

## The cover letter

Your cover letter should explain why you are **motivated** to apply for the position. It should list your **professional skills** ('hard skills' or 'technical skills') and **personal or people skills** ('soft skills') that match the advertised job requirements and it should clarify **general administrative issues** (e.g. starting date, etc.).

Recruiters generally don't have a lot of time on their hands, so your cover letter should not be longer than **a single A4** page. You should format your cover letter like a business letter. At the top of the page, you should include the **sender's address**, the **recipient's address**, the **place** and **date** and a **subject line with the job title as advertised**. The body of the letter should be divided into an **introductory section**, a **main section** and a **closing section**. Cover letters are typically written in a fairly formal style, but feel free to add a personal touch or even a dash of humour if that fits well with the company you're applying to. And make sure that you don't use different document templates for your cover letter and your CV. Employ fonts and font sizes consistently and ensure that the header and design of both documents match.

### General tips and advice

Start by reading the **job advertisement** carefully and get a feel for the **company's philosophy** (its objectives, vision and corporate mission). You can learn a lot from the job posting itself. For example, if the job ad uses a very relaxed, familiar form of address then you can adopt a similar approach when drafting your cover letter.

Try to see things from the **company's point of view** when you write your cover letter. When reading your cover letter, the recruiter should be persuaded that you are not only an excellent match in terms of the position being advertised, but that you are as interested in the company as you are in the job itself.

**Avoid the typical, overused phrases** that you can find in the many cover letter templates you can find on the internet. If you're applying in English, filler phrases like 'As you can see on my CV...' or 'I think I'd be a great fit...' are best avoided, as are clichés like 'I think outside the box' or 'I will always go the extra mile', because they've all been used countless times before and they don't tell potential employers what they really need to know. Ask yourself instead why you're motivated to apply for this particular position in this particular company? And when talking about yourself, don't use standard boilerplate adjectives like 'team-focused', 'highly motivated' or 'disciplined', but use real examples to illustrate your personal skills and experience. When you begin drafting your application try and focus on being, honest, open and creative.

**Try to stand out from the crowd.** Let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to show potential employers what it is that makes you unique.