

Starting Points: How to write a cover letter

An effective covering letter:

- will be engaging and professional in style, use action words and short sentences
- will draw an employer's attention to the strengths set out in your CV
- won't repeat what is in your CV, but will summarise the main points
- will demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position you are applying for
- should be tailored for each job you apply for

Suggested structure and content

Introduction

- Make clear reference to the job you are applying for together with any reference number, and mention where you saw the job advertised
- If applying for a graduate, internship or placement position, say where you are studying, what course you are on and your year of study

Why them?

- Tell them why you are applying for the position. What is it about the role and the organisation that interests you?
- Demonstrate that you have researched the company and the sector by making specific points
- Show that you understand what the role involves, and that you are well-suited to it

Why you?

- Why are you a strong candidate for this role? Summarise the experience, skills and abilities you have that match with what they are looking for, backed up with evidence
- Refer to any relevant key modules you have taken, any projects you have undertaken, and any achievements and work experience that might be relevant.
- What do you have that makes you stand out from other candidates? This is an opportunity to address any gaps or apparent weaknesses in your CV in a positive way

Conclusion

- End strongly - restate your interest, summarise your key points
- State your availability for interview

Useful resources

- careerscentral.shu.ac.uk > CVs/Applications/Interviews
- www.prospects.ac.uk/cvs_and_cover_letters.htm UK's official graduate careers website

Want to talk it through?

Contact: Careers and Employability Service for further advice and support
Phone: 0114 225 3752
Email: careers@shu.ac.uk

For further career planning resources, go to shu.ac.uk/careers

This information is available in alternative formats on request.

Example covering letter

Ms G Boyd
Recruitment Manager
JTR Retail
Manchester Road
Stockton M64 7FR

2 Union Street
Sheffield
S6 5RQ

1st October 2015

Dear Ms Boyd

Application for Graduate Management Traineeship

I am writing to apply for the above position, as advertised on Sheffield Hallam University's jobs database. I am a final year student, currently studying English at Sheffield Hallam University. I am interested in joining your graduate scheme for the September 2016 intake. Please find my CV enclosed.

I am particularly interested in this traineeship as it offers the opportunity to work in a fast-growing and fast-paced retail company. Your ethos of constant innovation and of encouraging all of your employees to seek to improve systems and processes is very appealing to my own values. I understand that the position will involve taking responsibility for projects early on, and I am keen to take on a challenging role such as this. I have experience within the retail sector in part-time roles, and enjoy the customer-focus, and the fact that every day is different. I was interested to see that you have recently been awarded the "Staff Development Award" for 2014. I spoke to your current graduate trainees at the Sheffield Universities Careers Fair in October, and was particularly attracted by their description of the support and mentoring you offer your trainees.

You will see from my CV that I have leadership experience, gained through my part-time role as floor supervisor at PG retail stores, as well as through my voluntary role as a fund-raiser for a housing charity. In both of these roles I have motivated small teams, set targets, and used my interpersonal skills to build strong working relationships. The most recent fund-raising event was a fun-run which raised £4000. I used my team-building skills to motivate the team of five volunteers, encouraging them to approach all of their contacts and use their networks to raise funds. I am motivated by achieving results and meeting targets. One of my biggest achievements in my part-time job was to be awarded the monthly regional floor sales award in July 2015.

I have developed valuable skills on my degree course. I have very good verbal and written communication skills, with experience of delivering presentations to a variety of audiences, and I would be confident in presenting reports to management and communicating with staff at all levels. My written communication skills are strong, and I am able to present persuasive and well-thought out arguments.

I am available for interview from 2nd January onwards. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Tara Smith

Sending as an email? Miss off your and their address, and date. Make sure you have a professional email address (use your SHU address). Attach your CV as an attachment. Put the position applying for clearly in the subject field.