

How to write an expert Cover Letter – with help from GenAI

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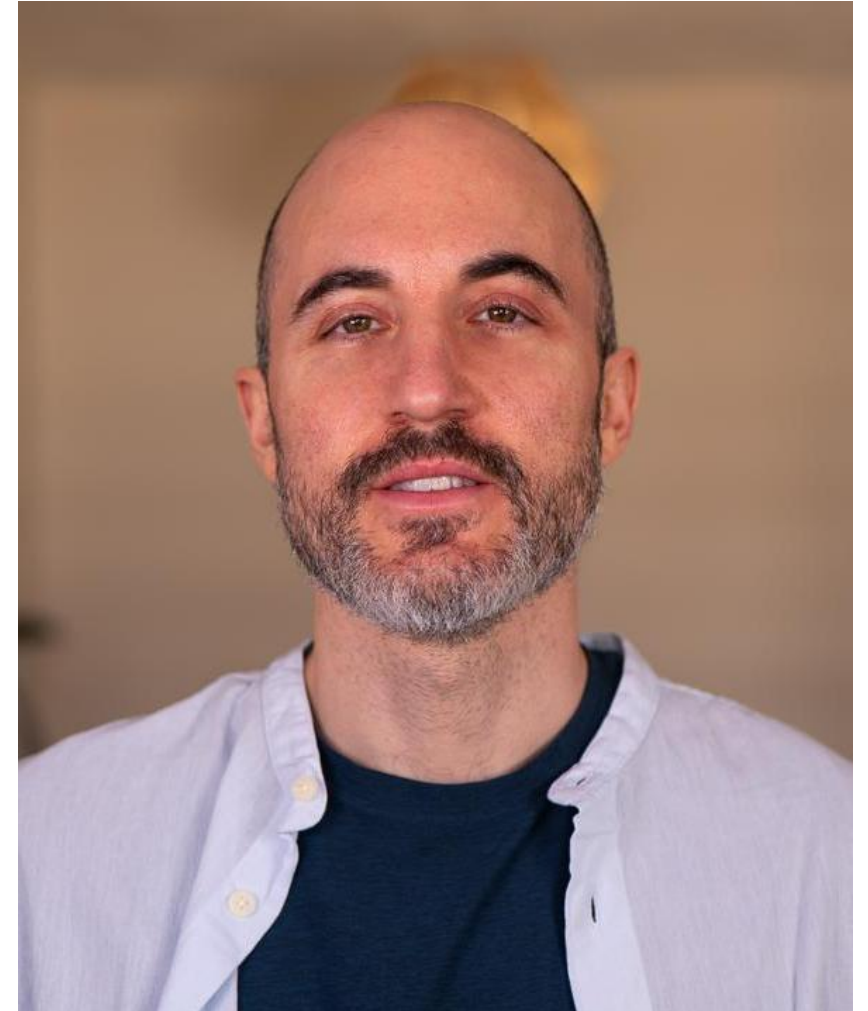
Agenda

- Why cover letters matter
- The theory: what to include and why
- The practice: create an expert cover letter - with help from GenAI

Quick Introduction

Josh Phillips

- Careers Consultant at LSHTM (Wed-Fri) supporting people in public and global health to build fulfilling, sustainable careers
- Background across consulting, research, NGOs, startups, charities.
- PhD (QMUL), Cambridge alum, qualified coach



Poll (At Start)

How clear and confident do you feel about your Cover Letter writing?

