

# Careers Service guide to...

## Covering Letters

A covering letter should always be enclosed when sending your CV in response to an advertised vacancy and when writing speculatively to potential employers.

The covering letter will often be the first thing that the employer reads. You should use it to highlight key areas in your CV and to emphasise the relevance of your application to the particular post and employer. The letter should be no longer than one side of A4 paper. Good quality, unlined paper to match the printout of your CV will make a professional impression.

The content of the letter falls into three main categories:

- **Introduce yourself and explain why you are writing**, if appropriate, with accurate reference to the job title and where and when you saw it advertised
- **Give the employer some good reasons to interview you**: explain why you are interested in that particular role; show some knowledge of the organisation if possible; highlight briefly any relevant experience, knowledge or skills. Emphasise what you have to offer, rather than why you want/need the job

- **Close the letter positively.**

Target your letter to the employer. This will avoid the impression that you are sending a standard mail shot to a list of employers.

Attempt to find the name of the person who should receive your application. It looks more focused and it shows genuine interest. You could telephone or email the company to find out the name of the human resources manager, or head of the relevant department.

If you are sending your CV by email, attach a covering letter too with a short email explanation referring to both the CV and covering letter.

3 Church Street  
Kelvinbridge  
Glasgow  
G12 1XZ  
(your address)

24 July 2011 (today's date)

Ms Ann Smith (address in person wherever possible)  
Human Resources Manager  
Youth Services Project  
9 Possil Street  
Glasgow  
G22 4PF (address of organisation)

Dear Ms Smith

MANAGEMENT TRAINEE POST (reference to job title/ref.no from advertisement)

- 1 Introduce yourself (e.g. your degree, postgrad.)  
The job you wish to apply for: where and when you saw it advertised; why you are writing (if speculative).
- 2 What you have to offer: relevant skills, knowledge, and/or experience; brief highlights from your CV.
- 3 Your interest in this particular job and the company. Show some knowledge or the organisation whenever possible.
- 4 Positive ending and when you are available for interview. If speculative, say if and when you will follow up by telephone.

Yours sincerely (named person)  
Yours faithfully (Dear Sir/Madam)

(space for your signature)

Mrs Kate Brown

3 Church Street  
Kelvinbridge  
Glasgow  
G12 1XZ

24 July 2011

Ms Ann Smith  
Human Resources Manager  
Youth Services Project  
9 Possil Street  
Glasgow G22 4PF

Dear Ms Smith

Youth Development Officer, Post Reference YDO0703

I am enclosing my CV in response to your advertisement for the above post which appeared in the Herald of 18th July 2011.

I have recently graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University with a BA in Social Sciences. As you can see, I have been studying part time for the last three years as well as working full time as a care assistant in a residential home for adolescent children.

My current job can often be challenging but it is also very rewarding. My job and the underpinning knowledge gained through my degree have equipped me with the relevant experiences and necessary skills to undertake youth development work with the Youth Services Project.

A combination of full time work and study has enabled me to develop excellent time management and organisational skills together with an ability to work under pressure. The post would allow me to continue working with vulnerable young people; but at a more demanding level.

I feel that I would be able to make a significant contribution to the Youth Services Project. From reading your annual report, I am assured that the work being undertaken by the project is highly regarded by the local community.

I hope that you will look at my application favourably. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kate Brown

The following examples of covering letters show a simple layout blocked to the left-hand margin. There are other layouts which will also look good, but whatever style you choose it should be clear and consistent.

12 Langside Street  
Langside  
Glasgow  
G42 9AX

24 July 2011

Dr Alan Smith  
Conservation Matters  
Department of Rural Development  
Eden Braes  
Aberdeen AB23 1EG

Dear Dr Smith

I am writing to enquire whether there are any graduate opportunities with your organisation at present. I have recently graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University with a 2.1 BSc(Hons) in Environmental Management and Planning and I have a particular interest in the field of sustainable planning and rural development as it relates to countryside conservation.

Part of my degree entailed a six month work experience placement and as you can see from my CV, mine was spent with a company that encourages sustainable development in the countryside.

I examined the socio economic issues associated with housing development in the regeneration of rural communities for my Honours dissertation. I chose this subject because I grew up in a rural community but had to move away because of the lack of employment opportunities, affordable housing and good transport links.

I believe that the underpinning knowledge and skills gained from my degree and work experience coupled with my enthusiasm, motivation and energy would enable me to offer sound professional advice on how to make rural areas better places to live and work. I have read your company brochure and admire your ethical approach to rural development and countryside conservation.

I hope you agree that my CV demonstrates my commitment to developing my experience in this field and that you will give my application due consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

David McDonald

### Contact:

Careers and Employability Centre  
M015, George Moore Building,  
Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow G4 0BA  
T: +44 (0)141 273 1000  
W: [www.gcu.ac.uk/careers](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/careers)  
Blog: <http://gcucares.wordpress.com>  
Twitter: [www.twitter.com/@gcucares](http://www.twitter.com/@gcucares)

We are open 9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday.  
9am - 4pm Friday. Please telephone in advance to confirm.

To arrange a careers appointment/practice interview or to check opening times, telephone 0141 273 1000.