

ASK us about...

Job Prospects



An idea of how your covering letter should look.....

Your name
Your Address
Postcode
Telephone number
Email address

Name
Job title
Address of the person you are writing to

Date

Dear Sir/Madam (if you don't know their name)
Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (if you do)

Your first paragraph is your introduction. In this paragraph you should explain why you are writing to them. So, it may be that you are replying to a specific advert in which case where did you see the advert?

Your second paragraph should refer to your CV and you should be setting out clearly what makes you suitable for this job. How exactly do you match the employer's criteria in their advert? Or if this is a speculative approach you should be stating what you believe they are looking for. Talk about the skills you have that would be relevant to the job and back these up with clear examples of how you have used these skills.

Your third paragraph should explain why this company appeals to you. Here you can talk about what you know about the company from your own research. You can research the organisation by looking at their website, an article or their company brochure. It is important not to waffle but to be clear and precise in what you say. If you can't find any information then use this paragraph to talk about your suitability further. Again put in evidence of your skills in practice.

Your fourth paragraph is where you need to conclude, sum up and end the letter. You can use phrases like 'in conclusion'.... You should include a suggestion to meet to discuss your suitability for a role within the company.

Yours sincerely (if you have put a name after "Dear...")
Yours faithfully (if you haven't)

Sign here

Your name typed here

Applying for jobs: Covering Letters

Need more help? Just ASK!

Call in for initial advice at a Help Zone "Drop In" in Student Services, who will refer you to a career specialist if required:-

- City North Campus, First Floor Baker Building
- City Centre Campus, Gosta Green, Room G27
- City South Campus, Second Floor Seacole Building
- Millennium Point: Level 2 Room 230

Telephone 0121 3315588 or visit our web pages for dates and times of Drop Ins and services at other sites.

Careers and Job Prospects websites:

- <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/careers>
- www.bcu.ac.uk/alumni/careers

Online e-guidance service:

- www.bcu.ac.uk/askus

Social Media:

- Facebook: [BCUemploymentzone](https://www.facebook.com/BCUemploymentzone)
- Twitter: [@employmentzone](https://twitter.com/employmentzone)

View our full range of leaflets online:
<https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/careers> >> [Quick Links](#)>> [Handouts](#)

Careers and Job Prospects, August 2011

What is a covering letter, and why do I need one?

When you apply for a job, work placement or voluntary opportunity, you will usually apply using a CV or an application form. When you submit your application, it is usually a good idea to submit a covering letter to introduce yourself and enhance the information within your CV or application form.

Use your covering letter to explain why you are writing to them; are you responding to an advertisement, or maybe applying speculatively? Explain the things that make you a suitable match for the role, and make sure that you highlight your knowledge of the company to which you are applying and the sector as a whole.

When employers are choosing a candidate, they will want you to show that you understand what the job involves, what the industry involves and for you to sell your skills to them. A covering letter is an ideal way to highlight your strengths in a concise manner and draw their attention to you as a strong candidate.



T: 0121 331 5588
www.bcu.ac.uk/student-services



Writing a covering letter: the basics

Remember, your covering letter is an introduction to your CV or application. You should create a different cover letter for each job you apply for - no two cover letters should look the same. Use your cover letter to:

- Explain why you are applying for the role
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the organisation
- Highlight any particular selling points within your CV
- Explain any additional factors that do not fit easily into your CV
- Mention any specific personal circumstances contained within your CV

Just like a CV, there are certain conventions to writing a covering letter. Remember the following:

- Use good quality paper, as with your CV
- Do not exceed one side of A4
- Use an easy to read font such as Arial, 10 or 12 point, and use good quality paper and a decent printer if you are printing your CV out.
- Put your name and address and contact details at the top
- The text of the letter should consist of four paragraphs
- Avoid using the same words and phrases that you use in your CV
- As always, double-check your spelling, punctuation and grammar. Get someone you know to have a read-through, or ask at the Centre for Academic Success at City North or City South Campuses
- If possible, try and find a contact name to address your covering letter to. This looks much more personal than writing "Dear Sir/Madam" and will make you stand out from other candidates. A quick phone call to the company should help you find out the most appropriate person to address the letter to.

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of external websites

What should I say?

Your covering letter can really make a difference when you are applying for a job, whether you are responding to an advertisement, but especially if you are applying speculatively.

In either case, remember to target your CV and covering letter to the role and company for which you are applying. Before you send it off, try to re-read the letter from the employer's perspective; think about what they are looking for, rather than just how you will benefit!

Responding to an advert?

Start with the basics: make sure you state the role for which you are applying, the job reference number, and where you saw the advert. You should explain why you are suitable for the role, making sure that you highlight any particular skills or competencies that are mentioned in the advert. Remember, an employer will be looking to check your skills against the job specification, and if you don't mention your strengths, then the employer will never know about them!

Applying speculatively?

As well as highlighting your suitability for the job, and any technical competencies, it is **vital** that you show why you are contacting this company; you should also demonstrate the research you have done into the organisation and the job sector. The leaflet **Researching Employers** will help you to do this.

Remember to have your CV and covering letter checked by a Careers Consultant before you send them. You may also want to seek the opinions of friends and family, but **don't leave it until the last minute!**

Layout of your covering letter

The layout of covering letters tends to be quite conventional. To help you, we have included a template overleaf which you may find useful. You can also find examples of covering letters online at the Prospects website: www.prospects.ac.uk —> "Careers Advice" —> "CVs and Covering Letters".

Remember to include the basics that are outlined above, and get your CV and Covering Letter checked before you apply! You can book an appointment to see a Careers Consultant, or send your covering letter to a Consultant through our online "AskUs" service. See the "Need More Help" section for details.

