

Career Education

Preparing Your Cover Letter

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Cover Letters

Cover Letter Guide

What is a "Cover Letter"?

A cover letter is a written document that accompanies your resume when applying for jobs, internships or graduate programs.



Unlike your resume, which contains factual information about your qualifications, skills, and work experience history, your cover letter tells your *story*. It's an opportunity to provide more detail, showcase your enthusiasm for the role, explain gaps or transitions, demonstrate your communication style, and connect the dots between your resume and the opportunity you are pursuing.

How is it different to my resume?

Feature	Resume	Cover Letter
Format	Bullet-points, structured sections	Paragraphs, narrative style
Focus	Key skills, qualifications, work experience	Motivation, fit, personality
Tone	Formal, factual	Professional, conversational

Key Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Build a Cover Letter template that you can tailor for every application.
- ✓ For each position you apply for, create a copy of your template and **tailor** it to reflect the position and company you are applying to
- ✓ Research the company's values, achievements and mission to ensure your cover letter aligns with their purpose and direction
- ✓ Unpack the job application to ensure you are specifically addressing their key skills and adjusting the language you use in your resume to reflect that of the organisation
- ✓ Ensure 100% consistent and accurate formatting and spelling
- ✓ Keep your presentation simple but professional to prevent being blocked by Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)



DO!

DON'T...

- ... be tempted by the fancy styles you see online. These are often filtered out by automated systems.
- ... speak about yourself in the third person. That's just weird!
- ... say you have a skill without providing specific evidence of actually demonstrating it.
- ... use a generic cover letter for every job you apply for.
- ... undersell yourself!

Resume & Cover Letters

Example Cover Letter Template



Include your contact details, the employer contact and their workplace address.

Address the letter to the contact in the job advert, and highlight the purpose of the letter straight away.

Your Cover Letter content can follow a pretty standard structure:

- Introduction
- STAR examples
- Why you're the best person for the job

Having an inventory of STAR examples to refer to means you don't have to write this section from scratch for every application.

Matthew Smith
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To: Caitlin Johns
People & Culture Advisor
Organisation ABC

Dear Caitlin,

Re: Statement of Claim - People & Culture Graduate Position

First paragraph:

- Brief introduction of yourself through a professional lens & why you are interested in the role.
- Use this paragraph to show the research you've done on the company, and how you align with their mission/values/goals/services.
- Tell them why they should consider you, what can you offer *them*, and what's your point of difference.

Second paragraph:

- Address **every** criteria in the job advert and respond to each with STAR examples.
- Ensure you specifically relate each STAR example to the criteria you are addressing.
- If you don't meet a criteria, let them know ways you would proactively learn it on the job. Extra points if you can demonstrate an example of your proactivity elsewhere.

Third paragraph:

- Summary of why you're the best person for the job now that you've demonstrated your skills.
- Remind them how your career goals align with their company.

Call to action:

- Welcome them to read through the accompanying resume, invite them to contact you for an interview.
- Thank them for their time considering your application, and share how excited you are about the opportunity.

Sign off:

Kind regards,

Matthew Smith

Career Education & Employability Resources

DISCOVER your options for gaining work and mentoring experience, job application advice and feedback, and individual support.

VISIT [UniSQ Access | accesshub.usq.edu.au](#)



Interview Support

Search 100's of videos to help you prepare for an interview. Record yourself responding to interview questions for feedback.



Resume Review

Access resources and templates, and upload your resume for professional feedback.



LinkedIn Review

Submit your LinkedIn profile for a review and feedback to ensure you are marketing yourself to your full potential.



Industry Connect Mentoring Program

Designed to connect you with an experienced industry professional to build your employability skills.



Events

Attend upcoming events to maximise your connections and networking opportunities.



Jobs Board

24 hour access to job opportunities for students from a range of employers throughout Australia and overseas.



How the Career Education Team can support you:

Career advice and information

Career conversation appointments

Find work while studying

Increase your employability

Transition to graduate employment



Need individual support?

UniSQ offers one-on-one career planning sessions with qualified Career Practitioners. We can help you understand how your values, attributes and life experiences contribute to your career goals. Appointments are available over the phone, via video, live chat, or email.

Book an appointment where we can help you to:

- Develop career management skills
- Set goals and strategies to help you with your career decisions
- Make sound career decisions and set directions
- Discover resources to support career decisions and actions
- Plan for employment after graduation

**CONTACT THE CAREER
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