud to see if there are any you struggle with.
- Always tailor your cover letter to the job - an application is all about showing how you're a good fit for the role on offer, and you don't want your cover letter to seem reused.
- Rather than writing 'To whom it may concern' or 'Dear Sir or Madam', address your letter to person listed on the role description/advert. It's more personal that way and shows you've taken initiative.
- Always triple check your spelling and grammar – try printing your cover letter out and then reviewing with fresh eyes or get someone with a keen eye to look over it for you.
- Keep your letter to around 250-350 words on a single page.

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