

Creating a Cover Letter/Letter of Interest in 6 Steps SAN Careers



A placement cover letter accompanies a CV in an application. It should outline **who you are** and explain **why you are interested** in the placement.

The aim of your covering letter is to persuade an employer to read your CV, and eventually invite you for an interview –Remember it's in the detail, others will have applied so make an effort.

You want to be able to capture the employer as quickly as possible.
So keep it brief, no longer than 250 words (one page in length).

What goes into a work experience cover letter?

Although you should always modify your cover letter for each job you apply for, there are a couple of things that all cover letters must include. On top of the standard letter details, these are...

- Your name and contact details
- The role you're applying for
- Why you're interested in the role and company
- Your skills and previous experience
- What you'll bring to the role and company
- Your career goals

If you are applying for a work experience placement to gain more insight into a career pathway...

- Your name and contact details
- The role you're interested in (research prior)
- Why you're interested in the role and company
- Your current skills and interest relating to the opportunity
- How you think the experience will benefit you
- Your career goals

6 Steps

Step 1: Addressing the recipient

The first three words of your placement cover letter are important.

That includes addressing your placement cover letter to the wrong person.

Recruiters and employers may steer clear a work placement cover letter addressed to – Dear Sir/Madam, and more than likely side-lined if someone were to address – To Whom It May Concern.

It's best to address your letter to the reader directly. So...

Option 1: Full Name

e.g. Dear Jason Beem, this could be the most considerate/appropriate option as it's gender-inclusive and doesn't rely on the use of 'mr' or 'ms'.

Option 2: Surname,

e.g. Dear Mr Beem

Option 3: The 'Ms' 'Miss' 'Mrs' dilemma

e.g. Dear Ms Stothard, (never presume marital status, so write Ms instead of Miss/Mrs).

When in doubt, Search or Ask.

If you do not know the name of the person who will be receiving your placement cover letter, there are a few things you can do...

- Search them on LinkedIn. Majority of companies will have a profile that lists their employees.
- Search for the job you're applying for online, this may give you more information about who the recruiter/specific individual is – Google could work!
- Contact the company and ask for the name of the person who would be most relevant to your enquiry.
- Address your cover letter to the department manager.
- If you cannot locate the person who handles recruitment, address your placement cover letter to someone who works in HR.

Step 2: Introduction – Short and sweet

Identify what type of placement you are looking for. If it is general work experience, then state you are 'looking for an opportunity to explore and gain insight'...

Specificity of the role in which you are interested, could lead to quicker responses.

Example:

I am writing to ask for an opportunity to gain work experience and industry insight within the marketing department, please find my attached CV. I have seen from your Linked In profile, you are currently offering employment opportunities and I would like to utilise this chance to ask for a work experience placement.

Note: Recruiters appreciate knowing where you found the vacancy/information regarding the company –social media/direct website/word by mouth. It makes a good impression and is useful for them as it identifies where their posts are most visible and effective.

Step 3: Why are you interested?

Explain why you are interested in the chosen placement/specific role (if identified).

It's important to do some research about the company you are applying to – why have you chosen to approach them? How as a company do they support your interests and aspirations? **Use this research to give definite reasons for your interest in the placement.**

Again, Specificity can create quicker responses.

Step 4: What do YOU bring to the table?

Explain what you will bring to the company as an individual. You may only be asking for work experience, right now. However, you still need to validate your request and give them an insight of your current skills and how you would utilise the opportunity.

You could even state some of your hobbies and interests – keeping them relevant to the role/department you've applied to.

Example:

I am currently studying my last year at Sirius Academy North, in Hull. My favourite subjects are Art, Photography and Maths. They have supported in strengthening my creative, analytical and portfolio building skills. I am practiced in creating portfolios of creative work and working to a brief. I also take pride in analysing my work and reflecting on how it can be improved.

Step 5: Manners Matter

Thank the recruiter for considering your application, and indicate your interest in discussing available opportunities further.

Example:

Thank you for considering my application, I'm looking forward to the prospect of discussing a work experience placement further.

Step 6: Sign off

Yours Sincerely - If you found the name of the recruiter/employer.

Yours Faithfully - If you didn't find the name and addressed it "to whom it may concern".