

Chapter 2: Writing a Job Application Letter

1. Introduction

A job application letter (also called a cover letter) is a formal document written by an individual who wishes to obtain employment or change positions. It is typically submitted when applying to a company directly or through a specialized organization such as an employment agency or a temporary work agency.

The purpose of the application letter is to present the candidate's qualifications, demonstrate suitability for the position, and persuade the employer to consider the applicant for an interview.

2. The Job Application Process

Preparing a strong job application involves three essential steps:

1. **Researching the company and the position**
The applicant must gather relevant information about the organization, its activities, values, and requirements. Understanding the employer's expectations is crucial for tailoring the application effectively.
2. **Preparing a Curriculum Vitae (CV)**
The CV provides a structured summary of the candidate's education, professional experience, technical skills, and competencies.
3. **Writing the cover letter**
The cover letter complements the CV by explaining the candidate's motivation, interest in the position, and added value to the organization.

3. Essential Content of a Job Application Letter

3.1 Expressing Interest and Motivation

One of the most important elements of a cover letter is the expression of genuine interest. The candidate should clearly explain:

- Why they are interested in the position.
- What attracts them to the company.
- How the organization's mission or activities align with their professional goals.

Demonstrating specific interest shows that the application is intentional and well-prepared.

3.2 Highlighting Skills and Added Value

Before submitting the letter, the applicant must identify their key competencies and explain how these skills will benefit the company.

Rather than presenting oneself merely as a job seeker, the candidate should position themselves as a provider of value. This involves:

- Linking qualifications to job requirements.
- Demonstrating problem-solving abilities.
- Showing how their expertise contributes to organizational objectives.

3.3 Professional Tone and Politeness

Politeness and professionalism are fundamental. The objective of the application letter is to create a positive impression.

The language should be:

- Formal and respectful
- Clear and concise
- Free of grammatical and spelling errors

Professional courtesy significantly enhances credibility.

3.4 Providing Contact Information

The letter must include complete contact details. These enable the employer to respond efficiently. Contact information should be accurate and clearly presented.

4. Structure and Formatting Guidelines

4.1 Length

The cover letter should not exceed **one page**. Conciseness demonstrates clarity of thought and respect for the employer's time.

4.2 Layout and Margins

- Use **single spacing**.
- Leave a space between paragraphs.
- Apply **1-inch margins** on all sides.
- Align the text to the **left**, which is the standard professional format.

4.3 Font Style and Size

Use a traditional and professional font such as:

- Times New Roman

- Arial
- Calibri

The recommended font size is **10 to 12 points**.

4.4 Photo

Including a photo is **not mandatory**, unless explicitly requested by the employer.

5. Standard Structure of the Letter

A properly structured application letter typically contains the following elements:

5.1 Heading

The letter begins with:

- Applicant's contact information
- Employer's contact information (name, address, phone number, email)

5.2 Subject Line

The subject specifies:

- The type of application
- The position concerned

Example:

Subject: Application for the Position of Electrical Engineer

5.3 Salutation

Use a formal greeting such as:

Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name],

If the name is unknown, a general professional salutation may be used.

5.4 First Paragraph (Introduction)

In this paragraph, the applicant should:

- State the position they are applying for.
- Mention where they found the job advertisement.
- Briefly express their interest.

5.5 Second Paragraph (Main Body)

This is the most critical section of the letter. The applicant must:

- Demonstrate understanding of the employer's needs.
- Explain how their skills and experience meet those needs.
- Provide specific examples when possible.

This paragraph establishes the candidate's relevance and added value.

5.6 Third Paragraph (Conclusion)

The final paragraph should:

- Express appreciation for the employer's time and consideration.
- Indicate availability for an interview.
- Reinforce motivation.

5.7 Signature

The letter ends with:

- A formal closing expression
- A handwritten signature (if printed)
- The applicant's typed full name

6. Conclusion

A job application letter is a strategic professional document. Its effectiveness depends on clarity, structure, relevance, and professionalism. A well-written cover letter demonstrates motivation, competence, and the ability to communicate effectively qualities highly valued in the professional environment.