

HOW DO YOU WRITE A LETTER OF APPLICATION?

An application letter is sometimes the first contact an employer has with you, so it's critical to ensure that you make a positive impression in writing.

Your application letter is much more than a "cover letter". When it is well done it

- **introduces you** to the employer
- highlights **key information** from your resume
- tells the employer **why** they should consider employing you
- invites the employer to **read further** to find out more, and
- convinces the employer that you're **worth interviewing**



It's definitely worth taking the time to make sure your application letter is spot on.



Sophie's story

I thought that writing an application letter would be really easy after all the time I spent doing my resume and portfolio.

It turned out to be more difficult than I expected, especially because I didn't want to waste the chance of making a positive first impression in writing.

I tried to make it easy for the person reading it to see the relevance of my skills and experience.

That meant I had to make the links from my resume to the job I was applying for – rather than expecting someone to read between the lines.

Luckily I emailed my draft letter to Careers and Employment at careers@qut.edu.au to get feedback – there were two spelling and grammatical errors that I hadn't picked up, even though I'd read it through really carefully heaps of times.

Have a look at the sample letter on the next few pages to get some ideas of how to write your application letter.

- ✓ Check out how to divide your letter into key sections.
- ✓ Read the application letter tips throughout the letter.

Ms Sophie Mitchell
11/23 Leichardt Street
Kelvin Grove Queensland 4059

8 October 2009

Mr Paul Rankin
Managing Director
Fresh Creative
Suite 5, 54 Vernon Terrace
Teneriffe Queensland 4005

APPLICATION LETTER TIP 1

Make sure you observe **business letter writing conventions** – left hand justified, open punctuation, clear, concise, readable – and of course, **NO** spelling or grammatical errors! This is a **formal** letter, whether it is hard copy or electronic, and whether you know the person you are writing to or not, so make sure it reflects positively on you as a professional.

Dear Mr Rankin

Why you are making contact

- *To apply for an advertised position*

I am writing to apply for the position of Advertising and Public Relations Assistant which was advertised on the Seek website on Saturday 6 October.

- *To apply for work experience or voluntary work*

To follow up from our telephone conversation earlier today, I am writing to apply for a period of work experience with your organisation.

- *To apply for any positions that may become available (a speculative application)*

I am writing to express my interest in working in a public relations or advertising role within your organisation. Angela DeMasi, a graphic designer at Fresh Creative who I met through a professional networking event, suggested that I contact you directly as available positions at Fresh Creative are not always advertised.

Who you are

Currently I am in my final year of a double degree in Creative Industries (Media and Communication) and Business (Public Relations) at QUT and am due to complete my studies in November this year. Practical and theoretical work that I have completed throughout my course has had a strong emphasis on real business problems and how to find creative, workable solutions. I have achieved consistently high results in my industry-related assessments and have particularly enjoyed liaising with organisations and researching solutions to meet their advertising needs.

APPLICATION LETTER TIP 2

Show that you value what you've learned from your degree and that you recognise the transferable skills gained that you will be able to apply to workplace situations. Focus on what the employer is looking for – they won't spend much time trying to find ways in which you can meet their requirements, so make it easy for them.



What you are offering – marketing yourself

You will see from my resume that I have participated in a range of industry-related experiences over the past 4 years. These experiences have enabled me to further develop my skills in time management, working under pressure, professional communication and presentation and creative problem solving, as well as the range of technical skills required in advertising and public relations. I have also maintained part time employment throughout my course, which has contributed significantly to my understanding of the realities of the world of work, including the importance of a positive work ethic. I am a self-motivated and enthusiastic person with a strong passion to develop my career in public relations and media, and I am eager to implement the professional skills I have developed so far while being committed to ongoing learning.

APPLICATION LETTER TIP 3

*This is your opportunity to highlight your **relevant experience, skills and qualities**, gained from uni, part time and other employment, voluntary work, extracurricular activities and so on. Don't be shy – employers won't know what you are offering unless you tell them!*



Why you are interested in them

From my research into Fresh Creative, via your website and through discussions with one of your employees, I have been motivated to apply to work with you. I am particularly impressed by your organisation's commitment to working as a partner with rather than a supplier to its clients, and I am excited by the range of services you offer as these would provide an excellent opportunity for me to demonstrate and develop my skills across a range of areas.

APPLICATION LETTER TIP 4

*Make sure you **tailor each application letter** to the specific organisation. This makes you stand out from other applicants as it indicates that your job search is a targeted approach, rather than sending the same generic letter to 50 employers.*



Closure

Thank you for considering my application. Please find enclosed a copy of my resume which provides more details of how my skills and experience meet the requirements of your position. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at an interview to further discuss my suitability for this position. I can be contacted on my mobile 0413 721 201, at home on 3345 7768 or via email at allie.smith@bigpond.com.

- *If this is a speculative letter*

I will contact you within the next week to discuss the possibility of meeting with you to further explore my suitability for current or upcoming positions at Fresh Creative.

Kind regards

(leave space here for your handwritten or scanned signature)

Sophie Mitchell



APPLICATION LETTER TIP 5

*“Apply in writing” doesn’t usually mean a handwritten letter. Employers generally require typed hard copy or electronic (email or online) applications. **Be guided by what the employer is asking for**, and make sure you respond to selection criteria if requested. If it’s not clear what is required, contact the person mentioned in the advertisement to clarify.*

MORE TIPS FOR WRITING APPLICATION LETTERS

- Keep your application letter to **1 page maximum**. Aim for 3-4 paragraphs of concise, easy to read text.
- **Personalise** your letter as much as possible. Find out the name and position of the person to send it to, and research the organisation so you can tell them why you want to work for them. This is great preparation for when you (hopefully!) get invited to an interview.
- **Get feedback** from an independent person. Fresh eyes will find mistakes you overlooked because of your familiarity with the content of your letter. Remember that you can email your draft applications to Careers and Employment for feedback.
- Make sure you **address any key requirements** if you are responding to an advertisement. Selection criteria require a separate response in addition to your letter.



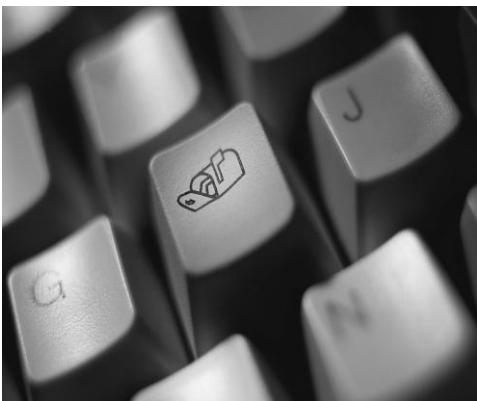
DID YOU KNOW?

Careers and Employment provides feedback on your draft application letter, resume and responses to selection criteria.

Email your draft as a Word attachment to careers@qut.edu.au, or drop in a hard copy to Student Support Services, level 4, C Block, KG.

Please allow 2 working days for feedback.

NEED MORE HELP?



Remember there's lots of information available to assist you to write an application letter.

- Check out the **Careers and Employment website** www.qut.edu.au/careers and look under Applying for a Job for info on application letters, resumes and other application paperwork as well as personal transferable skills.
- Have a look at **Australian sites** such as CareerOne for resources on application letter writing. Go to <http://www.careerone.com.au/jobs/job-search/get-that-job/improve-your-cover-letter>
- Also check out the **career resources** section on Seek at <http://www.seek.com.au/career-resources/>