# EMPLOYABILITY TOOLKIT – COVER LETTER

*This task is one of an integrated but adaptable set developed by the Careers and Employability team for Flinders University educators to improve student preparedness for the 'world of work'. Use it as the basis for an assessment, non-graded assessment, or activity. Further information and the full framework is* [*located here*](https://staff.flinders.edu.au/learning-teaching/employability-toolkit)*. Topic Coordinators are welcome to adapt these to purpose.*

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| **Task** | Cover Letter |
| **Task type** | Written Task |
| **Length** | 300-500 word cover letter |
| **Learning outcomes\*** |  |
| **Employability skills** | Self-management; problem solving; planning and organising; critical thinking |
| [**Employability Toolkit Category**](https://staff.flinders.edu.au/learning-teaching/employability-toolkit) | Develop and customise job applications and interview skills  |
| **ABCD\*\*** | Career building (C): students will improve on abilities to seek, obtain/create and maintain work (C7, P4) |

\*Topic Coordinator to map to learning outcomes; \*\*Mapped to [Australian Blueprint for Career Development](https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Australian-Blueprint-for-Career-Development.pdf)

## Task Objectives

1. Research employment opportunities of interest
2. Analyse a position description, research an organisation and write a cover letter

## Task Rationale

A job application is your first opportunity to tell a prospective employer about yourself, your skills, and why they should hire you. With your resume providing important context and evidence, your cover letter is where you neatly and succinctly present your case for why the employer should hire you. Your cover letter is your marketing pitch – along with your resume it needs to create a positive first impression to convince the reader that you should be selected for an interview. Your letter will also showcase your written communication skills so make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. This task will focus on preparing a one page cover leftter.

## Task Description

**Part 1** Complete the Job Advert Analysis & Organisation Research Task (this can be a separate task or activity)

**Part 2** Write a ONE page 350-500 word cover letter addressing:

* Who you are / the transferable skills you possess
* Why you are a match for the position
* Why you are interested in the organisation
* Refer to the cover letter structure below and resources for further information

## Part 2 Cover letter structure

The general structure of a cover letter is outlined in the generic 1-page cover letter template below. Use it to help you to construct a cover letter tailored to your chosen job advertisement. Give relevant and recent examples of your experiences, demonstrated skills and knowledge, and personal qualities that align to the position description. Explain why you are the preferred applicant for the position. Ensure that your letter it is no longer than one page.

## Resources

For general tips and tricks for preparing a cover letter you may also like to attend a [Cover Letter Hack](https://careerhub.flinders.edu.au/students/infoPages/detail/275) workshop, access a [recording](https://flo.flinders.edu.au/course/view.php?id=16394).

## Information for Topic Coordinator

Requirements for job applications can vary from within a sector and between organisations. Some may request a 1-page cover letter; others a 2-page introductory cover letter; or occasionally a 3-page cover letter which addresses selection criteria. Preparing applications can require different approaches. This exercise introduces students to writing a basic 1-page cover letter. Topic Coordinators can adapt at their discretion and should consult the Careers and Employability Service for additional advice and support.

**Students should always be directed to read and follow application instructions**

## Job Hacks sessions

The Careers and Employability team run regular [Job Hacks sessions](https://careerhub.flinders.edu.au/students/infoPages/detail/275) on preparing cover letters which are open to all students. With sufficient notice, these sessions may be aligned with teaching or students may be encouraged to book into a session outside of teaching. Contact the Careers and Employability Service careers@flinders.edu.au or 8201 2832 if you would like to discuss options.

First name Surname

Suburb SA 0000

Mobile: 1234 567 890

Email: mflinders@gmail.com

LinkedIN address

10 Month 20XX

Ms/Mr Surname

Position Title

Organisation

Address

Suburb SA 5000

Dear Mr/Ms Surname,

**Re: Position Title**

**Opening statement. Outline why you are writing. For most cover letters this will include what you are applying for and what you are studying**. Usually 1 paragraph**.**

**Why you? Outline your relevant skills, qualifications, and experience appropriate to the position. Make sure you read the advertisement/position description thoroughly**. 1-2 paragraphs**.**

**Why them? Build the connection. Why are you interested in this organisation? Make links between your skills and the skills that the employer is requesting. Show the employer that you have researched the company/workplace by highlighting some information about it. Express why you wish to work for the employer and why you would be a valuable contributor. Avoid being generic. This is the part of your application that can really make a difference/connection.** Usually 1 paragraph.

**Final paragraph. Positive close reinforcing your interest in the role. Reference any attachments (if appropriate).** Usually 1 brief paragraph.

Yours sincerely,

(Leave room for your signature)

Matt Flinders

# Cover Letter Checklist

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| --- |
| **The Basics** |
| * One A4 page in standard business letter format, size 11-12 point font (Arial or Calibri recommended), appropriate margins (2-2.5cm)
* 3-5 paragraphs, no lengthy paragraphs
* Check your paragraph spacing; select all text, then paragraph, then set line spacing before and after to 0pt with line spacing single.
 | [ ]  |
| **Formalities - Include** |  |
| * Date
* Your name, address, phone number and email
* Letter is addressed to a specific individual where possible using the recipient’s name (e.g. Ms Jane Recruiter), title, organisation and address (this probably won’t apply to larger scale recruitment processes e.g. graduate recruitment programs)
* Details of the position (position title, reference number)
* The purpose of the letter – speculative letter or a letter in response to a job advertisement (and where you saw the advertisement)
* Includes signature and/or applicant’s name
* Yours faithfully (when using Dear Madam/Sir/To whom it may concern) and Yours sincerely (when addressed to a named person) are used correctly
* Any attachments are referred to
 | [ ]  |
| **The Content** |  |
| Follow the sequence and structure set out on Page 8. Your content should be tailored to each position you apply to; for each program, each job advertisement, identify the employer’s criteria – in terms of skills, knowledge and experience and ensure your letter addresses these. * Reads in a logical order
* Evidence of your interest in the position and the field – state why you are interested in the job
* Connects qualifications, skills, experiences, with examples and evidence to the target job
* Cites evidence across study, placements, employment, volunteering and extracurricular involvements
* Highlights the benefits of the above and the match with the position
* Have you addressed any other requirements of the job? E.g. work availability, relocation, driver’s license?
* Evidence of your research into the organisation and why you want to work for them
* The letter finishes with a positive close
 | [ ]  |
| **Language and phrasing** |  |
| * The personal pronoun “I” is not over used when starting sentences.
* Sector specific language is used appropriately
* Language conveys interest, energy and enthusiasm
* Correct spelling and grammar
 | [ ]  |
| **Make sure your Letter AVOIDS the following** |  |
| * Never start a letter with "My name is..." – you are signing your name at the end of the letter.
* Do not use phrases such as “I believe I would be the ideal candidate for this position”
* Do not use a generic or template letter.
* Do not use passive or unprofessional wording – such as ‘like’, ‘I was required to..’, ‘I was able to…’
* Stating skills without giving evidence
* Slang, SMS or other abbreviations, jargon or casual expressions
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