Please complete **Question 1** and click **Submit**



<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/Ye2txWnCHJ>

Cover Letters matter to recruiters

- 89% expect a cover letter
- 87% consider them essential for interview invites
- 83% read the cover letter
- 66% spend less than 30 second reading
- 90% rejected due to lack of customisation
- 41% consider the introduction most important
- Primary focus?
 - **An applicant's ability to connect their work experience with the demands of the role (27%)**

(Sources: [ResumeGo](#), [ResumeLab](#), [Zety](#), [ResumeGenius](#), [StandOutCV](#))

Here is a job we are applying for

Public Health Programme Support Officer

Employer

[London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and London Borough of Wandsworth](#)

Location

Wandsworth, London

Salary


£35,391 - £42,888

Closing date

22 May 2026

[View more categories](#) ▶



Apply on website 



Save



Send job

Essential Qualifications, Skills and Experience

The successful applicant will have:

- A project management qualification or evidence of equivalent experience.
- Be proficient in the use of Microsoft Office, including Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Be able to communicate effectively and sensitively orally and in writing.
- Be able to work as part of a team and deal with a wide range of professionals at all levels internally and externally and will be key along with the ability to demonstrate a meticulous eye for detail.

Here's an expert cover letter for this role

AMARA DIALLO

18th May 2026

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Wandsworth, London

With respect to: **Public Health Programme Support Officer** position

Dear [Individual Name or Hiring Manager]

The Richmond and Wandsworth Public Health team's commitment to addressing population health challenges across two of London's most diverse boroughs is what draws me to this Programme Support Officer role. The Children and Young People and Targeted Interventions team works at precisely the intersection of evidence and action where meaningful health outcomes are made — and I am keen to develop my project coordination and administrative skills within a local authority public health setting, contributing to the day-to-day functioning of a team with direct community impact.

There is a strong parallel between my background and the demands of this role. During my MSc Public Health at LSHTM, I coordinated a mixed-methods dissertation study across four rural districts in Ghana — managing a dataset of 450 participant surveys, liaising with local officials, and delivering the project on time and within an £8,000 budget. This experience sharpened my ability to keep complex, multi-strand work organised and moving forward, which I see as directly transferable to supporting the smooth running of a busy public health department.

Project management has been central to my work across both academic and professional settings. During my internship at Engage Health Africa, I supported a three-country evaluation of a community health worker programme across Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda — coordinating qualitative data collection across 25 interviews, managing timelines across multiple workstreams, and contributing to a final report disseminated to FCDO and the Gates Foundation. This required maintaining clear documentation, tracking progress against deliverables, and proactively communicating updates to senior colleagues. I am confident in applying this structured approach to coordinating programme activities, supporting diary management, and ensuring the administrative functions of the Children and Young People team run efficiently.

Communication — written and oral, and across a wide range of professionals — has been equally important throughout my experience. At Engage Health Africa, I contributed to evaluation reports reaching senior stakeholders including FCDO and the Gates Foundation, distilling complex findings

from 1,200 programme participants into clear, accessible summaries. At St. Mungo's, I delivered weekly health literacy workshops to vulnerable service users on topics including sexual health and mental health, adapting my communication style to the needs of the group. I also presented dissertation findings to an audience of 40 or more academics and public health professionals at the LSHTM Annual Research Showcase, receiving commendation for clarity. In this role, I look forward to bringing that same range — from sensitive one-to-one interactions to clear written communication — to managing enquiries, writing agendas, and supporting the team's engagement with internal and external partners at all levels.

Attention to detail has been a consistent thread across everything I have done. At St. Mungo's, I coordinated referrals to five specialist health services, maintaining accurate case records in line with GDPR requirements — where precision was not just good practice but a safeguarding obligation. In my dissertation research, I applied logistic regression and thematic analysis to a dataset of 450 surveys, where methodological rigour was essential to producing findings that could genuinely inform national antenatal care policy. I am proficient in Microsoft Office including Excel at an advanced level, and in data management tools including REDCap and KoboToolbox, and I am confident in applying this precision to invoice management, filing systems, and information coordination within the team.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experience could support the Children and Young People and Targeted Interventions team.

