



MONASH University
Employment and Career Development

GO  **Boldly.**



Cover Letters

Outshine
the competition



TYPES OF COVER LETTERS

**Responding to a
job
Advertisement**

**Canvassing/Cold
Calling**

Referral Letter



Your letter should answer the following questions...

What do you want to happen as a result of this letter?

Why do you want to work for this employer in this job?

Why should the employer hire you?



Your letter should..

- **Make the employer want to read your resume and find out more about you**
- **Be specific about how you meet the job requirements**
- **Link your career aspirations to the employer or industry**
- **Be polite, formal, confident and respectful**
- **Follow the employer's instructions**
- **Be truthful**



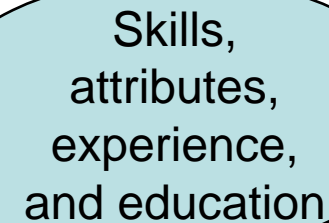
Your Cover Letter should NOT.....

- Be a generic letter you send out with to all applications
- Have any spelling or grammar errors
- Have attachments that were not requested
- Begin every sentence with 'I'
- Use unprofessional e-mail contact details
- Use negative expressions

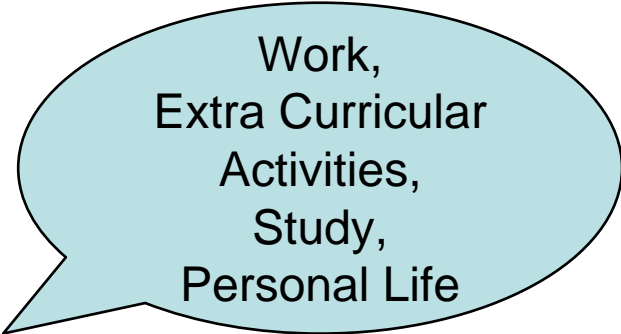


Before starting your cover letter....

- Research each organisation so you can personalise each letter
- Review the selection criteria of the position and make a list of what the employer wants
- Brainstorm examples of when you have demonstrated this specific criteria
- Be aware of your career goals



Skills,
attributes,
experience,
and education



Work,
Extra Curricular
Activities,
Study,
Personal Life



Cover Letter layout

- **Conventional business style format (everything aligned to the left)**
- **Keep it brief (4-5 paragraphs. One side of a page)**
- **Be aware of the format you have saved your application in – Use software programs/versions which are compatible with current business systems**
- **Follow the employer's instructions**

Andrea Douglass
27 Premier Avenue
Scoresby Vic 3179

11 April 2006

Mr Brendon Johnson
Graduate Recruitment Co-ordinator
Connor White Management Consulting
60 Albert Street
East St Kilda Vic 3205

Dear Mr Johnson

Graduate Program

After attending your company presentation at Monash University last Tuesday, and speaking with your colleague Sarah Jackson at the cocktail event afterwards, I am writing to apply for your graduate program. I would like to take this opportunity to outline some of my qualifications.

I am particularly interested in joining Connor White as you place a strong emphasis on working with clients to solve business problems; a philosophy that I believe engenders trust and long term relationships.

Currently, I am completing my Bachelor of Commerce degree that has given me an excellent overall understanding of business practice. I am majoring in Management, which prompted my interest in management consulting where I hope to put my interests and learning into practice.

In addition to my studies, my employment experience and campus activities have helped me to develop a number of qualities and skills. I was particularly interested to note from your presentation that you looked for applicants who could operate effectively with in a team and could apply their creativity. At Fine-food Supermarket my main role is to work collaboratively with staff, supervisors and merchandisers in organising floor space. This has given me the chance to develop my teamwork and interpersonal skills. In terms of creativity, my natural inclination is to look for new ways of solving things, an example of this was a promotional strategy that I developed when President of the Handball Club, which resulted in a 75% increase in membership.

Enclosed is copy of my resume and academic transcript. I hope that I have demonstrated the qualities and skills that you seek and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Douglass

Andrea Douglass

enc: resume and academic transcripts



Information to include...

- **Your name, address and contact details**
- **Date**
- **Name and title of the contact person**
- **Name and address of the company you are applying to**
- **Appropriate forms of address e.g. Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs or Dear Sir/Madam**
- **Reference number and full position title**
- **Content of the letter (4-5 paragraphs)**
- **Appropriate closure and signature**
- **Enclosure**



What to include in the body of your Cover Letter..

* 1st Paragraph

Explain why you are writing to them (you may include what you are currently doing)

*2nd Paragraph

Explain why you want to work for that employer and express interest in the specific job role

*3rd & 4th Paragraph

Detail your relevant technical and generic skills, experience and personal attributes (these should match the employer's requirements). Explain how you developed or demonstrated your skills and knowledge

*5th Paragraph

Finish on a positive note, and express interest in meeting at interview



Paragraph One

What do you want to happen as a result of this letter?

- Explain the purpose of your letter
- Confirm the position you are applying for
- Use a mutual contact if possible
- Confirm your qualifications or a brief specific outline about the degree you are studying, and what year you are in



Paragraph One

What do you want to happen as a result of this letter?

Responding to a Job Advertisement

- Please accept my application for the position of Graduate Accountant, Reference Number 1234, as advertised in The Age newspaper on June 21, 2008. I have recently graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Accounting and Finance and am ready to embark on my professional career.



Paragraph One

What do you want to happen as a result of this letter?

Referral letters from a recommendation

- I am writing to enquire about the employment opportunities with your organisation on the recommendation of Professor Boots, from the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University. Professor Boots suggested you might be interested in the research I have undertaken on the education outcomes of Horn of Africa refugees in the western suburbs of Melbourne. My understanding is that your organisation is committed to creating business opportunities for recent arrivals and I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss how my research could be used to develop program initiatives.



