Covering letter hints and tips

For many people writing a covering letter is a daunting task, because they know it is the first impression an employer will receive of them. And quick decisions can be made upon a first impression.

But if you get past the fear and think about what the main function of the covering letter is – to get the employer to read your CV, by outlining your relevant skills and experience – you will become more relaxed about the task in hand.

So here are a few pointers that will help you find it a little easier writing a great covering letter.

- Be positive about yourself and what you have to offer.
- Be enthusiastic about the job and the company or organisation.
- Keep the letter short – no more than one page of A4 paper – around 150 to 250 words should suffice.
- Keep things business-like, it is a formal letter.
- It's best to type up your letter on a computer, rather than writing it by hand.
- Use good quality white paper.
- Use the same font type you used for your CV.
- Address it to a named person, where possible.
- If it's not possible, address your letter 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
- Tailor your letter to the job you are applying for and to the employer.
- Spellcheck the letter, and then check it again yourself for mistakes.
- Ask someone else to check it for you.
- Remember to sign it!
- Don't add your phone number or email address as these are on your CV.
- Don't use a covering letter example as anything other than a guide.
- Don't forget to attach it to your CV, or send it by email with your CV.
- Save a copy of the letter, preferably electronically.

The article on **How to write a covering letter** and the **Example Covering Letter** also provide more information and support.

If you already have a **Planit Portfolio** account, don't forget to use the Cover Letter Creator online tool! This will help you create, set out and save your letters in your Planit Portfolio.