

Top Tips for Covering Letters / Emails

The basics – Use the same font style and size as your CV and aim for no more than one page. If you're sending a covering email use the same structure as you would for a formal letter. Your covering letter/email must be tailored to the company/vacancy and try to send it to a named person rather than 'Dear Sir/Madam'. Never send out a generic letter as an employer will spot this easily.

First impressions – Does your letter look inviting to read? Keep to a logical structure and try to avoid long paragraphs of text as your message can get lost. A simple structure is to briefly introduce yourself, then explain why you are a good match for the post and why you want to work for the company.

Tailoring your letter to the job: Research the company and use the criteria in the job advert or person specification (particularly the essential criteria) and job description to help you understand what the employer wants. Then focus on 2 or 3 of the key criteria, give specific examples to show how well you match these and show the value you will bring to the role. This is the most important section so you could use expanded bullet points to make this information stand out.

Market yourself - Think about the key things you want the employer to know about you which will make you stand out. Including a couple of relevant achievements can show your enthusiasm and motivation and help the employer see how you will benefit the company in future.

Attention to detail – don't just **say** you have good attention to detail but **show** that you have it by making sure your spelling and grammar are accurate.

Why this company? Say why the role/company interests you but try to avoid clichés such as 'because it's a vibrant successful company'. Show your research by maybe referring to the interesting clients/projects they have, a new area of business they are moving into, the opportunity they offer for early responsibility or the chance to bring new skills to the organisation.

Speculative letters - If you are sending a speculative letter you still need to research the company and typical vacancies in that sector so that you know what sort of skills and experience will be attractive to the company.

Examples on E-Learning@Tees: Go into the Careers section and look in Applying for Jobs. In CVs – Getting Started you'll find a range of covering letter examples. There are other sector specific examples in Your School.

Get Advice - Advisers in the Careers Service are happy to give advice and feedback on the content and structure of your letter but we can't check your spelling and grammar. See our website www.tees.ac.uk/careers to find out about eligibility and how to get advice.

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