

# Writing an Effective Cover Letter

## Should I always include a cover letter?

Yes, unless specifically asked not to include a cover letter, you should always assume that one is required. Your cover letter is your first sales pitch to an organisation so it is very important that you get it right- first impressions count!

## How do I write an effective cover letter?

As with all aspects of your application, writing an effective cover letter involves:

1. Understanding the requirements of the role you are applying for
2. Making a clear link between your skills and experience and what the employer needs
3. Expressing an interest in the company you are applying to and your enthusiasm for the role

## Key points to remember:

- Put your address in the top right hand corner, and the employers address on the left hand side
- Include the date
- Try to find out the name of the hiring manager and address the letter directly to them
- Keep it clear and concise: it should be no more than one A4 page
- However, it is not enough to simply state that you have attached a CV and look forward to hearing from them soon
- Take the time to tailor your cover letter for each role and company: employers can easily tell when you have copied and pasted a generic cover letter
- Proof read your letter before sending it

## Opening Paragraph, What to include:

Outline why you are writing, what position you are applying for and highlight briefly why you are interested in the role.

## Main body of letter, Second/ Third paragraph:

In this section you should try to answer the following questions:

### Why are you suitable for the role?

- You should make a clear connection between your skills and experience and the requirements of the role.
- The job specification will have an outline of what the employer is seeking- address these requirements directly.
- Try to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role
- Be as specific as you can: avoid long lists of skills and do not just regurgitate your CV:

Instead, choose specific examples from your experience and achievements which best demonstrate your skills in action. Think of your cover letter as your highlight reel: it's a great opportunity to really draw an employer's attention to key aspects of your academic, work or extracurricular activities that are relevant to this particular role and company.

These could include: successful grades in relevant modules, project or research work which demonstrates sector knowledge and team working skills, or work experience which demonstrates industry experience as well as key skills in action.

Can you think of anything that sets you apart from other applicants, if so, highlight it here.

### **Why do you want to work for the company?**

While employers know that you will be applying for more than one job, they do like to see that you have done some research and can show an interest in their organisation. Try to make this connection in your cover letter:

- Can you highlight recent projects they have been working on which interest you?
- Are there developments or changes in the company that you would be excited to be a part of?
- What particularly interests you about their company, and why do you feel you would be a good fit?
- Can you relate the work they do with research you have completed?
- In short, take the time to personalise the letter for the employer.

### **Final Paragraph: Conclusion**

State what attachments you have included; reiterate briefly your interest in the role and what you can bring to the team. Finally, state your availability for interview and that you look forward to hearing from them soon. Sign off with Yours sincerely (when you know the name of the recipient), or, Yours faithfully (when you do not know the name of the recipient).

If you would like to have your Cover Letter checked by a Careers Advisor, drop by a Quick Query & CV Clinic!

Clinics take place on all campuses during the year – check our [Events Page](#) for details of times and venues.

[dcu.ie/careers](https://www.dcu.ie/careers)