

A **Covering Letter (Application Letter)** provides a potential employer with a first impression of you, therefore it should be an impressive introduction. Since employers receive hundreds of applications, your letter aims to increase your chances of being short-listed for interview. A covering letter should accompany all resumes, except when personally handing your resume over at a face-to-face meeting.

**There are two types of application letters:**

- One is written in response to an advertised position (this can also be an 'expression of interest')
- The other is a canvassing letter, written to a company/employer where there is no advertised position. It is estimated that only 30% of all job vacancies are advertised, so this type of cover letter can be an effective marketing tool.

**The aim of your application letter is to convince the employer that you are worth talking to.**

- Begin with a strong positive statement about yourself and how you qualify for the position.
- If you have been referred by a friend or colleague, say so early in the letter.
- State why you want to work for the organisation.
- **As with your resume, the covering letter should be original and prepared anew for each job application.**
- Your letter should be typed (unless handwritten is specified) on A4 good quality paper. Personalised stationery is inappropriate for business correspondence.
- Be clear, concise and specific. The letter is usually a single page in length, consisting of 4 to 5 paragraphs. It may not be read if it's too long.
- Edit carefully; grammar, punctuation and spelling must be perfect.
- End your letter by asking for an interview.
- Neatness, balance, use of space, all these will have something to say about your personal standards and your mental organisation. The letter should look business-like.
- If you do not know the name of the person to send the letter to, but you have their title, try ringing the organisation to ask for their name. Starting the letter with "Dear Ms Smith" is more friendly than "Dear Sir/Madam" (Note: if you start with "Dear Ms Smith", it is usual to finish with "Yours sincerely"; if you start with "Dear Sir/Madam" you should finish with "Yours faithfully").
- Keep a copy of every letter you write. You will need to re-read it before you go for an interview.
- Use an A4 envelope so your application can be inserted without folding. Do not include more documentation than is requested. Do not use folders, binders or other covers. A secure staple in the top left-hand corner is best.

**For many positions, addressing stated SELECTION CRITERIA is essential. Usually, it is best do this in a separate document.**

## SAMPLE FORMAT FOR A COVERING LETTER

Name of Contact  
Position Title  
Address

Date

Dear Name

*Paragraph 1:*

*(If replying to an advertisement)* - state the position you are applying for and position number and where you found out about it.

*(If cold canvassing)* - state the reason for writing and describe the type of work you are seeking. State why you are interested in working for the organisation. This sentence should combine your knowledge of the organisation with your experience and skills, your goals for the future or your professional philosophy.

*Paragraph 2:*

Tell the reader of your academic and/or professional background and identify the kind of work you are looking for. Be specific, indicate if you are willing to re-locate or if you are seeking work in a particular location.

*Paragraph 3:*

Create desire by relating yourself to the employer in terms of the contribution you can make to their organisation. Convince the employer that you are a good candidate for the job. Choose your main selling points relevant to the Selection Criteria or advertised job description or general skills if you have no leads about what is required for the position. For each skill, state  
what the skill is  
how you have demonstrated it and  
how it would be useful to the organisation

*Closing Paragraph:*

Ask for action. State when you are available for interview and how you can be contacted.

Yours sincerely,

Signature – leave enough space here so that your signature will fit.  
Typed name.

Enclosures: (eg. resume)

**For further information about career related activities and opportunities contact the Careers staff at**



**Student Assist:**

**Phone: 02 6773 2897**

**Careers Enquiries go through AskUNE <http://www.une.edu.au/askune/>**  
(Please ensure that you enter in the subject line Careers Enquiry followed by nature of the enquiry).

**The support you need to succeed**