

Letter: the outlines

As with your CV: start by analysing the job description. What is the prospective employer looking for? Once you have worked this out and have matched it to your own competences, try to adapt your letter to the job description. No two letters you write should be the same.



Lay out and style

1

AIDA

This is our 'standard' cover letter layout, which will grab the reader's attention and make them want to contact you.

A

Grab Attention

I

Spark Interest

D

Create Desire, sell yourself

A

Initiate Action

2

Keep it clean

This is your ticket to being hired by Company X. Make sure your layout is clean and has a logical structure.

3

Personal info

Your date and place of birth and address all appear on your CV, so you don't need to include these in your letter. This also gives you more space.



Do's

and

Don'ts

1

New = good

Always write a new letter for each application. It's fine to re-use parts that work well, but always tailor it to the job.

1

Copy - Paste

Don't copy information from the job description to your letter. Use synonyms instead.

2

Its about you...

...but do make sure you don't use 'I' too much in your letter.

2

Not a recap!

Your letter shouldn't be a recap of your CV. Refer to your CV instead.

3

Check!

Get someone else to check your letter. Make sure there are no spelling or grammar mistakes.



At the Service Desk in the I Shop we will check your CV and cover letter for free. More info at rug.nl/careerservices



Letter: the content

Tailor your cover letter to the job you are applying for. This means that your letter is likely to change with each application. There are, however, a few general guidelines. Here's some tips to help you improve your letter.



Attention

1

Open creatively

Grab the reader's attention right at the very start of your letter. Incorporate current affairs, facts or best of all, a personal anecdote.



Interest

1

Start with "Why"

Why are you applying for the job? Show that you've done your homework and know the organization and its field of work.

2

Enthusiasm

Be enthusiastic about why you want to work for the company. Be clear about what you want; don't be vague. Try not to be too flattering.

Avoid cliché terms such as:
"enthusiastic", "teampayer"
and "go-getter"



Desire

1

Sell yourself...

Combine experience from your CV with personal attributes and give examples of how you would use your qualities in the job.

2

Branding

If you've done your homework, you'll have figured out your personal brand by now. Now is the time to use it and start selling yourself.



Action

1

Summarize

End with a call to action. Summarize why you are the best candidate for this job and say that you would like to meet the recipient of the letter.



This is where you suggest having a conversation over a cup of coffee!