

Letters of Application

What is a Letter of Application?

A letter of application, sometimes referred to as a cover letter, is sent alongside your CV when applying for jobs. A letter of application is a personal introduction which helps sell your application by giving you the chance to highlight your skills and experience. It is usually three to five concise paragraphs which outlines why you are the best candidate for the job.

A cover letter should always be made unique to the position for which you are applying. It is important to include a letter of application with each position you apply for.

Structuring your Letter of Application

A Letter of Application should be no longer than one page of A4. There is no right way to construct a letter of the application, the following points give a suggested format:

Addressing the letter

Where possible, address the letter of application to the person who will be reading it. You can usually find this information within the job advert. You could also visit the company's website. Don't be afraid to call the organisation to ask who to address the letter to, this shows them you are being proactive. If you cannot find this information then use a general introduction such as 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

Paragraph One

This should explain why you are writing the letter. You could begin by stating the position you are applying for, explain where you saw the job advertised and any other significant features of the position, you could also state when you are available to start.

Paragraph Two

You should summarise the key reasons why you are suitable for the job, why you are attracted to that type of work, highlight what interests you about working for the company and suggest what you could bring to their organisation.

Paragraph Three

Give details of any experience relevant to the position and show how the skills you have match the requirements within the job description. Outline any specific strengths you have and explain how these could be used to within the company.

Paragraph Four

Use this paragraph to conclude your letter. Stress your interest in the role and aspiration to work for the company. Express your desire for a personal interview. If there are any dates you would be unavailable for interview mention them here. Thank the employer for taking the time to read the letter and state that you are very much looking forward to receiving a response.

Signing off the Letter

If you included a named contact at the start, sign off 'yours sincerely'. If you use a general greeting, finish with 'yours faithfully'.

Top tips

Employers usually receive a large number of applications for each vacancy. Use the following points to ensure yours stands out for the right reasons:

- **Make it unique to the organisation** - Write a new letter for every application you make. Sending out a generic letter is rarely successful as recruiters will immediately spot your lack of time and effort. Show them you have done your research into the job and the company
- **Format** - Use the same font and size as you use in your CV. If you are sending it through the post or handing it in use good quality plain white paper to print it on
- **Length**- Be clear and to the point. Three to five well-presented paragraphs is usually enough
- **Language**- make sure you use a formal tone and correct language. This should be professional and match keywords used within the job advert
- **Identify your unique selling points**- Be positive about what you have to offer. Demonstrate to them why you are the perfect candidate. Stand out from other applicants by highlighting your most relevant skills and experience
- **Include examples** - Back up the statements in your letter with evidence of real examples that show the employer how you have used your skills and experience
- **Proofread** – Do not solely rely on spellcheck to identify mistakes. Check it several times yourself before asking a family member or friend to read it. It is important to remember to make sure your own contact details and the company name and details are correct and up to date

Keep a copy of your cover letter - you may be asked about it at interview

Examples

[St. Aidan's Website- Letter of application example and guidance notes](#)

[Prospects- Writing a cover letter](#)

Further Information and Advice:

[Prospects- advice on writing letters of application](#)

[National Careers Service- advice on writing letters of application](#)

Remember...

Please contact the Careers Department at careersstaff@staidans.co.uk if you would like individual information, advice and guidance on drafting your letter of application – we are happy to help.

Careers Department
St. Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form
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