

## ***Employment – Writing a cover letter***

You will see many different styles of covering letter if you search the Internet or look at career guides. There is no one right way to lay it out, unless the employer has special requirements, but you should make sure that you have considered what the company is looking for and how you can best meet its needs. It is an opportunity to highlight your strongest skills and show how you can do the job.

### ***Show that you have a genuine interest in the role and the company***

Researching the company or organisation is a good way to learn about its values and structure. For example, is it a big or a small company? Is it a private company or a Government organisation? Is it fast-paced or laid back? Who are its clients? Answering these questions should help you to understand the type of person they're looking for and it shows you've taken an interest in them.

### ***Show that you have the skills to do the job***

Read the job description closely and underline all the skills and experience they are looking for. Use examples from your own experience to show that you have these skills.

Besides the skills mentioned in the job ad, there are qualities the employer will want that aren't stated. For example, a vacancy for an admin officer might outline the packages and the years of experience that the company desires from an applicant, but *communication skills*, *time management skills* and *ability to work in a team* are also important.

### ***Make it interesting***

There will be plenty of applicants who fulfill the criteria. To stand out from the rest, think of something unique about yourself that will interest an employer.

### ***Keep it positive***

Always talk about the things you have achieved and qualities that you have rather than things that you haven't done yet or hope to do. Your final summary should be proactive – encourage the reader to take further action.

### ***Make it visually appealing***

Make sure that the text size is big enough so that it is easy to read. The font size and style should be consistent with your resume. Don't use too many features; it will make the page look ugly and cluttered. Avoid giving too much detail (two or three short paragraphs should be sufficient); it will deter the employer from reading on.

### ***Keep the language clear and concise***

Keep the language as simple as possible to make it easy to read and always check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

### ***Get a second opinion***

Once you're happy with the content and layout, get your SCOPE Adviser or a friend to look at it and give you their honest opinion. They might spot mistakes that you missed or suggest other information that you could include.



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### **Structure**

Include:

- your address at the top of the letter and contact details
- the date
- the company's address underneath
- always address the letter to a person rather than a general job title or dear sir/madam.  
Making that call to find out who the personnel manager is will make a good first impression
- job reference details: job title, where and when you found it, any reference numbers
- mention if you have had any contact with a staff member for information