

## COVER LETTER

# LET'S GET READY CAREER HACKS

A cover letter (also referred to as an application letter) is used to respond to key requirements, skills, attributes, experience, and knowledge as specified in the job advertisement. This fact sheet will help you to write an attention-grabbing cover letter.



### PRO TIPS

- A cover letter (also referred to as an application letter) provides the opportunity to demonstrate why you would be a good candidate by providing relevant information matched to the position requirements. A résumé should also accompany an application letter.
- Unless otherwise stated, an application letter can be up to 1.5 to 2 pages in length with information outlining your attributes, skills, competencies and experience required to do the job, as specified by key criteria located in the job advertisement.
- Be formal when addressing the start of the letter. Use Mr, Mrs or Ms, together with the person's surname (never use just their first name as it's considered informal and unprofessional). If you are unable to source their name from the job advertisement, call the company and ask who the letter should be addressed to.
- Know when to use "Yours sincerely" versus "Yours faithfully".
- Ask someone with a good command of the English language to proofread your résumé for spelling and grammar errors.

### VISUAL

Put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter who may be reviewing hundreds of résumés:

- Don't cram information in. Utilise white space in your application letter.
- Use a sans serif font (such as Arial or Calibri) in 11 point type, unless otherwise specified.
- Use left justification, with margins no less than 2cm.

### CUSTOMISATION

- Break down the job advert and identify the relevant keywords and themes that might be important to the company (refer to page 2).
- Respond to criteria that has been provided in the advert (refer to page 2).
- Always provide context and evidence to show how you've developed a skill and where you've used it.
- Provide relevant examples of previous work, tailored to suit the position you are applying for.
- Be mindful of Applicant Tracking Software (ATS) increasingly used by industry to screen documentation.

### TO CONSIDER

- Write in a business style, not assignment style.
- Write for the employer. Your letter should explain what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.
- Apart from the job advert and job description form, also look at the company's LinkedIn profile and company website to gain an understanding of their overall business objectives and identify how your knowledge, skills and experience align to their objectives.
- Your professional association and online industry publications can also provide an overview of industry.

### AVOID

- Copying other people's (or online sites') cover or application letter data.
- Avoid passive words like "I feel" or "I think". Be clear, confident and dynamic by using strong action verbs such as executed, implemented, advised, facilitated, demonstrated, etc.

## BREAKING DOWN A JOB ADVERTISEMENT

### Example Job Advertisement – Vacation/Internship Enterprise Rotation Program

Company ABC is one of the most trusted and respected global professional services firms with over 162 000 people in more than 155 countries. As a leading provider of advisory, audit and tax services we help organisations build, protect and realise value in dynamic and challenging business environments.

We also support numerous organisations in the areas of education, social inclusion, health and the environment, working on initiatives that make a genuine difference to our society.

Our purpose is to inspire confidence and empower change and to be the clear choice for our people, clients and the public.

How will you contribute to the company's overall purpose? Can you personally identify with their purpose? How are you going to get this across in your letter?

### The opportunity

Working in Advisory, Audit & Assurance, Tax or Enterprise, you'll be **mixing with** some of the brightest minds while **working with** some of the nation's most respected companies on significant commercial projects. You'll also have the opportunity to **network with** sector and technical experts across our business.

Identifying key themes: You'll need to demonstrate how well you professionally communicate and collaborate with internal (staff) and external (companies) stakeholders. This is so important that they've mentioned it multiple times in this paragraph.

### What you bring

Our standards are high but we're interested in more than academic qualifications. We welcome different backgrounds, value all experiences and fields of study. We're looking for **talented people, team players and progressive thinkers who can communicate their ideas convincingly.**

You will:

- Be a critical thinker with strong analytical and problem solving skills.
- Demonstrate good teamwork and leadership potential.
- Be adaptable to new technologies and systems.
- Have strong business and commercial acumen.
- Be passionate about delivering high quality work.