Paragraph One

What do you want to happen as a result of this letter?

Canvassing for employment

- As a 4th year Chemical Engineering student at Monash University, I write to enquire about potential work opportunities available with Life Source Water during the period of January - March 2009. I am particularly interested in your company's progressive approach to water management. My final year project investigating the environmental impact of wastewater services in the Lower Valley region developed skills that I believe will benefit your organisation.



Paragraph Two

Why do you want to work for this employer in this job?

- Demonstrate your interest in the organisation and the job
- Demonstrate your research in the organisation by discussing your relevant skills and attributes (don't cut and paste from their website)



Paragraph Two

Why do you want to work for this employer
in this job?

I am attracted to Big Guns because of the variety of commercial work that is carried out. My perception of your firm is one of professionalism, excellence in legal advice and a rewarding place in which to work, which has drawn me to apply for articles. I have a particular interest in Industrial Arbitration and am aware that your firm has a very strong practice in this area. This is exemplified by the fact that Big Guns represented the Electrical Workers Union in the Victorian Electricity Dispute.



Paragraph Two

Why do you want to work for this employer in this job?

Your involvement in the "brown" sciences and advice on rehabilitation of contaminated sites is closely aligned with my interests. Through my TAFE studies, I have gained valuable knowledge in areas such as waste management, treatment and disposal. Moreover, at Monash University, where I have to date achieved a High Distinction grade average, my major in chemistry has been complemented with a minor in Environmental Science. One of my subjects of particular interest has been Environmental Chemistry: Pollution and Remediation.



Paragraphs Three and Four

Why should the employer hire you?

- Address the criteria that the employer has specifically requested here
- Back up your skills with evidence from study, employment or other experience
- Demonstrate your match to the position



Paragraphs Three and Four

Why should the employer hire you?

My course has helped me to gain relevant technical skills in testing and monitoring water quality and provided an understanding of aquatic systems. Course field trips and volunteering activities for a conservation research project have also added to my abilities to collect and record data for analysis and learn more about the current issues, policies and legislation of Natural Resource Management and freshwater systems. My scientific report writing skills include the ability to be methodical, accurate and comply with standards.



Paragraphs Three and Four

Why should the employer hire you?

As a part time retail assistant I learned to deal with a wide range of people and handled challenging customer enquiries efficiently. Helping in the family business has also raised my understanding of the importance of listening to customers in order to build good client relationships. In both jobs I was working in a team and my good communication skills helped me to work well with others to get a job done.



Final Paragraph and Closure

Include two messages:

- **A statement of appreciation to the reader**
- **A request to meet them in person**

Thank you for reviewing my application. Please find attached a copy of my resume as well as a statement of claims to key selection criteria. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application further at interview. I can be reached on (03) 9999 9999.



Using e-mail- what's the difference?

- **It will not require the location details of the employer**
- **Continue to use Dear Sir/Madam as a form of address to the reader**
- **Still need to demonstrate your match to the selection criteria**
- **Write for on-screen readability**



Send Send and File... Save as Draft Delivery Options... Display More



To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Reply To:
Subject: Application for Accounting assistant (reference no.4329)
From: Sarah.Herrmann@adm.monash.edu.au - Friday 06/03/2009 01:54 PM

Dear Mr Horton,

I would like to express my interest in applying for the position of Accounting Assistant, reference no.: 4329 at Coles Meyer as advertised on the Monash University, Career Gateway job-seeking website. Please find attached a copy of my resume and cover letter for you to look over. Could you please contact me confirming that you have received my application via e-mail on Sarah.Herrmann@adm.monash.edu.au.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Sarah Herrmann

.....
Phone: (03) 9903 1020
Mobile: 0400 000 000
E-mail: Sarah.Herrmann@adm.monash.edu.au



Sarah Herrmann - Cover Letter (Assistant Accountant ref. 4329).doc Sarah Herrmann - Resume (Assistant Accountant ref. 4329).doc |



Employer application forms

Enable employers to

- Check fundamental selection criteria is met
- Provide labour market indicators
- Compare applicants like to like



Application forms – you might be asked

- **Contact details**
- **details**
- **To nominate job preferences**
- **To list education/qualifications**
- **Describe employment experience**
- **Note additional skills/achievements**
- **Respond to**
 - **Competency questions**
 - **Open questions**
- **Details of Referees**
- **Other information for statistical purposes e.g. age**



Competency questions are common

Previous behaviours indicate future approach

Tell me about a time you were disappointed with your work performance. What did you do about it?



Open questions

- **Why do you want to work for this organisation?**
- **What do you think are the 3 most important challenges faced by the government in the next 5 years.**
- **What is your most significant achievement?**
- **What are your interests outside of academic pursuits?**



Some Final Tips

- **The reader may not interpret information in the way you do so make clear and specific statements**
- **Try not to plead- “If only you would give me a chance”**
- **Don’t put your self down – “Although I am only a XXX student...”**
- **Be credible - there is no need to exaggerate or lie**
- **Keep it to 1 page only**
- **Employers want targeted applications**



Resources

- Handouts
- Sample cover letter
- Checklist for reviewing your own
- Writing a cover letter
- careers.monash.edu.au/jobseekersguide/cover-letters.html
- Resume and Cover letter **feedback Service not just feedback – samples on line and instructions**
- careers.monash.edu.au/students/resume-checking.html
- Other resources
- **The Global Resume and CV Guide by Mary Anne Thompson (Book reference in the Careers Library)**