Yours sincerely,

Amara Diallo

The theory: what to include and why

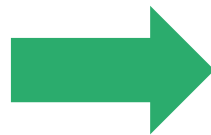
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1. The Hook

- **The Hook – why them**

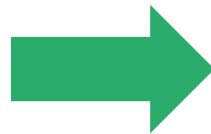
- Name something specific about the organisation — a programme, initiative, or mission priority. Signal your desire to develop the skills the role requires.
- Specificity = credibility. Generic openings are invisible; precise detail earns attention and signals genuine motivation.



The Richmond and Wandsworth Public Health team's commitment to addressing population health challenges across two of London's most diverse boroughs is what draws me to this Programme Support Officer role. The Children and Young People and Targeted Interventions team works at precisely the intersection of evidence and action where meaningful health outcomes are made — and I am keen to develop my project coordination and administrative skills within a local authority public health setting, contributing to the day-to-day functioning of a team with direct community impact.

2. Parallel to you

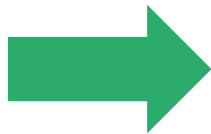
- **Parallel - your value in their context**
 - Draw a direct line between your experience and their work. Name the project, the scale, the outcome.
 - Reduces hiring risk. Recruiters hire people they can picture doing the job — the parallel answers that question before the interview.



There is a strong parallel between my background and the demands of this role. During my MSc Public Health at LSHTM, I coordinated a mixed-methods dissertation study across four rural districts in Ghana — managing a dataset of 450 participant surveys, liaising with local officials, and delivering the project on time and within an £8,000 budget. This experience sharpened my ability to keep complex, multi-strand work organised and moving forward, which I see as directly transferable to supporting the smooth running of a busy public health department.

3. Why you

- **Why you — skill, sub-attributes, impact**
 - One paragraph per key skill in the Job Description essential/desirable criteria. Specific example, real numbers, named organisations, clear outcome. Address the components within each skill, not just the headline.
 - Evidence beats assertion. Sub-attributes show you understand what the role actually involves day-to-day.

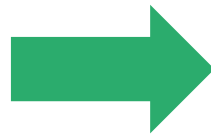


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4. Professional closing

- **Professional closing**

- Thank the recruiter. Express forward momentum — "I look forward to discussing further" — not passive hope.
- Assumes progression rather than waiting for it. Leaves the recruiter in an action-oriented frame.



Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experience could support the Children and Young People and Targeted Interventions team.

Yours sincerely,

Amara Diallo

The practice: write an expert cover letter - with help from GenAI

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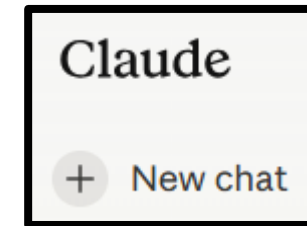
What you'll need

1. Your CV saved as a Word or PDF file
2. The example cover letter ([download it here](#))
3. The job description for the role you are applying to — either the full text copied from the listing, or the URL of the job advert
4. The AI cover letter prompt ([download it here](#))

How it works, step by step

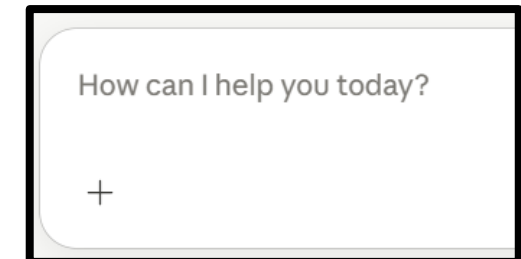
Step 1 — Go to Claude

- Open your browser and go to **claude.ai**. Create a free account if you do not already have one — no paid subscription is needed.
- Click **New Chat** to open a fresh conversation.



Step 2 — Upload your files

- Using the attachment/upload button in the chat (the paperclip icon), upload both of the following files:
- Your CV
- The example cover letter downloaded from Moodle
- Upload both files before typing or sending anything



How it works

Step 3 — Add the job description

Either paste the full text of the job description directly into the chat box, or include the URL of the job listing. If pasting, do this after your files are uploaded.

