



**Employability** 

Careers and Employability Centre

# **Covering letters**

A covering letter introduces your CV and you. It signposts key sections, explaining your suitability for the job. When sending out your CV (by post or email) a covering letter should always accompany it. The covering letter is the first thing your prospective employer reads, so it should provide compelling evidence of the reasons why you should be interviewed. On the reverse you will see an example of how to lay out the letter.

## Before you write your covering letter

Research the employer, the role and skills needed. Ask yourself, what makes the company different from its key competitors. This information will enable you to show that you understand the employer, what it is looking for and, most importantly, how you match up to the criteria. You may find our careers Information leaflet on **researching employers** a useful starting point for your research, access this online: www.aston.ac.uk/careers, Careers A to Z, Careers Information Leaflets.

# Essentials to include in an effective covering letter

## A layout example is presented later in this leaflet:

- It should be one side of A4, made up of four/five paragraphs
- · Explain what you are applying for
- On the same colour paper as the CV (ideally cream or white)
- Your contact details (name and address, telephone and email)
- Type rather than hand write your letter (and in same font as CV)
- Ensure it does not repeat your CV
- Target your letter as with your CV to match the skills and experience required by the employer
- Grammar perfect and spell checked
- State the post you are applying for, the job reference and where you saw the advert
- Explain you suitability/motivation for the role
- · State technical competencies, skills or appropriate experience that is mentioned in the advert

## When applying speculatively

With this type of covering letter you need to explain exactly why you have contacted the company. Explain why you are applying, why you want to work in this area, why you want to work for this company. To be effective and get a positive response you **must** demonstrate you have researched the company and have targeted your CV to fit their needs. How do you research an employer? By checking their website, local press, their company brochure, contacting the local chamber of commerce and by contacting the company direct. If you opt for the direct route then you should have a clear set of questions that you wish to ask drawn up, make comprehensive and clear notes! Your covering letter should have clear examples that demonstrate your suitability for a role within the type of company.

Your name
Address here
Always include your post code,
Telephone number and email

#### Date

The name of the person you are contacting Their job title
The full address of the person you
Postcode

Re: position you are interested in

Dear Sir/Madam (if you don't know their name) Dear Name...... (If you do)

This introduces who you are and why you are writing. It should also indicate where you saw the advertised vacancy. If applying speculatively it should explain the kind of opportunities you are seeking and any links you have to the employer. It explains to the reader why you are sending them your CV. Explain you are studying / graduating in....You can mention here if you are applying after speaking to one of their representatives at a career event or fair or where you saw their job advertised. If this is a speculative application you can set out what you are looking for.

In your second paragraph should refer to your CV and you should be setting out clearly what makes you suitable for this job. You shouldn't be repeating what is in your CV but highlighting the content so use bullet points to show:

Skills

Experiences

Qualifications relevant to this post

In the third paragraph you should explain why this company appeals to you. This is why general applications yield poor results, by not demonstrating motivation for the role. Talk about why you want to work for this company, what particularly appeals to you. Is it their training policy? Is it because of their reputation nationally or internationally? Explain your motivation. You need to demonstrate concisely that you have these by signposting to the evidence outlined in your CV. This evidence may relate to your employment experience, education, voluntary work or other leisure interests. You need to emphasise your motivation for this particular job and employer.

In the final paragraph you need to conclude, tie up and end the letter. 'Thank you for your time and consideration if you have any questions regarding my application please do not hesitate to contact me'. You can include a suggestion to meet to discuss your suitability for a role within the company. If sending a speculative application you may plan to follow it up by phone if you do not hear from the employer within 2 to 3 weeks. If so, you should state this in the letter. Your final paragraph should indicate clearly how to contact you.

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Yours	taithtuily	ur vou r	nave usea	Dear	Sir/iviagam	.) Yours	sincereiv	ur vou	use a	namei	į.

Signature

Your name typed here

### How can the Careers Centre help me to prepare?

#### DVDs, books and leaflets

We have a library of useful careers resources to provide guidance and examples on constructing your CV and covering letter. Register for a careers loan library account in the Information and Resources section of our website, and you will be able to borrow the books and DVDs we have to aid your research.

#### **International Students**

We have produced a booklet on CV and covering letter construction for International students. This booklet is available free from the Careers Centre.

#### Workshops

The Careers Centre offers workshops on producing professional CVs and covering letters. Check the Events section of our website for forthcoming workshops and booking information. <a href="https://www.aston.ac.uk/careers">www.aston.ac.uk/careers</a>, Careers A to Z, Events.

#### **Psychometric Tests**

You can gain practice in taking online psychometric tests similar to the ones many employers use. Access practice tests and further help online: <a href="www.aston.ac.uk/careers">www.aston.ac.uk/careers</a>, Careers A to Z, Psychometric Testing.

#### **Careers Information Leaflets**

Our careers specialists have compiled a large resource of information leaflets to aid your career planning and decisions. The full range of leaflets exclusive to Aston students and graduates; can be accessed online: <a href="https://www.aston.ac.uk/careers">www.aston.ac.uk/careers</a>, Careers A to Z, Careers Information Leaflets.

#### **Careers Advice Appointments**

Book a careers advice appointment with our team of experienced advisers to discuss your covering letter, CV, application or any other careers related topics. Book online: <a href="https://www.aston.ac.uk/careers">www.aston.ac.uk/careers</a>, Careers A to Z, Seeing a Careers Adviser.

#### **Careers Newsletter**

Keep up to date with the latest Careers News, Forthcoming Events, Competitions, Bursaries and labour market information with our weekly (in term) newsletter. Finalists are mailed the newsletter each Friday, but it can also be accessed via our website: <a href="https://www.aston.ac.uk/careers">www.aston.ac.uk/careers</a>, Students and Graduates, Latest News.



# Accessibility

We can provide this leaflet in various formats upon request

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