

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. It 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

Ideally no longer than a page of A4, there is no 'correct' layout, however, the below 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, by visiting the company's website or by calling the organisation to ask who to address the letter to. 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. State the position you are applying for, explain how you are aware of the vacancy, any other significant features of the position, and when you are available to start.

- **Paragraph Two**

Summarise the key reasons why you are suitable for the job and 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**

Detail 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, including any dates you would be unavailable. 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**

To a named contact at the start, sign off '*yours sincerely*'. If using a general greeting, finish with '*yours faithfully*'.

Top Tips

Employers usually receive many 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 are 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.

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

Further Information and Guidance:

[Covering letter | National Careers Service](#)

[Prospects- Writing a cover letter](#)

[Cover letter examples and templates | Indeed.com UK](#)

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

Careers Department

St. Aidan's and St John Fisher Schools