

# Cover letter basics

## 1. Purpose

- Shows the areas of your background and experience that make you a great fit for the job
- Convinces the employer you have something valuable to contribute.
- Creates a desire for the employer to interview you.

## 2. Format

- One A4 page only.
- Business letter format.
- Aligned to the left hand margin.
- Single line spacing.
- One blank line between each section.

## 3. Structure

Think of your cover letter as a “mini-essay”.

The main topic is: “What makes me a great fit for *THIS* job”.

Have each paragraph form a meaningful section of the overall argument.

### Introduction - paragraph 1

Clearly identify:

- the job you are applying for;
- where you saw it advertised, or how you know about it;
- why you are interested in that organisation and/or position. (Your genuine reasons, not including \$\$\$).

To customise your letter incorporate references to any direct contact you have had with representatives, or specific company knowledge. For a letter of enquiry, clearly explain what you are writing about.

### Main statement – 1 to 3 paragraphs long

Each paragraph should:

- start with a clear topic sentence which identifies qualifications, skills, interests, or knowledge relevant to this position
- back up the topic statement with one or two specific examples of how you have previously demonstrated that ability. Examples from university, work or extracurricular activities can be used.
- the last sentence in each paragraph should link back to how it demonstrates you are a good candidate/how it will be useful in *THIS* position

### Closing paragraph:

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the organisation and reaffirm your interest in the position. Let your research show!
- Let the employer know you: are willing to provide further information; have included your resume and any other requested documents.
- State your interest in attending for an interview and, if relevant, the dates you will be available for work.

If it is a letter of enquiry, compel the reader to action by specifying a date on which you will follow up with a call.

## 4. Is it a good cover letter?

Does it:

- show you fit that employer's needs/ selection criteria?
- present your relevant attributes in an interesting way?
- link your experience with the company and the job requirements?
- provide specific examples of your achievements and contributions?
- communicate your genuine interest in the position?

Sample cover letter

© Careers & Employment, Deakin University. Do not plagiarise the examples provided.

Your application **MUST** use your own language and describe how your experience suits the position. See the career guide [How to identify and demonstrate your skills](#) for further ideas.

*Current date*

10 March 2010

*Employer Details:  
Name of contact /Manager  
Their position title  
Company name  
Company address*

Ms. Elizabeth Henderson  
Graduate Recruitment Manager  
PGK Ltd  
120 Stevens Street  
MELBOURNE Vic 3000

Dear Ms. Henderson

Re: Graduate Accountant – Ref. No. PGK 5018

I am writing to express my strong interest in employment as a Graduate Accountant with PGK as listed on the Deakin University Jobshop web site on 6 March 2009. During the recent Career Fair held on the campus, I had an opportunity to meet with a PGK representative, Mr. George Lucas. His in-depth description of the program rotations in auditing, tax compliance and cost accounting further increased my interest in this position.

I am a final year Bachelor of Commerce student at Deakin University, majoring in Accounting and Finance, and will graduate in November of this year. I consistently receive distinctions for applied accounting assessment tasks such as preparing financial statements, analysing profit and loss balance sheets and creating business activity statements. These practical tasks have prepared me well to fit into the diverse work tasks in the Graduate Accountant role at PGK.

My attention to detail and aptitude for auditing was developed to a high level during a 3 month internship at Bigges Accounting Firm. During this time I assisted in an annual and quarterly audit of two large construction firms, which enabled me to integrate theory into practice. I was pleased to have contributed to the efficiency of the work group by designing a cross referenced Excel spreadsheet to ensure all entries had been verified accurately.

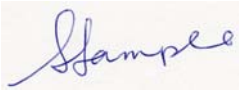
As a part-time Administration Assistant for Management Ltd, my teamwork and communication have been highly valued. Working in a team of four administrators, three of whom are part-time, it has been essential to work in an organised manner and communicate clearly and concisely when sharing ongoing tasks. My ability in these areas was recognised by the office manager, and I was offered the responsibility of inducting new staff in their duties. These skills will be valuable in communicating within PGK's task teams.

My problem solving and leadership ability have been developed through the range of activities in which I am involved, both in and out of university. As captain of a team at the Burwood Tennis Club, I motivated team members by setting goals for their skill development. I also volunteer as a mentor to new students and help them to identify services within the university that will enable them to perform well in their studies, and adapt to the new study environment. These abilities will be well utilised in a Graduate Accountant role.

Please find enclosed my resume and a copy of my academic transcript. I look forward to discussing my application further with you at an interview. Should you require any additional information I can be contacted at any time on 0402 740 672. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Your signature



Ms. Sally Sample

Your name

*Your name, address and contact details can be aligned to the right or left. Australian business convention is that everything should be aligned left. Where space is tight, right alignment can create a little more space.*

*Use an email address that is a version of your name. Not a humorous one!*

*Customise your introduction for each employer by using a personal contact, or specific company knowledge.*

*'Background summary' Sally shows how her education and experience are relevant to this position.*

*Topic: teamwork and communication skills*

*Example: past experience*

*Linking sentence: uses her knowledge of the organisation and role requirements.*

*Finish on a positive note and state your interest in attending an interview.*

*In these paragraphs Sally describes specific achievements and contributions made in other situations to show she can make similar contributions to this organisation.*

*If 'Dear Sir / Madam' was your greeting, then your closing should be 'Yours faithfully'.*

Division of Student Life