

An Idea of what your cover letter should look like...

Your name and address

Date

The employer's name

Contact person (including job title if appropriate)

The address

Dear Mr. / Ms. / Dr. and name:

YOU: Your first paragraph is your introduction. In this paragraph you should explain why you are writing to them, which position you are interested in and why. It will also inform the reader if you are replying to a specific advertisement or if you are sending a spontaneous application.

ME: In your second paragraph you should explain why this specific company appeals to you. You can talk about what you know about the company from your own research and to relate it to your suitability. Put evidence of your skills in practice.

In the third paragraph you should briefly refer to your CV and you should be highlighting clearly why you are the right candidate for the job. Outline how your skills and qualifications match the employer's criteria in their advertisement. Talk about your skills and back these up with clear examples of how you have used these skills. Here you can also discuss your interest in the organization's work or your passion for a relevant cause.

WE: In your fourth paragraph, you need to conclude, sum up and end the letter. You should have a suggestion to meet to discuss your suitability for a role within the company. Don't forget to thank the employer for their consideration of your application.

Yours sincerely,

Sign here

Your name typed here

Header

Introduction

Body

Closing

Applying for Jobs: Cover Letters

What is a cover letter, and why do I need one?

When you apply for an internship, a job or a voluntary opportunity, you will usually apply with a CV or fill out an online application form. A cover letter often accompanies your CV introducing yourself, enhancing the information within your CV and clearly stating why you are the **right** candidate for the position you apply for.

You can use your cover letter to explain why you are writing to an organization; are you responding to an advertisement or maybe just applying in general? Clearly **highlight your skills and strengths** that make you a suitable match for the employer. Make sure you explain your motivation to take on a specific position, demonstrate your knowledge of the organization to which you are applying and the sector as a whole.

Employers may look for individualized and thoughtfully written cover letters as one method of screening out applicants who are not sufficiently interested in their position or who lack necessary basic skills.

A cover letter is the ideal way to show that you understand what the job entails, your interest in their work and industry and to market your skills to an employer. Do not repeat the information you provide on your CV but highlight your soft skills, motivation and interest in joining the organization.

Soft Skills, also known as interpersonal skills, or people skills, include proficiencies such as communication skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, personal effectiveness, creative problem solving, strategic thinking, team building, influencing skills and selling skills, to name a few.

Need more help? Just ASK!

Visit the **Career Development Center**

@Webster University Vienna

Mag. Margit H. Kanka, MA

Room 224, 2nd floor

Tel: +43 1 269 9293 79

Office hours:

By appointment!

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For more information on our services and resources, available internship and job openings, please visit our **website**:

<http://www.webster.ac.at/cdc>

Writing a cover letter: the basics

Remember, your cover letter is an **introduction** to your CV or application. You should use this to :

- ⇒ Explain why you are applying for a specific position.
- ⇒ Highlight your soft skills and particular selling points within the CV.
- ⇒ Demonstrate your knowledge of the company and the industry.
- ⇒ Explain any additional factors that do not fit easily into your CV (such as a potential starting date).

Just like a CV, there are certain **guidelines** for writing a cover letter. Remember the following:

- Do not exceed the length of **one page of A 4**.
- Use an **easy to read font** such as Arial or Times New Roman, 10 or 12 point.
- The text of the letter should consist of **four paragraphs**.
- Avoid using the same words and phrases that you use in your **CV**.
- Put your **name and contact details at the top**.
- Always address **the recipient personally**, Dear Mr. / Ms. / Dr. Bauer. Avoid just putting Dear Sir / Madam or To whom it may concern in your header.
- Do not forget the **date**.
- In case you send it via mail, use good quality paper and a decent printer to print it.
- Do not forget to **sign your letter**.
- Double-check your spelling, punctuation and grammar. Have it **proof-read**.
- If you send your application via e-mail, attach your cover letter as a pdf. In the e-mail text, just mention that your cover letter and your CV are attached. Make sure that even this short e-mail does not contain any spelling, punctuation or grammar mistakes.



Writing a cover letter: What should I say?

The cover letter is usually divided into a header, introduction, body, and closing. You can think of a cover letter covering three essential areas:

- **YOU:** Why are you interested in the company?
- **ME:** Show your soft skills, motivation, interest and qualifications.
- **WE:** Thank you and politely suggest a personal meeting to discuss your skills further.

1) **Header:** Put your name and address and contact details at the top. The recipient's contact information, and the date sent will follow after your contact details. Following that is an optional reference section (e.g. "RE: Internship Opportunity at Global Corporation"). The final part of the header is a salutation (e.g., "Dear Mr. / Ms. / Dr. XY"). Try to find the name of the person to whom the letter should be addressed.

2) **Introduction:** The introduction briefly states why you are interested in a specific position desired, and should be designed to catch the employer's immediate interest. Focus on the **YOU—the employer!**

3) **Body:** The body text highlights your soft skills and elaborates on facts mentioned in your CV. You explain why you are interested in the job and would be of value to the employer. Do not just repeat the information on your CV but elaborate your skills, qualifications and past experience. Avoid using the same words and phrases that you use in your CV. If there are any special things to note such as availability date, they may be included as well. Focus on the **ME!**

4) **Closing:** A closing sums up the letter and indicates the next step you expect to take or to happen. It may simply say that you thank in advance for taking the time to consider your application and that you look forward to hearing from or speaking with the employer in a personal interview. After the closing is a valediction ("Sincerely"), and then a signature line. Optionally, the abbreviation "ENCL" may be used to indicate that there are enclosures. Focus on the **WE!**

Before you send your cover letter, try to re-read the letter from the employer's perspective; think about what they are looking for, rather than just how you will benefit! Have your cover letter proof-read by someone you know or by your career counselor!

Your cover letter can really make a difference when you are applying it for a job or an internship. It is an important tool to appeal to a future internship provider or employer!

So do not leave it until last minute!