



**Southern Cross
University**



Writing a cover letter

Your cover letter is the first document most potential employers read, so make it count!

Do your research

Your cover letter will stand out if you clearly show why you want to work for your targeted company. You can find useful information through the company's website, annual reports, publicity materials and professional associations, business magazines, trade journals or the stock exchange.

Link your transferable skills to the position

Download the position description and use key words from this document in your letter and resume. If writing an unsolicited cover letter, or cold call letter, target your letter to the needs of the employer by identifying key transferable skills.

Write the content

Your cover letter should flow naturally and logically. See over the page for structure and layout recommendations. Key points to remember:

- Avoid long, complicated sentences.
- Do not start every sentence with 'I'.
- Use concise and simple language.
- Use a professional tone.
- Make the first paragraph interesting to read.
- Avoid impersonal phrases like 'as per your advertisement'.
- Use active verbs ([see Fact Sheet – Applications Thesaurus](#)).
- Incorporate your enthusiasm for the role into the letter.
- Give the employer an insight into your personality.

Sell your skills and experience

Clearly articulate your skills and experience to potential employers in your letter and resume to help employers recognise your fit with the organisation. Research the role and organisation to best sell your knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities. An example for a role requiring exceptional communication skills might be:

"Throughout my studies I have always held part-time jobs, which has enhanced my communication skills. I also actively participate in volunteer activities at university, such as being a Student Ambassador for three terms and assisting incoming students during Orientation. These roles developed my communication skills by teaching me to quickly build rapport with students through carefully listening to identify their main concerns and then recommending solutions."

Your cover letter must:

- Emphasise your interest in the position and the company.
- Show how your skills and experience match the role.
- Be one page and attached as a Word or PDF document if sent via email.
- Provide a concise snapshot of reasons to hire you.
- Summarise highlights of your resume and selection criteria.



Careers and Employability
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Cover letter checklist

- ☐ Is the employer's name, position title and address correct?
- ☐ Are your contact details correct?
- ☐ Have you clearly stated the type of employment, (e.g. paid, part-time, volunteer) you are seeking?
- ☐ Have you demonstrated evidence of your research into the prospective employer?
- ☐ Does your letter fit on one page?
- ☐ Have you mentioned when you are available to start work?
- ☐ Have you emphasised your key transferable skills and attributes in relation to what the employer is seeking?
- ☐ Have you avoided using slang terms or jargon?
- ☐ Does the tone of your letter indicate self-confidence and respect without bragging or being too humble?
- ☐ Have you shown your final draft to someone else for their feedback?
- ☐ Have you avoided apologising for what you don't have or being negative about yourself?
- ☐ Is your letter grammatically correct and free from spelling errors?
- ☐ Have you signed your application letter with your name printed below?

Date Month Year

Mr Peter Jones
Managing Director
P&O Cruises Australia
GPO Box 5287
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Jones

Paragraph 1: Reason for your letter

- Please accept my application for...
- Writing at the suggestion of... who...
- An application for employment or internship opportunities.

Explain your current status, e.g. that you are studying for a degree or about to graduate, or applying for an internship. Clearly state your availability and/or potential start dates.

Paragraphs 2 and 3: Selling your skills and experience

These paragraphs briefly outline the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities that you possess. They should demonstrate your 'fit' with the organisation and focus on what you can offer or bring to the company. See section in this handout on Selling Your Skills and Experience for examples.

Paragraph 4: Areas of organisation which hold a special interest for you

For internships or cold call employment letters, indicate which areas or departments you are interested in (this demonstrates that you have taken the time to research the organisation) and make it clear that you are flexible and keen to accept any available roles in order to further develop valuable practical experience.

Paragraph 5: Close of letter

You must close your letter in a positive tone. Express your availability to attend an interview, thank them for their time, and say that you look forward to hearing from them or discussing opportunities with them further, in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Your Name

Your Name

(02) 1234 5678
0414 123 899

your.correct.email@scu.edu.au



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