

Every time you send out a CV you need to attach a cover letter that is tailored specifically to the job that you are applying for and the organisation that you are applying to!

Preparing your cover letter

The cover letter can be a major determinant of success. It will draw the reader's attention to relevant parts of your CV and re-confirm your motivation for the position and the organisation.

What should be included in a cover letter? As a general guide, your letter should contain the following information:

Opening paragraph

This should specify why you are writing (in response to an advertisement or on a speculative basis). Refer also to your degree course and results expected/gained.

e.g. "I have recently graduated with a 2.1 Honours Degree in Mechanical Engineering at Dublin Institute of Technology and am very interested in the position of Graduate Engineer as advertised on the Gradireland website"

Why the organisation

Why do you want to work for the particular company, government department or organisation? State that you are very interested in working for them and give the reasons why, showing that you have done your research. Vague statements like "I want to work for you because you have a good reputation" won't impress an employer. Research the organisation's website and the web generally to look up any recent reports about it. Speak to people you know who work for that employer to find out more. Be as specific as you can in your reasons for wanting to be a part of their team.

e.g. "I see from your website that you are involved in the development of....."

Why you

Why do you want that particular job? Why should they employ you? What do you have to offer? Do you have a unique selling point that will make you stand out from other candidates?

Read the job description carefully and draw attention to your most recent and relevant examples of your ability to do the job. You can include here relevant examples of your work experience, relevant college modules, project work as well as personal skills developed through work experience and interests. You may also wish to include some of your personal qualities that are an integral part of the role.

e.g. "As you will see from my attached CV, I have gained experience in....."

"My summer work experience inhas given me an insight into....."

"I see that this position offers... In respect to this, one of my key strengths is the ability to... I recently demonstrated this quality through..."

Closing paragraph

Close your letter with a statement that you would like to discuss employment opportunities and that you look forward to hearing from the individual. Avoid apologetic endings like “thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Sorry to have bothered you”. You need to end on a strong positive note and indicate your availability for interview.

e.g. “I will be pleased to attend for interview at any convenient time and I look forward to hearing from you”

Cover letter – general tips

- Use one side of A4 only – ideally three or four paragraphs at most stating clearly what the vacancy is and how you heard of it, or, if a speculative approach, indicate what sort of work you are interested in.
- Write as a professional business letter with your address as the top right and the company address at the top left.
- Type up clearly, preferably onto good quality (bonded A4) paper.
- Address it to a specific person rather than “Dear Sir or Madam”. A simple phone call to the organisation will establish who is in charge of recruitment. Make sure you get names, addresses and titles exactly right - sloppy addressing makes a bad impression! Your closing salutation when you have addressed a letter directly to an individual is “yours sincerely”
- Tailor your letter to each particular job/organisation to which you apply.
- Don't simply repeat what is said on the CV, but draw attention to your most relevant qualifications, experience, and skills as they relate to the position for which you are applying. Explain why you are interested in the job, highlighting your strengths, your understanding of the work, how well suited you are to it.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer organisation - look them up on the internet, visit their own website, talk to people who know it. This will show that you have done your research and used your initiative. Give specific examples of why this employer interests you.
- Show consistency between the case you make for yourself in the letter and on the CV. The covering letter is meant to play up the positive impression of the application and the application to reflect the positive claims made in the letter.
- Move matters forward by indicating availability for interview or indication of the follow up approach to be taken if it's a speculative application.
- Send out the right signals of enthusiasm, appropriate focus and create a business-like impression overall. If sending out a speculative letter state that, if the position you are interested in is not available that you would consider any other suitable vacancy available.
- Check spelling, typos and overall appearance. Ask someone to read your cover letter before you send it.
- Keep copies of all letters you send out. It may be some time before you get a reply by which time you may have forgotten what you wrote in your letter.
- For good examples of cover letters - both speculative letters and letters answering advertisements – see the following websites and look at the examples below

WEB RESOURCES

<http://gradireland.com/careers-advice/cvs-and-applications/cover-letters-for-graduate-jobs>

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/covering_letters.htm

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-cvs/covering-letter-essentials-for-graduate-vacancies>

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-hunting-tools-downloads>

Mr. Michael Adams
Human Resource Manager
Ryanair
Dame Street
Dublin 2

152, Badger's Walk
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15

x/x/2015

Dear Mr. Adams,

Having recently attained a 2:1 honours degree in International Business and Languages (French and Spanish) from Dublin Institute of Technology, I was very interested to see your vacancy for European Sales and Marketing Executive as advertised with Gradireland. Ryanair's business ethos is one that I find most progressive and constantly challenges the 'establishments' of traditional rival carriers. I have followed with great interest the innovative ways that you have recently developed your controversial marketing and advertising campaigns to reach your customer target market right across your thirty one European bases.

I can appreciate to be successful in this role, the individual will need to be capable of working to tight deadlines and collaborate effectively with European sales & marketing team. As part of my academic study, projects were examined on a continuous assessment basis. This enabled me to develop high level communication and team-working skills in addition to excellent time management. I further developed these skills through my work with the Dublin Tourist Office where I was required to provide information and advice to tourists in a friendly and timely manner.

I note that you are seeking an individual with a strong knowledge of the media market in both France and Spain. In my final year I completed a group case-study on a comparative analysis of new media advertising techniques used in France and Ireland in the food industry. As part of this project, I gained a thorough understanding of the changes that have happened in French media which has seen a dramatic decrease in national newspaper readership and fundamental changes within the constitution regarding media freedom. During my Erasmus year in the University of Navarra, Spain, I attended a module on media studies which I believe would also stand to me in this role.

I understand that this position will require an individual with excellent leadership potential and good interpersonal skills. You will see from the attached Curriculum Vitae that I took part in a student enterprise competition in DIT. As leader of our team, I fostered an inclusive supportive working environment that worked to the completion of a tight scheduled marketing plan. I ensured the team played to individual strengths and maintained good open working relationships.

I am confident that these skills and personal attributes would be of benefit to Ryanair and would allow me to succeed in this role. I would be delighted to discuss any aspect of this application at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Paul O Connor