

CV Guidelines and Letter Writing

- Your CV should be a marketing tool showcasing your experience and qualifications. It is imperative that you utilise your CV to the best of its ability. It deserves a maximum amount of time and attention.
- Write several drafts and ask for an objective eye to look over it.
- The average amount of time given to a CV is 15 seconds. Its only purpose is to get you an interview, so make sure it is persuasive in outlining your suitability for the job. Your potential as a candidate must be conveyed, make it interesting but relevant.
- Put a great deal of time into the content and presentation of the first page. The first page must automatically grab the readers' attention. The information should be laid out in a coherent manner; the employer should be able to get a general idea of your skills and whether they are relevant to the position.
- Always begin your CV with a short but informative profile. It should be no more than four sentences indicating what sort of role you're interested in, your current role or position, your key experience to date and what you can offer an employer in broad terms.
- Always remember that CV's are divided into a yes or no pile, make sure yours is in the yes pile by making it interesting and relevant.
- Don't be modest; express your achievements in terms of awards, money, time and percentages. Be genuine, try and describe yourself in terms that are outside the norm. Most employers are looking for someone who's willing to go beyond the expected.
- Use bullet points throughout the CV where appropriate; always point out your suitability for the position.
- Always accompany your CV with a cover letter reminding the organisation that you are an appropriate individual for the job.

Letter Writing

- The Cover Letter plays a pivotal role towards obtaining an interview. Many people underestimate its influence not realising its importance. It is therefore very important to invest a substantial amount of time in writing an effective letter. While a CV is important, the cover letter provides the opportunity to introduce yourself and to market your qualifications to a potential employer.
- The letter should immediately inform the reader why he or she is receiving the letter. If you have previously spoken to them on the phone or in person, mention it in the letter.
- A CV cover letter should emphasize the value of your experiences, education or personal qualities. However, be careful not to repeat information already given on your CV.
- Be persuasive and convincing. Demonstrate how your skills and experience could benefit the organisation.
- The cover letter should relate your skills to the requirements of the position. If your skills match the requirements of the role you will be more likely to be contacted for an interview.
- Cover Letters should be written in a creative yet professional manner. Be proactive in grabbing the readers' attention. If a position is widely advertised, an employer might receive over 100 letters and CVs. Often a well-written letter can determine whether your CV will be reviewed.
- The letter should be typed, well written and directed to a specific person. Show your initiative by enquiring into who the potential decision maker is and then write directly to that person. The use of Sir/Madam is too bland and is ultimately considered a sign of laziness.

Opening Paragraph:

Clearly state why you are writing, the position you are interested in and how you heard of the position. (If you are sending a letter of interest, which is not in response to a specific job opening, simply indicate the type of work you are seeking).

Middle Paragraph(s):

Indicate your suitability for the job and how your skills could benefit this particular organisation. Describe your unique capacity as an employee, try and stand out from other applications. You might use one of the following approaches:

Relate your skills and experiences to the requirements of the position. Identify three reasons for the employer to consider you for the position and state your reasons for wanting to work in the organisation. Also make a reference to your CV for additional information.

Closing Paragraph:

Structure the closing paragraph by clarifying how they can most easily reach you. Whenever it is possible, be enthusiastic and take the initial step yourself. You might say, "I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications in more detail. I will call you on (state a specific date) in order to arrange an appropriate time to meet."