

Cover letter check list

Question	Yes	No	Notes and tips for improvement
Is your cover letter written in the same font as your CV?			The two documents should look like they belong together.
Have you stated your address and contact details at the top or top left?			The cover letter is a formal business letter and needs to include your contact details.
Have you included the recipient's name, job title, company and address (or, if not stated, the HR department, organisation name, main location)?			A formal letter states clearly who the intended recipient is.
Is your letter dated, using the standard date format for the UK?			Example: 20 March 2014 (March 20, 2014 is the US equivalent)
Are you using the correct form to address your reader at the top of your letter? Dear Sir/ Madam, (if you have no name) Dear Mr. Surname, (or Dear Ms. Surname,)			Avoid <i>Dear John Smith</i> and also <i>To whom it may concern</i> ; <i>Madame</i> is French; put a comma (attention to detail)
Do you know what the main requirements are for this role (in terms of grades, skills, experience)? Normally, this is provided in the person specification of the job advertisement - "What we are looking for".			This list is also used to evaluate your application and to decide whether to interview you. If there is no person specification, look up the career profile (select <i>entry requirements</i>) at www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations or http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions
Have you explicitly mentioned the requirements and given specific examples (your evidence)? This ensures that you tick all of the employers' boxes.			For example, it's not enough to say you are a good team worker – show this by giving one or two specific examples where you have worked in a team. This is your evidence. You can link to your CV.
Do you have included the correct formal greeting at the bottom? Yours faithfully, (if Dear Sir/Madam,) Yours sincerely, (if Dear Mr. ... or Dear Ms. ...)			<i>Best wishes</i> or <i>Kind regards</i> are used in emails and are not appropriate for formal business letters. Don't forget the comma here, too.
Have you typed your first name and surname at the end?			You do not have to use a scanned signature or fancy formatting in a cover letter, but be aware that this is often used in formal business letters.
Does your cover letter fit onto one page?			One page is the recommendation.
Have you proofread your cover letter? (Does it sound right? Have you used the UK spell checker and corrected all typos? Is your structure logical?)			Some employers use the rule of three: three typos and you're out. If in doubt get someone else to proofread this, and if English is not your first language, get a native speaker to proof-read it.

If you answered **YES** to all questions than your cover letter is likely to be effective and ready to send.
Each **NO** answer is likely to reduce your chances of getting an interview!

Notes:

The cover letter is your key marketing document that **explains why you are suitable** for the placement/job, and the CV is used to provide specific details. The cover letter is a **formal business letter**. Employers confirm that the cover letter is always **read by a person** who will evaluate your suitability against their criteria.

Here is an example of what a general cover letter looks like:

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/sites/targetjobs.co.uk/files/general-covering-letter.pdf> (TargetJobs)