

# WRITING A COVER LETTER



## WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is your first point of contact with an employer. This is your chance to sell yourself as the best applicant, so use the opportunity to make yourself stand out above the rest.

## WHY IS A COVER LETTER IMPORTANT?

A cover letter should show that you have the skills and experience outlined in the selection criteria of the job description. A well written cover letter can help to increase your chances of being given an interview and ultimately getting the job.

## HOW DO I WRITE A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter follows the same structure of a formal letter;

- Introduce yourself
- Relate your skills and experience to the selection criteria
- Explain why you are the most suitable candidate for the position

For a guide on the structure, please refer to the template provided.

## TO WHOM DO I ADDRESS MY COVER LETTER?

Address your cover letter to the employer or recruiter for the job. This may be on the website, if you cannot find this information then call to enquire beforehand.

What are some tips for making my cover letter stand out?

- Always use positive language and talk about your experience with confidence.
- Address your cover letter to the recruiter for the position; this may be on the website. If it is not, then you should call to enquire beforehand.
- Include a paragraph that answers the question “Why should we hire you over everyone else?” This will leave a strong impression on the employer.

## HOW LONG SHOULD MY COVER LETTER BE?

Unless specified, make sure that your cover letter does not exceed more than one page. Be succinct and to the point so that the reader can easily identify what they are looking for.

## IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD AVOID WHEN WRITING MY COVER LETTER?

Avoid overly descriptive words, clichés and redundant phrases. “I am passionate...” “I am a fast learner...” This will take up space that should be used to address the selection criteria.

Do not mention skills or experience that are not relevant to the position you are applying for. Having a high proficiency in Microsoft Word will not help when applying for a bar job.

Do not paraphrase the selection criteria or job description. Think about how you can use that information to guide the wording of your own skills and experiences to sound more applicable.

## HOW DO I IDENTIFY THE SELECTION CRITERIA?

All skills, qualifications and experience that are detailed in your cover letter, must be included in your resume.

The selection criteria can be found in the job description. Sometimes this may not be clearly stated, in this instance you will need to carefully read the job description for key words, skills, qualifications and experience that they are looking for.

Please be aware that the position duties are not the same as the selection criteria.

## HOW DO I ADDRESS THE SELECTION CRITERIA?

State that you possess the skills required and where you gained them from. Do not fall into the “I” statement trap, “I have..” , “I possess...”. Be aware of the words that you use to describe your skills and experience, making sure to not sound repetitive or negative.

If the job requires someone with “A passion for clothes”, avoid stating, “I have a passion for clothes and fashion.”

Instead use key words from the selection criteria and refer back to your experience, “My past retail and personal shopping experience has given me a strong passion for all styles of clothes and fashion.”

## SHOULD I INCLUDE MY AVAILABILITY IN MY COVER LETTER?

Yes, you should include this at the end of the first paragraph just after you have introduced yourself.

## HOW DO I USE A COVER LETTER FOR AN EMAIL APPLICATION?

You have two options here; the first is to use your email body as the cover letter. The second is to attach it as a separate document along with your resume.

## NEED MORE HELP?

You can get help with your cover letter by booking a Resume & job search appointment [here](#) with one of our advocates.

## APPLYING FOR A FULL TIME POSITON?

Contact the UQ Careers and Graduate Employment team.

[www.careerhub.uq.edu.au](http://www.careerhub.uq.edu.au)

# COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Your Name

Your Postal Address

Your Phone Number

Your E-Mail Address

The Date,

Employer's/Recruiter's Name

Employer's/Recruiter's Title

Company Name

Dear Mr/Mrs (Remember to personalise this)

**Re: Position (It is a good idea to make this bold font so that the employer knows immediately what the letter is about).**

**Paragraph #1:** Introduce yourself (use your name) and ensure that you explain why you are writing, the position you are applying for and identify where you found the job posting. Include your availability at the end.

**Paragraph #2:** Address any selection criteria or inform of applicable skills for the position. When addressing selection criteria, state the level of the skill and where you gained it from. If listing applicable skills, then use the same format. Use key words from the position description but be careful not to reword the position description back to them.

**Paragraph #3:** What makes you stand out from everyone else is detailed here. Think about your own personal experiences and skills, and then communicate this to the reader in a clear and succinct way.

**Final Paragraph:** Thank the reader for taking to time to consider your application and make reference to your attached resume. Make a statement that invites the employer to contact your for further information or to organize an interview or meeting.

Yours Sincerely

Your Signature

Your Name