

## **Covering Letters**

### **General**

When you apply for a vacancy by CV you must always enclose a covering letter. This letter is a vital part of your application as it tells the employer about you and should encourage them to want to read your CV. A good covering letter should include details of why you are a good candidate for the job and give a summary of the content of your CV.

You should keep a copy of every covering letter and CV that you send. You can then use these to prepare for interview.

### **What to include**

Items that must be included are: the job title (and reference number) of the position for which you are applying, where you heard about the vacancy, and references to parts of your CV which highlight your suitability for the post.

The covering letter can also be used to explain anything that can't be covered on your CV, such as the nature of any disabilities (highlighting what you can do rather than things you can't), or if applying to a foreign country, whether you already have visas and work permits.

### **Speculative applications**

If you are applying speculatively be as specific as possible when describing the kind of post you are looking for. You should explicitly state any relevant experience that you have. If you can, link your experience to the activities of the company, so they know you've taken the time to find out about them. You should also make your intentions clear: are you asking for more information or to be considered for interview, do you want to be 'put on file' or are you looking for a summer placement?

### **The personal touch**

It is always better to write to a named person, than write a letter addressed to Dear Sir/Madam. You can often find out the name required via a quick phone call to the office.

### **Layout**

Covering letters should be written on one side of a sheet of good quality white paper. They should be laid out in a business-like manner, i.e. your address (with postcode), telephone number and the date should be in the top right corner. The address of the company should appear a little lower down and on the left hand side. When you write the address include the name of the person responsible for recruitment, their job title and their department. For example:

Mr A Smith  
Personnel Officer  
Accounts

If you have written to a named person, your letter should end 'Yours sincerely'. If not you should end with 'Yours faithfully'. You should sign the letter and print your full name underneath your signature.

### **Finally**

Although reworking your CV and writing covering letters for each application takes time and effort, it is well worth it. Employers can tell when a lot of thought has gone into an application; equally they can tell when an applicant has sent out a large batch of generic applications. The more work you put in now, the better chance of being selected for interview.