

Job Application Tips

Cover Letter

Your covering letter is your first contact with a prospective employer. A well written cover letter allows you to stand out from the crowd and sets you apart from other applicants. Use your cover letter to show your personality, curiosity, and interest in the field you are applying to work in and to highlight the information in your resume that is relevant to the position you are applying for.

Here are some tips that may help:

- Keep it to one A4 page in length if possible. Avoid writing your cover letter as if it were a paragraph-form of your resume. Remember, less is more!
- Use the name and title of the contact person in the organisation. If you do not know who you should be addressing, then don't address anybody. Just jump straight into the body of the letter.
- Include the name of the position, where you saw the advertisement (if relevant), your main selling points, and reasons for applying/skills/background that is suited to the position and company, and a strong conclusion. A strong conclusion involves finishing off quickly by explaining how your experience/knowledge/background will help you in the job.
- Keep it simple and clear.
- Undertake some background research into the job and organisation and include this in your cover letter by sprinkling in some information/facts relevant to the position and company.
- Tailor your covering letter for each application – generic applications can often miss the point.
- Proof read, proof read, proof read...
- Email to the recipient as a PDF. Not every computer has the capability of reading .docx or .pages files and attempted conversions of files may introduce formatting errors. Files saved as PDF give you better control over how it appears on the recipients screen.

Curriculum Vitae

Create yourself a resume that is worth reading and maximises your career opportunities. Here are some tips which may help you be successful.

The sections that should be included in your resume:

1. Personal Details
2. Education
3. Employment History
4. Computer and Technical Skills
5. Professional Memberships
6. References (optional)

You also may like to include:

- Career objectives

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- Additional qualifications
- Professional memberships
- Interests or hobbies.

1. Personal Details

- Full Name
- Address
- Contact telephone numbers (including area codes)
- Email address

2. Education

- List your highest achievement first stating qualification and grade, subject, dates and educational establishment.
- Continue with other qualifications to senior school level.

3. Employment History

- Always list your employment in reverse chronological order.
- If you have only worked for one company, break it down showing each position held within the company or major projects dealt with.
- List your responsibilities and achievements using bullet points; the most important first, remember to elaborate on those areas that are particularly relevant to the position you are applying to, but don't include so much information that it gets distracting and is exhaustive to read.
- Make sure you include job title, name and location of organisation, type of business, and dates of employment (month and year).

4. Computer and Technical Skills

- Use this section to highlight any skills or training undertaken that is relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- State the level of your skills where possible.

5. Professional Memberships

- Mention any relevant professional memberships as well as any contributions made to professional organisations.
- Hobbies (Extracurricular activities)
- This should be brief and show your interests away from the work environment.

6. References

- Two references are adequate. Relevant references are your current (only if appropriate) or your last employer. Alternatively you could use an academic reference.

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- Include the referee's name, title or position and contact telephone number(s). If your resume is becoming too long or you are concerned about privacy it is perfectly acceptable to write; "references are available upon request".

Points to remember:

1. Always provide a brief covering letter with your resume. This can save time on re-writing your resume each time you apply for a role as it can highlight points specifically relevant to this position.
2. Keep your resume as concise as possible – 2 to 3 pages are ideal.
3. Simple type fonts and clear headings
4. Avoid excessive narrative.
5. Double check for spelling mistakes and grammatical correctness – get someone else to check it also, and do not rely on "spell check", as this can often "Americanise" your spelling.
6. Avoid self-opinion and aim to include facts and evidence.
7. Photographs are unnecessary.
8. Space sections adequately and if possible ensure that sections don't spill over pages.
9. Never ever bad mouth a previous employer.

Remember, your resume will decide whether or not you are selected for an interview. A good document will show the prospective employer that you have taken time and effort to apply for the role; a bad document could show sloppiness and a lack of commitment. So take the time and put the effort into creating the best resume that you can.