

THE COVERING LETTER

(for graduate jobs)

This is a formal, structured letter, typically no longer than one A4 page and essential when applying for a placement. Use the format of a formal business letter.



Your contact details normally on the top right (address, email, telephone); using the same font as your CV.

Date goes here

Name of recipient
Job Title (if known)
Name of organisation/company
Address (or location, if sending by email/uploading)

Dear Mr./Ms. Surname, [if you have a name for the recipient; avoid first and surname, e.g. Dear David Smith – a result of bad mail-merging]

Dear Sir/Madam, [if you have no name for the recipient]

(1) First paragraph: Reason for writing An example could be: *I am a final year student of.../ ... I am currently in my final year at the Kent Business School, University of Kent, studying [degree/MSc] ... I am a postgraduate student... [as appropriate] and would like to apply for the position of ... as advertised by the Kent Business School... /on your website/via the University's Careers and Employability Service... [state where you have found out about the job].*

For a speculative letter: *I have recently met ... [if you have a contact name] who suggested I contact you./Having met [name] during the university's careers fair in November... etc. ... and would like to enquire whether there might be an opportunity for me to contribute to your marketing department with my knowledge and skills.*

(2) Second paragraph: What interests you about this role? A short paragraph about your motivation - what attracts you to the role you are applying for? Demonstrate that you have researched this job and know what's involved [check at the **Business Insights** section on the KBS Employability blog] and explain why you want to work in that role.

Example: *I have already gained substantial practical work experience in this field from my year in industry/summer internships and wish to build on this; I have spoken to a representative from your company during a recent lunch-time talk at the University of Kent...; I have researched the role of [career field] extensively and believe I have the skills needed to succeed in this field/make a positive contribution to your business./I can bring the skills and qualifications as set out in your person specification.*

(3) Third/fourth paragraphs: What makes you suitable for this role? This is a substantial section where your task is to match your skills/experience/knowledge to the job;

typically two or three paragraphs providing detailed information. Use the **person specification** from the job description as a guide. For example, if it states that the ideal candidate should have good IT skills, especially Excel, mention the software you can use, specifically writing about your Excel skills - show how you meet the criteria and address all of the points from the person specification!

If you have no person specification, use the list of skills you find through the **Business Insights**. Think about how you will be able to contribute to that team/business. Mention your modules, individual/group projects, any work experience so far and the skills you have used. This section is about your evidence, i.e. **your examples** where you showcase the skills you have developed to date. These can come from study, work or interests/student society/volunteering etc.). Always back up your statements with examples.

Example team working and communication: *My team working and communication skills are very strong and were developed in a number of areas. For example, during my previous work at McGregor's Gourmet Burger, I was part of a small team, taking orders and serving customers. At university, I am currently volunteering with Canterbury Help-the-Homeless, contributing to the team of helpers with my work in the soup kitchen and on the streets, encouraging local homeless people to make use of the facilities. I am also a member of the Kent Dance Society and have taken on the role of treasurer, taking responsibility for the society's finances whilst actively participating in weekly classes and annual shows.*

Be positive and take ownership for what you achieved – e.g. replace "I was asked to analyse sales data" with "I analysed sales data"

(4) Penultimate paragraph: Why do you want to work for this employer? Short paragraph about what attracts you to this organisation in particular? This shows that you have researched the organisation and know how they differ from similar organisations. This could be combined with paragraph 2 (motivation). You may find the employer's mission statement useful or the section **About Us** on their website as well as information on the recruitment pages from recent graduates/employees.

(5) Last paragraph: Conclusion - Brief statement, possibly mentioning availability for interview; short summary, e.g. "I believe that my skills, knowledge and experience would enable me to make an immediate contribution to your team."

Thank the employer for considering your application. Finish by saying that you attach your CV (if not a separate upload) and that you "look forward to providing further information in person." / or "I will be available for interview at any time and look forward to hearing from you."

(6) Signing off

If you have used Dear Mr./Ms. Surname, ... sign off with **Yours sincerely**, if you have used Dear Sir/Madam, ... sign off with **Yours faithfully**, then print your name.

Note: *Kind regards* or *best wishes* are too informal, and *Yours truly* or *Sincerely yours* are US and not used in the UK.

Good luck with your applications!

imj/2015