



Writing an Application Letter

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Your application letter is a very important component of your communication with potential employers. It is the first document they read about you and, as you probably know, first impressions are vital when forming opinions.

In the past, application letters were used just as a covering page for the rest of the documents and may have been very brief and uninformative about the candidate. For example, the letter may have read something like this:

Dear Sir

I wish to apply for the position you advertised in last Saturday's Mercury.

I have attached a resume for your perusal.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Jane Citizen

In today's competitive employment environment you should use every opportunity to market your skills professionally. An application letter should highlight your interest in the position and your strengths – this will help you stand out as an impressive candidate.

Your application letter should give the employer a 'snapshot' of all the reasons why they should employ you. It should introduce you in a clear and focused way and encourage the employer to read the rest of your application with interest.

Given that your application letter is designed to summarise the highlights of your resume and statement addressing selection criteria (if required), it should not be written until you have completed these documents. That is, even though the application letter appears first in the list of documents that you submit, it should be the final document that is written.

WHAT SHOULD AN APPLICATION LETTER FOCUS ON?

Application letters should focus on:

- the position you are applying for;
- why you are applying to the organisation;
- what you have to offer;
- what action you want from the organisation;

and remember, no negative statements such as “Although I haven’t ...”.

FORMATTING YOUR APPLICATION LETTER

Date

Name of Contact
Position Title
Address

Dear (Ms, Mr etc.) Surname

Paragraph 1

If replying to an advertisement, state the position you are applying for (if it’s a Government position then include the Position Classification and Number); and where you found out about it.

OR

If cold canvassing, state the reason for writing and describe the type of work you are seeking, then why you are interested in working for the organisation. This

sentence/s should combine your knowledge of the organisation with your experience and skills and your goals for the future.

Paragraph 2

Your qualifications for the position – academic and any other relevant facts and figures.

Paragraphs 3-5

Choose your three main selling points relevant to the Selection Criteria (if there are any) or advertised job description, or general skills if you have no leads about what is required for the position. Dedicate a paragraph to each skill as follows:

- what the skill is;
- how you have demonstrated it; and
- how it would be useful to the organisation.

Paragraph 6

List the documents you have included in your application package. State the action you require – an opportunity to discuss your application in more detail, when you’re available for interview and how you can be contacted.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Type name

HELP! WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

- Self-help information is available on the Student Services website www.studentservices.utas.edu.au – follow the links to the Career Development and Employment Service.
- Peruse/borrow books from the Student Services careers resource library.