



Letters and application forms

When applying for a job you are competing against a lot of other people. It is important that your application makes an impression and stands out from the others. A properly presented and prepared cover letter and correctly filled in application form will help you.

Writing a covering letter

Underline the skills in the advert. Write a rough copy of your letter and include the skills underlined. Be positive and emphasise why you are perfect for the job. You should include any relevant skills you have.

Suggested layout

First, give a summary of your skills and experience. Keep it brief and to the point. Then, say when you will be free for an interview. Remember to include your name, address, phone number (if you have one), the date and enclose a copy of your CV.

What to say

Be clear. Don't use a long word if a short one will do. If you have been unemployed for a while, say how you spend your spare time (for example, by doing voluntary work, study and so on). Be honest, keep to the facts and try not to oversell yourself.

How to say it

Include the job reference number if there is one in the job details. Enter it below the opening line. For example:

Dear Mrs...

Re: Job reference 345

Try to find out the name of the person you need to write to. If you start with 'Dear Sir/Madam', end with 'Yours faithfully'. If you start with the person's name (for example, 'Dear Mrs Smith', end with 'Yours sincerely'. Finally, double-check your spelling and grammar before sending the letter, by using a dictionary or by asking a friend or relative to check over it.

How the letter looks

Be neat, whether your letter is handwritten or typed. Leave plenty of space around the edges and a clear space between each paragraph. Use good quality plain paper and envelopes. Check against your rough copy to make sure you have not missed anything. If your application is in audio format check that the content is clear, to the point and easy to understand.

Sign the letter and print your name underneath to make sure it can be read easily. Ask a friend or relative to check over your letter before you send it. Finally, make sure your application arrives on time. If you are posting it, allow for delays. If your application is late, the company might not even consider it and your time will have been wasted.

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions

Filling in application forms

Some job adverts will ask you to fill in an application form. You may need to contact the employer to get a copy of the application form. If you need to fill in a Jobcentre Plus application form, you can get this from your nearest Jobcentre Plus office. You can also download it using the following link: www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/es5.pdf

Here are some tips on filling in application forms:

- Always check the instructions for filling in the application form - for example: whether you have to write in capitals or fill in the form in black ink only.
- Spell the name of the company correctly.
- Prepare a draft of the application form and then transfer the information to the actual form - if you're filling it in by hand.
- Read over the job advert again and make sure the information you include on the form is relevant.
- Answer all questions and fill in all the boxes.
- If there are gaps in your employment history say what you were doing during that time - for example: bringing up your children or working as a volunteer for a charity.
- Include skills that you have developed outside work.
- Ask a friend or relative to check your application form before you send it.

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions