

Covering letters

A covering letter should always accompany a CV unless the application instructions say otherwise.

An effective covering letter will:

- Make it clear what you have to offer to that company. You are ‘selling yourself’ to the employer.
- Make it clear that you understand the company and the job for which you are applying. An effective letter is likely to require some research about the company and position (and yes, if you simply restate key information off the organisation’s website, they will notice!).
- If appropriate, present in a positive light anything which might raise a question in the mind of the employer. (Example: If illness had affected someone’s degree classification, they could stress how completing their degree in spite of illness demonstrates qualities the employer will value).

It can do this by:

- Describing any features of your experience which are particularly relevant in more detail than a CV can.
- Describing briefly, but specifically, what it is about that organisation which particularly interests or impresses you.
- Being no longer than an uncrowded side of A4. It should be a ‘hook’ to encourage the potential employer to consider your CV and want to meet you; therefore it does not need to tell your life story. It must be detailed enough to make you stand out, yet concise enough to retain interest.

External links

- [Prospects: Covering letters](#)
- [TARGETjobs: covering letter essentials for graduate jobs](#)