

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD APPLICATION

TIPS FOR YOUR COVER LETTER

RESEARCH AND MAKE IT PERSONAL: Writing an application is a process where you gradually get better in terms of describing and underlining your competences. Each application has to be targeted the specific job and company; standard applications will be discarded right away. Find a way to match your qualifications with the wishes of the company. The requirements can change a lot from one company to another, so you have to research to spot what they are looking for. In general research is key when applying for a job.

MOTIVATION AND INTEREST: Give the reader a quick explanation of your motivation for applying for the job and what you have to offer. The application should be interesting and make the reader want to learn more about you at a job interview. Have a “company” focus and make sure the application doesn’t say “I” throughout.

FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS: Focus on your strengths (not weaknesses) and exemplify your competences and how you are suited to solve the tasks. Either, in the job description there will always be some tasks that you don’t like or don’t feel qualified for, but you always want to enhance the positive things. Even though you don’t meet the full list of wishes the company puts forward in the job ad you might still be a good candidate for the job.

CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE SKILLS: As an international student, you need to point out your specific language and cultural skills and business insight. The company might even suggest a project/product where you can help because of your background. The company might see you as a potential link between their company and your home country and equipped with the ability to think within an international mindset.

LAYOUT: An application should be one page only (A4) but not much shorter. Keep a good structure that makes it easy for the reader. A lot of information can be placed in the CV instead of the application - e.g. your address. Company name and contact name is not needed. Place this in the e-mail text.

NEED HELP?

CAREER SEMINARS: AAU Career offers career seminars in Aalborg, Copenhagen and Esbjerg every semester. Sign up at careers.aau.dk.

CAREER COUNSELLING: If you still need guidance after attending the seminars you have the opportunity to book an individual career counselling. Read more at careers.aau.dk.

THE UNSOLICITED APPLICATION

In the unsolicited application, you are the one to take the initiative. You take contact to the company. An advantage is that your application doesn’t drown in a pile of applications. You might be lucky to contact the company at a point where they need someone like you.

Before you apply, you must acquaint yourself with the company and its working area and needs. That makes it easier for you to target your application and articulate your competences in a language the company understands. Don’t forget to check if they already have posted a job advert. If so, you apply for this job if it fits your wishes and abilities.

Research the company as much as possible to target the application directly at the company. Generic applications will not be taken seriously by any company; it has to be relevant for the HR manager to take the time to read it.

Network is a way of gaining knowledge of a company and maybe even get direct contacts. Consider contacts in your personal network that may have information on your chosen path or area of interest. Your network might include:

- Family and friends
- Lecturers and tutors
- Ex-employees
- AAU alumni
- Other professional contact on e.g. LinkedIn or even Facebook

TITLE: You might suggest a position you wish to hold or describe your area of interest.

ARGUMENT: Describe why you want to work in this company and with certain projects. Maybe you have read an interesting article about the company, followed them on LinkedIn or talked to them at the Careers Fair or other event.

DESCRIBE THE JOB YOU ARE LOOKING FOR: Describe your skills and what you are dedicated to work with. Make it clear what you have to offer and which tasks you are able to solve. Mention if you are versatile and able to handle other tasks than the ones you have focused on. Focus on enhancing your most essential competences and relevant work experience – and make sure to put your experiences into context. When and where did you acquire and where have you applied the specific competences?

ABOUT YOU: Give the reader an idea of who you are as a person.

ENDING: Sustain the initiative by writing that you will contact the company. Remember to actually do this. This way you give them the most reliable impression of you.

REMEMBER: Relevant information such as recommendation can be attached. Bring references to the job interview.



EXAMPLE: A BUSINESS APPLICATION

THE ADVERTISED APPLICATION

The advertised application is an answer to a job advert.

Usually, the company lists a number of demands to your qualifications. This is nothing but a wish list and you don't have to fulfill every single one of the demands.

If you are in doubt, it is always a good idea to call the company and ask questions about the job that you can't find the answer for elsewhere. This way you show your interest and maybe they will remember you, when they read your application.

You can also show an interest in a company at the Careers Fair, company visits, etc.

Write a catchy **TITLE**

MOTIVATION/PRESENTATION OF YOU: Write a short and precise presentation of your motivation and yourself giving the reader an idea of who you are. Show that you have researched the company and have a "your value in the company" focus so that the employer feels that you are specifically targeting him/her.

HEADLINES: By using headlines you can avoid the application becomes too text heavy.

YOU ARE OFFERING... Focus on what you have to offer the company and not the other way around.

MATCH THE DEMANDS: This is the most important part of writing an application. Focus on matching your competences with the demands from the job advert. Don't comment on the demands you cannot fulfill. You have to describe some of your academic competences related to the job - exemplify it so your statements doesn't become too superficial, such as: *"I have a theoretical knowledge of branding with an international and national focus"*. INSTEAD write: *"I have used my knowledge of branding in my 8th semester project where my group and I worked with LEGO with a focus on national and international branding of their new game boards"*.

ABOUT YOU: Give the reader an insight of who you are as a person by describing your personal competences. Remember to exemplify them by putting them into a context. Danish companies also want to hire you for your personal competences, not just your academic competences.

ENDING: Leave the reader with the feeling that you really want this job, and that you are interested in the further developments of the case.

You and I can make sweet music together – here is your new marketing coordinator!

Your company is in a constant growth both in Denmark and in Europe. Due to my degree in international business and sales, I know how to market products and combined with my personal background in music, I have a knowledge of how I can help you continue your success.

Creative marketing experience

In my master's thesis, I worked together with company X and Y and compared different marketing strategies when trying to launch new products to already satisfied customers. Your company has similar challenges, and thus I already know your customers' profiles. I have new ideas of how to brand your products by application of my experience with consumer behavior and e-marketing. My upbringing in both Spain and Germany has given me a strong international profile with cultural and linguistic strengths.

Tuning in on salesmanship

A sale is not just a sale but an experience that has to be told as well as an understanding of customers' needs. My bachelor's degree in music from University of Barcelona gave me a very good insight in what music means to musicians and how to meet their wishes. My student job in a music store also gave me experience in direct contact with customers, argumentation and how sales can be targeted.

German thoroughness, Spanish passion

As a person, I am very outgoing, humorous and responsible. Before I came to Denmark last year, I used these qualities in my spare time where I volunteered at the local youth club, arranged sport events, and other social activities. You will get an employee that likes being in charge and making sure all the pieces fall into place.

All in all, my marketing and sales experiences, my cultural understanding and linguistic capabilities, and passion for music makes me the unique profile you need. I am looking forward to an interview where we can discuss my future employment.

Yours sincerely, XXXX

REMEMBER: Signature, name and a reference. Only attach diplomas, references etc. IF the company has asked for it. Otherwise, bring it for the interview.