

How to write a cover letter

A cover letter is a document you send with your curriculum vitae (CV) (traditionally it would have been the front cover).

It differs from a CV in that instead of being a written overview of your skills and experience, it's specifically written tying you to the job you're applying for. It allows you to highlight certain areas you think would make you right for the role in particular, attributes mentioned in the advert.

It's also different from a personal statement which summarises your abilities, achievements and career motivations.

What should a cover letter include?

Although cover letters are a lot less rigid than CVs, there are still some things you should always aim to include.

- Your personal details (e.g. name, address, phone number if not included on your CV).
- Where you found the vacancy?
- Why you're suitable for the job?
- What can you do for the SSSC?
- Closing statements (including thanking the recruiting manager for their time).

Why is a cover letter important?

To put it simply, your cover letter is the easiest and most effective way to stand out.

It brings something extra to the table when you apply for a job – the SSSC will learn more about you, your personality, what you actually want from the job and gain insight as to why you're applying.

How should a cover letter be formatted?

Much like a CV, there is no one format when it comes to writing a cover letter.

However, the layout will say a lot about your approach and your overall attention to detail. For that reason, it definitely isn't something that should be underestimated.

Make sure you write in a logical way, here are some key rules to follow for your cover letter:

- be clear and concise
- keep paragraphs short and direct
- back up any statements you make with facts & figures
- choose a professional font
- check spelling and grammar

How long should a cover letter be?

Around half a page of A4 (one page maximum). It should be a little more personal than your CV but keep it punchy and to the point. Recruiting managers don't want your life story.

Do I have to have a cover letter?

You should only submit a cover letter to the SSSC if explicitly asked for in the advert. It is usually asked for in addition to your CV. Not only does it show you're serious about the job you're applying for, but it also gives you another opportunity to bridge any gap between your CV and the advert for the role you are applying.

We respect your privacy and will only use your personal information fairly and lawfully. To find out how we handle your personal information please read the Privacy Notice on our website.

Best of luck,

The Recruitment Team