



You must always include a cover letter with a CV for a professional job application

Before you write the letter

Try to find a **named contact** to address the letter to. Sometimes, this is actually impossible if you are using an agency or if the organisation that you want to work with is very big. However, keep an eye out for the named contact on the advert or try to speak to other people who work at the organisation to see if there is somebody that you can address the letter to.

Call ahead! Research

The biggest mistake most people make when writing a cover letter is that they do not use this opportunity to show the reader that they fully understand the organisation and are excited to work for them. It is very important that you do this because employers believe that enthusiastic candidates with strong reasons to work for them will perform better than other candidates and remain with them for longer. Considering this, it is essential that you take the time to explore the organisation's website and LinkedIn profile as well the news for further information about them. You need to write something so specific about them that it means you could not send the same letter to one of their competitors and it still be factually correct. This means that you need to go beyond statements like 'I am excited to work with you as you are a large multinational corporation with many opportunities for progression', this is true for hundreds of companies.

Call ahead!

Again, sometimes for large organisations this seems impossible however on many job adverts the organisation will actually provide a name and a number for potential applicants to get in touch with any questions. In this case use this opportunity to show your interest in the role, let them know a little bit about you and to dig a little deeper into the nature of the job and their ideal candidate.

Length and Style

Make sure that your cover letter actually looks like a letter! For most job applications, the letter should be **one page long**.

You can **mirror the tone of the job advert** in your letter. If the employer that you are writing to has a very formal advert, send a very formal letter, however, if their advert is quite 'fun' with lots of excited language and exclamation marks, your letter can become less formal too. Of course, you would never want to be too chatty in the letter, for instance, by starting it with 'Hi' or using text speak.

Use **positive confident language** in your letter. This means that you can't write 'I think', 'I hope', 'I wish' or 'I believe' in the letter. Write the letter confidently, as if you know that you already have the job, using phrases like '... this skill will be of great advantage when...!'

Consider how you will be sending your cover letter. If you will be sending your cover letter in an email, you can simply include your cover letter text as the main text in your email, and omit the addresses. This will ensure you come across well in your email, removing an additional attachment and potential duplication.



Their address

Date

Dear name of employer

Re: “Job Title” Ref: XXXX or Opportunities for “Job Title”

Introduction:

Say who you are and why you are writing. If you are responding to an advert state where you saw it and be clear on which role you are applying for. If this is a speculative cover letter you can state how you found out about the organisation if it is a small one. You need to be clear in a speculative cover letter of the kind of work that you are looking to do with the organisation.

Why you match the vacancy:

Say why you should get this job: what appeals about the post and why you are suitable for it, drawing attention to the main skills, qualities and/or experience the job requires and how you match up to the requirements, with examples as evidence. You can use the job advert as a basis for this. If you are applying speculatively then you can make an educated guess at the kind of skills and experience that would be good for the kind of work that you want to do. If you want inspiration for this, then you can find a job profile on prospects.ac.uk and it will list the skills needed for that type of job.

Why you want to work for this particular employer:

Focus on why this employer is the right one for you. By researching the company or organisation you will be able to identify the key positive features that make it stand out among competitors or similar agencies. When doing a Google search, click news on the top left of the page, then select ‘Last month’ on the left hand side of the search results to find up to date news stories. Refer to any recent (positive) news about the company, this will show you understand what the company is about.

Personal notes:

If you have personal contacts in the organisation, maybe as a result of networking, work experience, social media or an event on campus, now is the time to share this. Don’t simply mention the person, tell the reader what you have learned from this contact about the organisation. This paragraph can aim for a personal touch that can be missing from a formal CV.

Conclusion:

Close with a polite and positive statement. If you are applying speculatively, let the employer know at the end of the letter that you will be back in touch at the end of a given timeframe to see how your application is progressing. Two weeks is normally a reasonable time for this.

Yours sincerely,
The Applicant

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Mrs Kate Sheldon, HR Director
FireRite
45 Wakefield Drive
Marsden
HY3 4BA

30 April 2018

Dear Mrs Sheldon

Re: "Graduate Trainee" Ref: FR42/14

I am a final year student at the University of Huddersfield and I am writing in response to your vacancy for the above post placed on my university's JobShop.

As you can see from my CV, my experience as both a Market Researcher and a Communications Intern at Asda Head Office make me an ideal candidate for this role. Whilst at Asda, I had the opportunity to analyse social media engagement and create a strategy to improve our online relationships with customers. After my suggested changes were implemented we saw a 6% increase in follower interaction and I know that this experience will be of great benefit when analysing customer data for FireRite as well as when using HootSuite to interact with your customers. I am a strong communicator and relationship builder, both key attributes required for this role. I have been able to develop these skills when building rapport with clients working as a Market Researcher and when quickly adapting to a new team when working at Asda Head Office.

My interest in FireRite was sparked by your presentation at The University of Huddersfield's Grad Jobs Fair last year when Liz Jones talked to students about her experience as one of your 2016 graduate management trainees. I was particularly impressed by the variety of projects that Liz described, especially the recent opportunity she had to take sole responsibility for the WhiteGreen account. I was given a lot of responsibility at my Asda internship early on and I thrived in that situation so I know that FireRite would be an ideal organisation for me to work in. I am also excited to work for an external agency, rather than internally at an organisation, as the challenge of working for a variety of clients appeals to my desire to constantly learn and update my skills.

Through my LinkedIn connection with Liz I know that FireRite use the Paradox database software; this is another appealing aspect of your graduate role as I have made use of this software within my successful final year degree project.

I have enclosed my CV for your review and I am available for work upon completion of my university work in early May. Thank you for taking the time to read this application, I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,
Sophie Dexter

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