

ual:



Cover

Letter

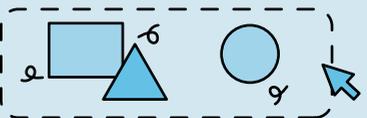
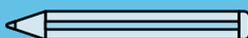
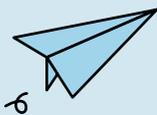
Learning Guide

Cover Letter



Learning

Guide



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Content	What and Why?	3
	Making It Accessible	3 - 4
	The Basics	5 - 7
	Set Yourself Apart	8 - 9
	Checklist	10
	Resource Guide	11 - 12

What and Why?



A cover letter is a text document that accompanies your CV when you are applying for a job. It can also be sent to an employer when you want to enquire about speculative roles.

A cover letter personalises how you introduce yourself to an employer. It should highlight how your experience, knowledge and skills make you a suitable candidate for the role you are applying for.

Cover letters are either included in the body of an email sent to employers when applying for a role, or can be attached as a document that's sent along with your CV and/or Portfolio.

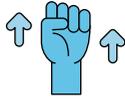
Making It Accessible



It is important to consider how easy it is for others to understand and access what you are communicating to them throughout your professional journey. Thinking SCULPTURE is our way of ensuring we embed accessibility creatively.

When creating and sending your cover letter to employers or clients, you will need to make sure it is accessible to everyone. Review the list below and consider which elements will be most relevant to your cover letter.

Making It Accessible

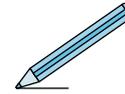


- Structure** – does it flow?
- Colour and contrast** – is it clear?
- Use of images** – have you used a caption?
- Links** – do they work correctly?
- Plain English** – can you understand it?
- Titles** – is it laid out clearly?
- User testing** – have others reviewed it?
- Review** – check their feedback
- Edit and fix** – make any necessary changes

You should also consider

- **Document format**
Check if the employer would like cover letters to be sent in a particular format or size.
- **Document name**
Save your cover letter as 'Your Name/ Company Name/ cover letter' so it's easily identifiable.
- **Accessibility**
Make your document more accessible by avoiding the use of bright colours or a font size smaller than 11pt.
- **Email format**
If you are sending your cover letter in the body of an email, double check your use of spacing and paragraphs to break up the text.

The Basics



Content

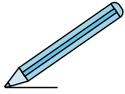
Consider your audience and tone of voice when writing your cover letter. Have you used a professional tone?

Employers often have many candidates to review and have limited time to review each application. It is important to include what they want to know as clearly and precisely as possible. Is your cover letter to the point? A cover letter should never be longer than one side of an A4 sheet. Does it include relevant and relatable examples that highlight you being suitable for the role?

What writing technique will you use to best highlight your experiences? A good writing technique to keep your examples concise is C.A.R (Context, Action, Result). Have you used this writing technique in your cover letter?

Is it tailored for the role you are applying for, or, specific to how you want to work with the organisation if you are sending a speculative cover letter?

The Basics



Structure

Here are some suggested ways to break down the structure of your cover letter and what information to include.

- **Introduction**

Briefly introduce yourself and explain why you are contacting the employer. Express your interest in the role advertised or state your query.

- **Why have you chosen them?**

Explain why you would like to work for this company specifically.

Have you done your research? Is this a company you have been inspired by and eager to join? This is your chance to say it. Reference campaigns, projects and work the company is doing which you find interesting (and if it's connected to the role you are applying for – even better!) Talk about prospects you find exciting about joining the team and how the company will provide valuable experience to you on your professional journey.

- **Showing your understanding or asking your query**

Show your interest and understanding in the role you are applying for. If you are sending a speculative cover letter, explain in what capacity you would like to work with the organisation.

To show your understanding, consider using keywords to show your expertise or technical skills.

- **Why the employer should choose you**

Using the job description and person specification as a guide, give concise examples of how you meet the criteria by linking them directly to specific responsibilities or attributes the employer has mentioned.

- **To summarise / bringing your cover letter to a close**

Let the employer know how best to contact you, or if sending a speculative cover email, ask for their availability for a follow-on call.

Lastly, thank them for taking the time to read your cover letter.

Set Yourself Apart



Be confident

Remember, you are writing to an employer who is looking for new talent to recruit, they want to know how great you are.

Avoid negative qualifying statements in your cover letter like 'I think my experience is a good fit'. Instead focus on speaking with conviction 'my experience is a good fit' and provide an example that demonstrates this.

Be conscious of using "we" when speaking about teamwork – use "I" as the cover letter is about you! What did you do in the team? How did your input or approach to work contribute to the success of a project or in a previous role?

Use similar language

Include language used by the organisation in the job description throughout your cover letter. Using the language in this way helps to explicitly highlight the key skills the employer is looking for.

Be specific about how you fit in and why

In any cover letter, particularly speculative cover letters, you need to be specific about why you fit in. Do you have specific suggestions on how you would approach or contribute to the success of a project? Can you identify something that the company isn't doing which only you could do for them and explain why? The more an employer can see the value you will bring to a role, the stronger your cover letter will be.

Be honest about why you are writing to them

If you are sending out a speculative cover letter, be honest and open about why you are contacting them. If you need sponsorship or a work permit, ask the employer if they would be able to provide this support.

Checklist



Visual impact and branding

Have you made sure your paragraph structure, line spacing and choice of fonts are clear and legible, both in print and on screen?

Tailor every time

Have you written a cover letter for the role you are applying for, or drafted a new email for each organisation you approach? Avoid copying and pasting everything from previous cover letters.

Be consistent

Have you checked your tone of voice has remained the same throughout your cover letter? Have you used a similar writing technique to show your examples?

Check!

Have you checked that the font, font spacing and size is the same throughout the cover letter if you have made edits?

Have you checked through your spelling and grammar? Has someone read your cover letter to help you spot any errors?

Resource Guide



If English is an additional language to you, you can access language support and development services via UAL's Language Centre: <https://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/language-centre/english-language-development-for-ual-students>

If you need support proofreading, use free, inbuilt services such as Microsoft's spelling and grammar checker. Alternatively you can download browser extensions like Grammarly, ProWritingAid, Ginger. They will do a similar job, however most are only free for a trial period.

Send your cover letter in to be reviewed by our employability educators at careers-support@arts.ac.uk

LinkedIn Learning – How to Write A Cover Letter – 21min video class - <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-a-cover-letter/how-to-get-your-cover-letter-to-the-decision-makers?u=57077561> [how-to-get-your-cover-letter-to-the-decision-makers?u=57077561](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-a-cover-letter/how-to-get-your-cover-letter-to-the-decision-makers?u=57077561)

Screenskills – Approaching Employers - <https://www.screenskills.com/starting-your-career/how-to-approach-employers/>

Resource Guide



Prospects - <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-letters>

Glassdoor - <https://www.glassdoor.co.uk/blog/guide/how-to-write-a-cover-letter/>

The following links are to American web resources. Pay attention to spelling and grammatical changes.

The Muse – Cover Letters that make managers smile (and then call you) - <https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-cover-letters-that-make-hiring-managers-smile-then-call-you>