How will you incorporate and address these employability skills and personal attributes within your letter of application?

You will need to demonstrate against each criteria how you have successfully applied the skill/attribute/technology using the SAO framework (Situation, Action, Outcome).

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### What we offer you

You'll work in a **collaborative culture** that focuses on the wellbeing of our people to drive **innovation**. Our flexible and agile work environment fosters an **open, friendly and supportive environment**.

We believe **diversity** of thought, background and experience strengthens relationships and delivers meaningful benefits to our people, our clients and community. We are consistently recognised as an employer of choice for women, and our inclusive culture promotes the development of our people irrespective of gender, ethnicity, generation, flexible work status, family circumstances, sexual orientation or disability.

If you are looking for a vacation experience that will take you further, talk to us.

It's not all about your technical proficiency. You will need to show that you are able to fit into their existing work culture.



# THE APPLICATION LETTER: EXAMPLE RESPONSE TO ADVERTISEMENT

The example provided is to be used as a guide only. It's important to make your responses your own.

<p>Jane Smith 1 Smith Street PERTH WA 6000 E: jane.smith@xzy.com.au   M: 0400 000 000</p>	<p><b>Your name and address</b></p>
<p>23 March 2022</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p>Ms Brown Coordinator Company ABC 1 ABC Street PERTH WA 6000</p>	<p><b>Addressee's Name</b> <b>Addressee Title</b> <b>Company Name</b> <b>Company address or email</b> <b>(refer to contact information provided in the job advert).</b></p>
<p>Dear Ms Brown</p>	<p><b>Greeting:</b> Only use Dear Sir/Madam as a last resort. Try to get the person's name you will be sending your application to.</p>
<p>RE: Vacation / Internship – Enterprise Rotation Program</p>	<p><b>Subject:</b> Cite position name and reference number (where provided).</p>
<p>I would like to apply for the above mentioned Internship, recently advertised online at seek.com.au.</p>	<p><b>Introduction:</b> State the position, where you found it advertised, or how you found out about it.</p>
<p>I'm <b>excited</b> to apply for this position with Company ABC, after learning more about the company while attending a student Enterprise Showcase Session at your Perth office in February this year.</p> <p>I know I would bring to this position a <b>flexible</b> and <b>innovative</b> approach, an <b>analytical</b> outlook, and <b>enthusiasm</b> in learning the different rotation areas of <b>Advisory, Audit &amp; Assurance, Tax</b> or Enterprise a <b>valuable</b> Company ABC internship would provide.</p>	<p><b>Middle paragraphs:</b> Start with a dynamic and interesting opening statement linking your interest in the position against a combination of key words mentioned in the advert covering attributes, abilities and areas of business.</p>
<p>Currently studying a Bachelor of Business Degree in my penultimate year at Edith Cowan University, I have developed <b>sound business and commercial acumen</b> while studying (<b>xxx unit/s</b>). Undertaking study in these units has developed my knowledge in (<b>xxx</b>) methodology and (<b>xxx</b>) systems. My practical application of this knowledge includes (<b>provide detail here where you have used this knowledge – i.e. in a group project, during a placement, work experience, voluntary work and/or employment etc.</b>).</p>	<p>Give a brief outline of yourself, your education and how this applies to the position.</p> <p>Link your learning outcomes to the job requirements when appropriate.</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Page number (right aligned).</p>

#### Colour Key:

Key words as they appear in the job advert linked to personal attributes and employability skills required for the position.

Key criteria as they appear in the job advert.

Address each criterion separately by providing **evidence of your experience/knowledge** using the SAO framework (see the Selection Criteria Hack for additional information on SAO framework). Outline your subject matter expertise developed throughout your study and through paid/unpaid work experience.

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My ability to generate new ideas by undertaking research using **effective critical analysis** skills by applying a reasoned approach and formulating a considered response is best demonstrated in my third year university project/placement "**title/name**" where I **(provide brief detail about project)**. Working on this project helped me refine my **analytical and problem solving** skills when I had to **(provide detail about a small issue that came up while on placement, and the skills and knowledge you used to solve it, how you improved your performance)**.

