



# Cover Letter Factsheet

The cover letter is your opportunity to introduce yourself, demonstrate your suitability for the role and encourage the person to read your resume. Cover letters come in two forms, one is asking to be considered for possible vacancies termed as a 'speculative' letter. The other is a response to a job advert.

## Speculative letters

If you are writing a speculative cover letter you will need to outline what you are seeking, whether it is employment, volunteer work or an internship. This letter is sent to an employer or employment agency, seeking consideration for possible employment opportunities, i.e. positions which are not currently advertised or which do not currently exist.

It is vital to incorporate the speculative approach in your job search for the following reasons:

- A high percentage of jobs are filled in the unadvertised job market.
- Many employers rely on keen students who write to them, of their own initiative, to fill vacancies.
- An employer may be impressed with your initiative, experience, and excellent presentation and make efforts to create a position to accommodate your request or an unexpected job vacancy may arise and your application is already in the employer's hands.

When speculating, mention that you are seeking advice about graduate opportunities or the industry, career paths, new developments or areas of interest. You could then indicate you are interested in voluntary work, casual work or vacation employment.

## Cover letters

Cover letters link your resume to the job or organisation. It is important to emphasise or highlight information from your resume in the cover letter. The cover letter can also add information to demonstrate your skills and experience. These are our seven tips for writing cover letters:

1. Use business letter writing conventions. Left hand justified, open punctuation, clear, concise and readable.
2. 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.
3. Keep your cover letter to one page maximum. Aim for four to five paragraphs of concise, easy to read text.
4. Address any key requirements if you are responding to an advertisement. Selection criteria, however, should be addressed in a separate response, in addition to your cover letter. Please see the selection criteria fact sheet for more information.
5. If it is not clear what is required, contact the person mentioned in the advertisement to clarify.
6. Include study, work, personal qualities and transferrable skills information.
7. Edit your letter. Check for any spelling or grammatical errors. Get feedback from an independent person. Fresh eyes will find mistakes you overlooked because of your familiarity with the content of your letter.

# Sample Letter

Full name  
Street address | City, State, Postcode | Mobile no.  
Email | Social Media ie. LinkedIn (optional)

Dear Mr Stewart,

I am writing to apply for the Technical Officer Graduate Program advertised on the University of Western Australia CareerHub. I am a third year mechanical engineering student studying a Bachelor of Engineering Science at the Univeristy of Western Australia. I am majoring in mechanical engineering and have also undertaken intermediate studies in physics, German and management.

As part of my Bachelor of Engineering Science I am required to complete a minimum of 12 weeks of work placement experience. I am very interested to gain experience in the workforce at ASIO as part of the Technical Officer Graduate Program. My degree has comprised of engineering design, collecting and evaluating data, using problem solving techniques for a variety of tasks and understanding co-worker and cross-cultural relations. The graduate program at ASIO is of interest to me as it offers opportunities to utilise software skills, investigate technically complex data and to apply networking skills in an operational environment. ASIO is a major part of defence and terror prevention for Australia and to be a part of such an important workforce utilising advanced technology would be both humbling and rewarding. Opportunities given in the program align with my career interests and would give me invaluable experience.

The engineering course at the University of Western Australia focuses on team operations and small team functionality from the beginning of the degree. This, paired with studies in organisational behaviour and workplace management, will be a crucial factor in my ability to contribute effectively, constructively and influentially in team environments in the graduate program. I have also developed a range of transferable skills from my previous work experience and my study. I thrive under pressure and I am a critical thinker, which will be important to help make sound but adaptable judgements in the planning and development of tasks. I believe I have a high emotional intelligence, great interpersonal skills enabling me to maintain excellent collegial relations in all aspects of work and I understand the need for discretion. I am positive this will align well with roles in the graduate program.

As a dual citizen, my world travels began early in my life and I have experienced invaluable insights into understanding cross-cultural relations and differences. It makes me resilient and adaptable to fast paced, evolving environments.

Please find attached my application form for the Technical Officer Graduate Program and copy for my resume. I would value the opportunity to discuss the graduate program in person at an interview to further demonstrate the capabilities that I can offer to ASIO.

Yours Sincerely,

Your name

Include your address details.

Address the letter to a person with Dear Mr./Mrs. (if you can) otherwise To Whom It May Concern.

**Paragraph 1:** Introduce yourself, the position you are applying for and how you heard about the job.

**Paragraph 2:** Talk about what drives you, your skills, values, interests and how they relate to the job and organisation (This is where you can talk about 'cultural fit').

**Paragraph 3-4/5:** Take the opportunity to talk about your relevant skills and experience. Make reference to specific jobs or tasks from your past (work or life experiences) that back up the skills and abilities you write about.

These paragraphs allow you to relate your experience directly with requirements of the position you are applying for.

Close with a polite, positive statement that invites the reader to contact you.

Use 'Yours sincerely' if you have used the person's name (i.e. Dear Mr./Mrs.)  
Use 'Yours faithfully' if you have used 'To Whom It May Concern.'