Step 4 — Paste the prompt

Open the AI cover letter prompt downloaded from Moodle. Select all the text, copy it, and paste it into the Claude chat box below your job description. Then press **Send**.

Essential Qualifications, Skills and Experience

The successful applicant will have:

- A project management qualification or evidence of equivalent experience.
- Be proficient in the use of Microsoft Office, including Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Be able to communicate effectively and sensitively orally and in writing.
- Be able to work as part of a team and deal with a wide range of professionals at all levels internally and externally and will be key along with the ability to demonstrate a meticulous eye for detail.

As the Lead Career Advisor responsible for advising and guiding students with their careers at this top-tier, research-driven institution for public health, government, research, international development, and healthcare sectors, I am an LSHM student and I need your help writing a tailored, expert cover letter for a specific role. I am also uploading an example cover letter produced by the LSHM Career Service. Use this as your quality benchmark and structural guide - match its tone, flow, paragraph length, and level of specificity. Do not copy its content, but mirror its approach.

Please follow this exact process - do not skip steps or jump ahead.

STEP 1 - Read and analyse

First, read my CV, the example cover letter, and the job description carefully. Then tell me:

- The organisation name and role title
- The top 3-4 skills or competencies the job description is asking for, in priority order
- One key observation about how well my CV matches this role - including any gap or tension I should be aware of

Wait for me to confirm before moving to Step 2.

STEP 2 - Ask me one question

Ask me this single question before writing anything:

"Is there anything specific about this organisation, team, or role that particularly attracts you - something not already obvious from your CV? For example, a specific programme they run, a recent team story, a personal connection to their mission, or a reason you are targeting this type of role right now?"

Wait for my answer before moving to Step 3.

STEP 3 - Write the cover letter

Using my CV, the example cover letter as a structural guide, the job description, and my answer from Step 2, write a complete cover letter following this exact structure:

Paragraph 1 - The hook (hook them): Open with a specific, genuine reason why this organisation and this role attracts me - referencing something particular about their work, mission, or team. Do not open with "I am writing to apply for...". End by briefly connecting to one relevant parallel from my own experience, and signalling my desire to develop the key skills this role requires.

Paragraph 2 - The parallel: Draw a clear, direct parallel between my most relevant experience and the core demands of the role. Be specific - name the project, the scale, the outcome. Show how my background maps onto what they need. Do not say "I am confident" or "I am a strong candidate".

The paragraphs are the skill set paragraphs. For each of the top skills identified in Step 2, write one paragraph that:

- Names the skill clearly
- Pulls a specific example from my CV with concrete detail (numbers, scale, named organisations, outcomes)
- Includes sub-attributes of that skill where relevant (e.g. if the skill is "communication", address both written and oral, or internal and external audiences)
- Shows impact - what happened as a result of applying this skill

Step 5 — Follow Claude's lead

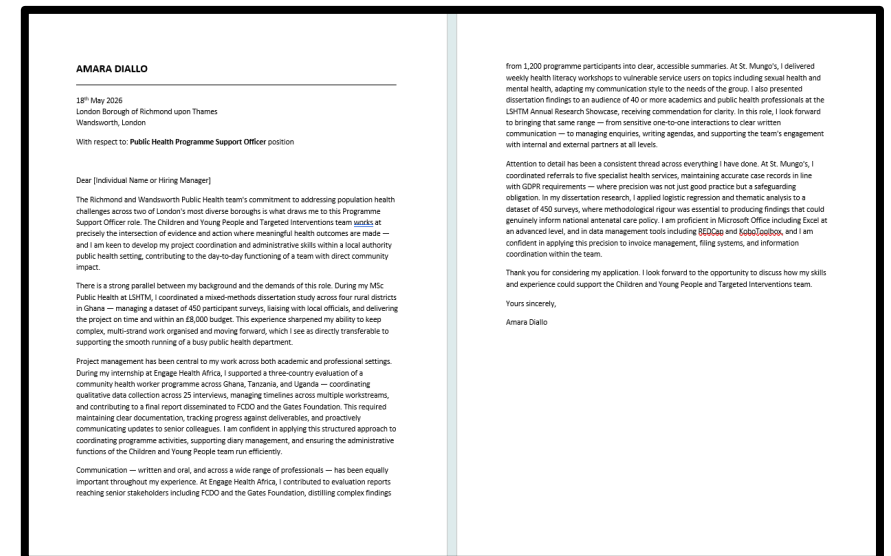
- Claude will work through the process step by step.
- It will first analyse your CV and the job description and share its findings. Read these carefully — if it identifies a gap between your profile and the role, this is useful to know before you apply.
- Then it will ask you one question about why this organisation attracts you. Answer this as specifically as you can — the more concrete your answer, the better the cover letter will be.
- Claude will then write your full cover letter and offer suggestions for improvement.