While studying, I've worked part-time in customer service roles which gave me the opportunity to develop strong communication and interpersonal skills while working with a **diverse** range of customers and staff. I appreciate and understand the importance of building and maintaining positive work relationships with my **team** members and with other internal and external stakeholders by using a professional manner, being helpful, friendly, open, adaptable and using my initiative.

An example of this is through ECU's Peer Mentoring Program, where I have volunteered for the last year working with first year students. I encourage and motivate first year students to engage in university activities and support services, which has helped me to develop leadership potential. I come up with fresh **ideas** in delivering information and **support** to students, customised to the person so their level of engagement, understanding and **confidence** is increased. This experience has been a great opportunity to develop my **leadership** skills.

Understanding the importance of additional industry experience, I have also sourced my own unpaid work experience in the areas of tax and auditing services. This required extensive labour market research and increasing my understanding and ability in developing and maintaining networks in the industry. A result of this was successfully gaining an unpaid placement at **Company LMN**, where I completed **XYZ** project **(provide detail)**.

During this placement I was exposed to **new technologies and systems (provide examples)**. Being self-motivated, I quickly identified staff members who could provide an overview of the new technology. I then identified the appropriate online tools and printed resources I could use to quickly acquire the knowledge and skill required so I could successfully complete the project I was working on.

During both my work and studies I have consistently completed work to **high quality standards** within set time frames as my high distinction grades and referees can attest.

Provide a brief outline of relevant experiences (employment, internships, and work experience) and the skills you have developed within this context. Link this back to the key requirements of the position.

Use a broad range of experiences to showcase your transferrable skills such as communication and team work. Make sure to highlight information pertinent to the position you are applying for.

This section highlights your direct industry experience you have gained (through an unpaid work experience placement you have arranged, or a formal placement i.e. WIL program that is part of your course). It also showcases your networking skills.

2 Page number (right aligned).

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Key criteria as they appear in the job advert.

Address each criterion separately by providing **evidence of your experience/knowledge** using the SAO framework (see the Selection Criteria Hack for additional information on SAO framework). Outline your subject matter expertise developed throughout your study and through paid/unpaid work experience.

Through my studies, professional experience, research and networking I have developed an excellent understanding of **Company ABC** and look forward to continue improving my own learning and performance in progressive areas of this business.

Thank you for considering my application. I have enclosed a copy of my résumé which details my qualifications and employment history.

I can be contacted at any time on my mobile number 04XX XXX XXX or by email on j.smith@abc.com if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Jane Smith

Enc.

Closing and sign-off

When starting the letter with Dear Mr Smith, end with "Yours sincerely". When starting with Dear Sir/Madam, end with "Yours faithfully".

Enc. (Shortened version of enclosed.) Use this if you are attaching/ enclosing a secondary document such as a résumé, selection criteria, transcripts, etc.

3 Page number (right aligned).

## USEFUL LINKS

Visit ECU **CareerHub** at [careerhub.ecu.edu.au](http://careerhub.ecu.edu.au) for a list of useful website links to assist with the development of your résumé. You can book drop-in sessions and workshops to develop your employability skills. For additional information to become a career ready graduate, see the **Get Career Ready Online Module**.

## HACK SERIES

Résumé

Interview Skills

Selection Criteria

Cover Letter

Finding Work Experience

### Contact

P (61 8) 6304 5899  
E [careers@ecu.edu.au](mailto:careers@ecu.edu.au)  
W [ecu.edu.au/careers](http://ecu.edu.au/careers)  
W [careerhub.ecu.edu.au](http://careerhub.ecu.edu.au)

### Student Hub

Joondalup Campus: Learning and Career Hub, Building 31  
Mount Lawley Campus: Building 3  
ECU South West: Building 1

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