



prospect **US**\*  
RECRUITMENT

Cover Letter  
Guide

Writing a cover letter is the perfect way to make a good first impression on prospective employers. It allows you to express everything you've got to offer as a candidate, including anything that won't sit comfortably on your CV.

This guide to writing a cover letter is intended to give you some pointers which will generally apply to the vast majority of roles and organisations. However, the most important thing to bear in mind when writing your cover letter is that it needs to be unique – it should reflect you, and it should reflect your prospective employer. Cover letters should generally be sent alongside your CV, unless the job advert specifically states otherwise. If you are sending an application form, it's generally not necessary to send a cover letter as well (again, unless requested otherwise). Vacancies may request you address how you meet the person specification, if so ensure you address each point in turn.

## 1. Starting points

- Try and find out who will be handling the application, so you can address your letter to them by name (rather than sir / madam).
- Your tone throughout the letter should be respectful, and formal rather than informal.
- Start by referring to the exact job title, including where you saw the advert and the job's reference number (if any).
- A good next step is to state why you want to work for the organisation and this particular vacancy. Try to be as specific as possible when talking about the organisation (to show you've done your research).

## 2. Content and structure

Try and address the following issues in your letter:

- What is it about this role that interests you? Again, be as specific as possible – talk about one aspect of the job that particularly appeals to you and explain why.
- Why are you a good candidate for the job? Talk about the skills, experience and qualifications you have, giving as many examples as possible.
- Try and match what you say with the points in the person specification/criteria, but don't just repeat every bullet point word for word!
- If you feel you don't have the exact experience or skills the employer is asking for, rather than ignoring the issue try and emphasise your transferrable skills. For example, you may not have direct experience of face-to-face fundraising, but you may have other experience (for example, through telesales) which is relevant.
- It's also worth talking about other skills you can bring to the role which aren't specifically mentioned in the advert or job description, such as IT skills or being highly organised.
- Always try and use examples of your skills and experience that will make you stand out from the crowd!

### 3. Finishing

- The letter presentation should be clear and accurate, including several paragraph breaks. Make sure you don't repeat any information, and that you structure your letter in an accurate way. A final spell-check is also essential.
- Your cover letter should be no longer than 2 sides of A4, and preferably 1 side.

### 4. Application forms

- Much of the above applies equally to filling in application forms. However, there are a few additional points to bear in mind:
- Read the instructions carefully before filling in the form. Make sure you complete all the relevant parts of the form before submitting.
- If you're completing the form electronically, make sure you use a standard font – like Arial or Times New Roman – and that you keep the font size no smaller than 12.
- When it comes to stating why you're interested in a job, complete this section as if you were writing a cover letter (see above).
- Make sure you include all relevant documents in your application, such as the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form.
- Do not attach your CV instead of completing the application form.
- Make sure you keep a copy of your completed application form on record.