How it works

Step 6 — Refine and finalise

- Once Claude has written the letter, you can ask it to adjust anything — for example to make a paragraph more specific, change the tone, or swap in a different example from your CV. Keep refining until you are happy with it.



Important notes

- Claude will only use what is in your CV — it will not invent experience you do not have
- The quality of the output depends on the quality of your CV and your answer to Step 5. The more detail you provide, the better the result
- Always review the final letter yourself before submitting — you know your experience better than any AI tool
- If you would like feedback on your cover letter from the Careers Service before submitting, book a 1-1 appointment
- Note: you don't have to use GenAI at all!



Additional resources

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Cover Letter template

- Click [here](#) to download our Cover Letter template (Word, Editable)
- Note: this template was created with GenAI (Claude), following the instructions given in this masterclass

AMARA DIALLO

18th May 2026
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Wandsworth, London

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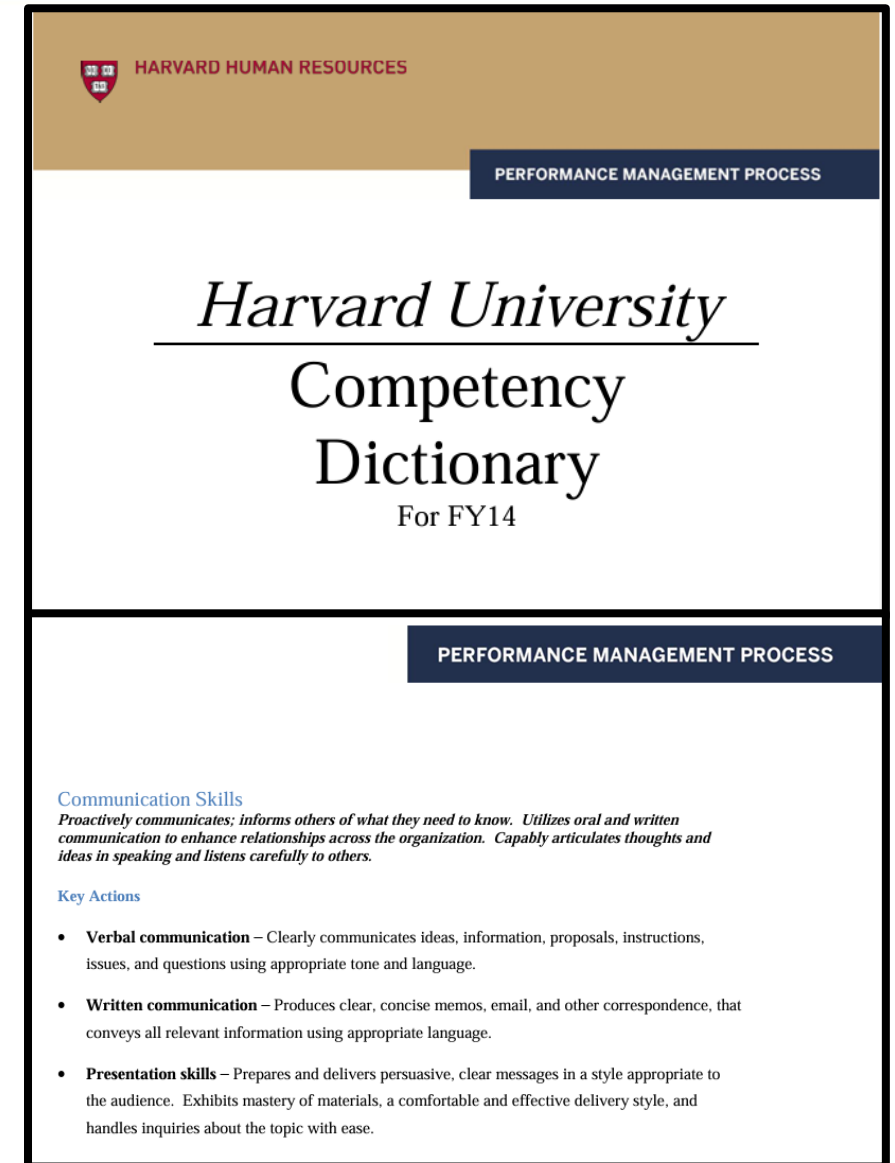
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Yours sincerely,

