



A well written covering letter or application could differentiate your CV from the many others that pass across an employer's desk, so how do you make sure that yours stands out?

When responding to an advertised job vacancy whether via letter, email or fax, you should always include a covering letter with your CV. Treat it as a part of your personal marketing literature, which merits attention and consideration. A covering letter introduces you and your CV and is your first chance to make a good impression to your potential employer. Aim to make it entice the reader to take those few extra minutes to consider you against other applicants.

**Below are some general guidelines to help ensure that you receive a positive response from your initial application.**

### ***Appearance and layout***

Ensure your letter is neatly and clearly presented with no grammatical or spelling errors. Emails or letters should be written in a common font such as Ariel or Times New Roman, with standard formatting and should emulate a handwritten letter in terms of style. – Please don't use 'text' speak or bad English and beware of 'Americanizations' in the writing here as it could destroy all of your hard work.

### ***Content***

The content of your cover letter should be brief and pertinent to your application, so avoid lengthy repetition of information covered in your CV. In particular:

- *Your letter should address the relevant contact, whose name often appears in the job advert. Avoid Sir or Madam if possible, unless you are unable to obtain a name.*
- *If you are replying to an advert, say so. Mention job title, any reference number and where and when you saw it.*
- *Briefly outline your current situation, why you are seeking change and why you are interested in the advertised vacancy.*
- *Ensure that you put across why you feel that you are suitable for the vacancy and again you can mention any key skills or attributes you have, that are required for the role.*
- *Ensure that your CV covering letter flows freely however and does not slavishly match every point on the job description. The reader should be left with an overall impression that you are a potentially valuable addition to the workforce and not merely going through the motions.*
- *Negative information of any sort should be avoided in your covering letter as well as CV. If you were dismissed from a previous job, you should save the explanation for the interview.*
- *Close your letter with a polite expression of interest in further dialogue with the employer. Do mention that you would like the opportunity to discuss your suitability further at an interview and that you await a response in due course.*

One final point regarding letters of application and CV's is that you should always try to follow them up with a phone call no later than one week after posting/emailing it, if you have not received a response. Employers are often very busy and don't always have the time to respond to every application promptly, so this is good way of ensuring that they have received your application. In addition, if you do get to speak with the employer directly, it can be a great way of introducing yourself and breaking the ice!