

Cover letters

Directorate:
Counselling
and Career
Development
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What is a cover letter?

- A formal letter providing detailed information on why you are applying for the position
- A brief motivation on why you are a suitable candidate for the position (skills, experience, knowledge, personality)

Structure & format

- **Addressed to a name** individual or otherwise
Sir/Madam
- **Subject heading and post reference number**
- Should not be **longer than a page**
- Always be **divided into 2 or 3 short** paragraphs
- If addressed to a name **conclude with** “Yours Sincerely” & to Sir/Madam is “Yours Faithfully”

Content of Cover letter

- What you are applying for
- Why are you interested
- Why company should be interested in you
- Don't repeat information from your CV
- Never use standard cover letter for all applications
- It should be typed and originally signed

Content of cover letter

- Indicate how you **meet the requirements**
- Just choose the **top 2-3 requirements** as you cannot address them all
- Say few points about **your uniqueness** & briefly show **evidence**
- Indicate you **logistical availability** for wish to be invited for **interviews**

Content of cover letter

Section	What to include
Introduction	What job are you applying for and where you heard about the job. If you are writing speculatively (in other words, not in response to a specific advertisement), then you should indicate what kind of position you are seeking
Paragraph 2	Give a short overview of your strengths and most relevant attributes, for example, academic qualifications, work experience, skills, interests, referring the employer to the detail on your CV or application form.
Paragraph 3	Make the link between what you can offer in terms of skills and experience and the organisation's requirements which you have identified. Show why you want a particular job. Demonstrate knowledge of the organisation by referring to aspects which interest you, for example, products, services, and opportunities for staff development.
Conclusion	Close the letter on a positive, confident note offering to supply more information if required.

Example of why you think they should invite you for an interview

As evident in my CV, I have demonstrated the skills required for this position. During my time at Unisa, I led a successful study group over four years and as a volunteer, was commended for my dedication. In these roles I developed leadership and organisational skills. My work experience in restaurants taught me how to perform well under pressure and I enjoyed working as part of a team.

JOB APPLICATION FORM

- An official HR document designed by each company for a specific post / vacancy
- Should the incorrect application form be completed and submitted, you will not be shortlisted or considered for the post



Tips for application forms

- Read the form carefully before you complete it.
- Complete the form in full - even if the information is on your CV that you included.
- Always use a black pen, or type in the answers.
- Write neatly and clearly.
- Answer all the questions - if a question does not apply to you, write Not Applicable or N/A.
- Don't fill in areas marked "For office use".

Tips for application forms

- After completing the form, read and check your answers.
- If you make a mistake and you do not have another form, neatly correct it.
- Use original signature (not photocopied)
- Remember to include all documents as requested on the form.
- Ask someone to read your completed form and give you feedback.

Further resources

Unisa Directorate: Counselling and Career Development website:

- Prepare for Job Opportunities website:
<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Learner-support-&-regions/Counselling-and-career-development/Prepare-for-job-opportunities>
- Employability downloads:
<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Learner-support-&-regions/Counselling-and-career-development/Downloads-and-podcasts>

Contact us

We are available by e-mail:

- Send an e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za should you need to discuss any needs you may have in terms of further support.
- Contact Counselling and Career Development at a [regional centre closest to you](#).

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