Amara Diallo

Skills Dictionary

- Gives you sub-attributes of specific skills
- Use this to evidence skills effectively in your Cover Letter
- Click [here](#) to view (PDF)



The screenshot shows a document titled "Harvard University Competency Dictionary For FY14" under the heading "PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS". The document is from "HARVARD HUMAN RESOURCES". The specific competency being detailed is "Communication Skills".

Communication Skills
Proactively communicates; informs others of what they need to know. Utilizes oral and written communication to enhance relationships across the organization. Capably articulates thoughts and ideas in speaking and listens carefully to others.

Key Actions

- **Verbal communication** – Clearly communicates ideas, information, proposals, instructions, issues, and questions using appropriate tone and language.
- **Written communication** – Produces clear, concise memos, email, and other correspondence, that conveys all relevant information using appropriate language.
- **Presentation skills** – Prepares and delivers persuasive, clear messages in a style appropriate to the audience. Exhibits mastery of materials, a comfortable and effective delivery style, and handles inquiries about the topic with ease.

- Click [here](#) to improve and tailor your Cover Letter using CareerSet

Login to your account

✓ **Improve your CV**

Get an instant CV score and receive actionable feedback to improve.

✓ **Tailor your CV**

Meet employer needs and rank higher in recruitment systems with ease.

✓ **Enhance your cover letter**

Improve quality and ensure alignment with the job requirements.



Login with your LSHTM email address

[Student Login »](#)

[Alumni Sign Up »](#)

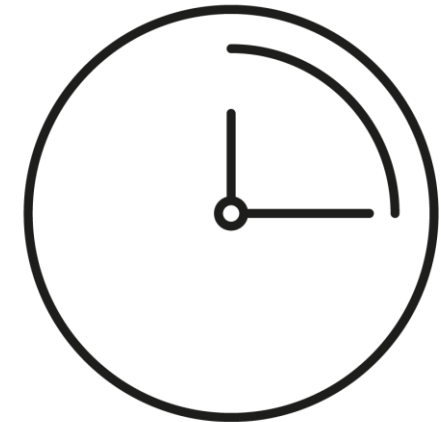
Recap

- Cover letters matter
- Include a hook, parallel, why you, and closing
- You can use GenAI to help write an expert cover letter
- Always check before submitting!

Your next step

- After this session what is one specific action you will take in the next 48 hours?

Write your answer in the chat



Poll (At End)

How clear and confident do you feel about your Cover Letter writing now?

Please complete **Question 2** and click **Submit**



<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/Ye2txWnCHJ>



Q&A

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Thank you

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