



COVER LETTER TEMPLATE AND CHECKLIST

Summary:

- Always keep your cover letter to one page.
- Do not try and make the margins smaller to fit more on a page - this will look messy and come across like you do not have the ability to write succinctly and clearly.
- Try and keep the font at size 11 or 12.
- Always tailor your cover letter to the role by including as many facts and statistics as you can about the firm.
- If you are applying for a job, explain when you are available for an interview or what notice period you need to give.
- Finish the cover letter with something the recruiter will remember.
- Thank the recruiter for their consideration and that you look forward to hearing from them.
- Finally, ask a friend to proof your cover letter for any silly grammatical errors or typos.



Explanatory Note

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Checklist:

- 100 words.
- Academic background.
- Work experience placement, Training Contract or Vacation Scheme.
- A very brief introduction of why you are applying to/interested in the firm.

Example:

I am a [second year LLB undergraduate student] at the [University of x] and I am writing to apply for the [2022 Vacation Scheme] at [x firm]. Following an [open day, insight event or speaking with [x]] at the firm, I learnt about the firm's success within [x], their core values of [x] and their [x approach] to their training contract program which in turn developed an interest in pursuing a legal career at [x firm].

Paragraph 2: Why law?

Checklist:

- 150-200 words.
- The initial “spark” of law: (event + action) + consequent = niche and interest in firm/spark.
- Spark should link to the next 2-3 activities that lead you to commercial law and explain your interest in the specific niche that makes you interested in that firm.

Example:

Spark:

My interest for a career in law was sparked during [an open day/module/work experience] where I [wrote an essay/completed a case study/took part in a negotiation task/attended a discussion panel/completed a group assignment].

Consequent Actions:

Subsequently, I then went on to [insert activity here] where I completed [insert task here] and enjoyed [enhancing my understanding of commercial issues the legal sector faces/examining evidence to ensure a fiscally beneficial outcome for a client/collaboratively sought a commercially viable solution for a client] ...

Interest in the firm:

Following these experiences, I would like to train at [x] firm which [insert your interests that you mention in your experiences] where I will be tasked with [insert a firm aspect which is unique to the firm you are applying to].

Paragraph 3: Why the firm?

Checklist:

- 200-300 words.
- Things to discuss (focus on three of these).
 - 1. Strengths in Practice**
 - 2. Quality of firm's work and clients**
 - 3. Firm's business strategy**
 - 4. Training programme**



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5. Cases or lawyers that you would like to work on/with

6. Firm's culture

- For each of the three, you must explain why it links back to you.
- After the three are discussed, conclude on a point about the training programme and why it links back to you.

Example:

Strength in practice areas:

[x]'s success within practice area [x] as shown by their recent [award/tier ranking] presents an exciting opportunity to develop my prior [experiences/interest] in [x practice area] as a trainee at [x] firm.

Quality of work/client:

Reading about [x]'s role in advising [x on merger/transaction/acquisition/of x] I was impressed by [x's strong cross-border capabilities/in-depth legal knowledge/utilisation of technology]. I enjoyed learning/applying this at [work experience/module/essay] and would be excited by the opportunity to apply this as a trainee at [x].

Firms Business Strategy:

[Reading/discussing/learning] about the firm's business strategy, I noted its [recent merger/international approach/business model]. I admired this approach because it [highlight's the firm ability to innovate to meet new client demands/caters to a diverse client range/operates a unique structure]. As an undergraduate, I have [attended workshops/modules/written essays] which highlights how [x]'s strategy will foster growth and thus an ideal environment as a trainee.

Training Programme:

Intake

Small: [x]'s small intake of [x] trainees are also appealing as it grants trainees exposure to complex transactions and direct client contact early on. After [insert pro bono/work experience] I have gained experience working directly with clients which would enable my success in a small trainee intake at [x].

Medium/larger: [x]'s trainee intake of [x] trainee is also appealing as it will enable trainees the opportunity to work collaboratively, which is important considering the [values/goals/team structure] at [x].

Structure

From [reading about/attending an open day] about [x], I became interested in [x]'s [non-rotational/entrepreneurial/high-client exposure/training program structure]. This approach enhances [x]'s success as it [provides high-client exposure early in training/teaches trainees early responsibility/ teaches trainees how to establish client relationships/ensures diversity in seats] which ensures [x] has a competitive advantage as [client's prefer longstanding relationships/specified client advice].

Culture:

Learning about the [values/goals/traits] that [x] embraces such as [entrepreneurial/business-minded/collaborative] I found that these [values/goals/traits] would contribute to [x]'s competitive advantage as [client's will value [x]'s [values/goals/traits] as it ensures a more commercially minded outcome/it reflects their own client base/employees are more motivated to work].



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Conclusion

I am excited by [[x]'s training strategy mentioned earlier] because I [enjoy early responsibility/enjoy deadlines/enjoy collaborative work] as exemplified by [STAR method].

Paragraph 4: Why You?

- 200-250 words.
- Explain three key traits you possess.
- Explain why they are important to the firm.
- Make them quantifiable and link back to your specific experiences.

Example:

I possess the ideal combination of skills to become a successful [lawyer/paralegal/work experience student]. For example, I have demonstrated strong [communication/collaboration/time management/resilience/organisation/leadership/teamwork skills] through [insert experience] where I achieved [insert result]. I developed [x] skill when I [STAR method]. [Insert skill] is also important because [explain why it will make you a good lawyer/paralegal/work experience student]. I developed this skill when I [STAR method] ...

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

- 50 words.
- Summarise your intentions and why you are applying.
- Sign off the cover letter with the correct salutations.

Example:

I am confident that the competencies I have developed from my degree, work experience and other activities listed above will enable me to excel as a trainee at [x] firm.

Thank you for taking the time to read my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

[Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully],

First Name, Last Name



Checklist Table

Paragraph 1: Introduction	
Checklist	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 words. • Academic background. • Work experience placement, Training contract or Vacation scheme. • A very brief introduction of what sparked your interest in the firm. 	<p>I am a [second year LLB undergraduate student] at the [University of x] and I am writing to apply for the [2022 Vacation Scheme] at [x firm]. Following an [open day, insight event or speaking with [x]] at the firm, I learnt about the firm’s success within [x], their core values of [x] and their [x approach] to their training contract program which in turn developed an interest in pursuing a legal career at [x firm].</p>
Paragraph 2: Why commercial law	
Checklist	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150-200 words. • The initial “spark” of commercial law: event + action = spark. • Spark should link to the next 2-3 activities that lead you to commercial law and explain your interest in the specific niche that makes you interested in that firm. <p>Formula: Spark (event + action) + Consequent Action = Niche and interest in firm</p>	<p>Spark: My interest for a career in law was sparked during [an open day/module/work experience] where I [wrote an essay/completed a case study/took part in a negotiation task/attended a discussion panel/completed a group assignment].</p> <p>Consequent Actions: Subsequently, I then went on to [insert activity here] where I completed [insert task here] and enjoyed [enhancing my understanding of commercial issues the legal sector faces/examining evidence to ensure a fiscally beneficial outcome for a client/collaboratively sought a commercially viable solution for a client] ...</p> <p>Interest in the firm: Following these experiences, I would like to train at [x] firm which [insert your interests that you mention in your experiences] where I will be tasked with [insert a firm aspect which is unique to the firm you are applying to].</p>
Paragraph 3: Why the firm?	
Checklist	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-300 words. 	<p>Strength in practice areas: [x]’s success within practice area [x] as shown by their recent [award/tier ranking] presents an exciting opportunity to develop</p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Things to discuss (focus on 3 of these).<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strengths in Practice2. Quality of firm's work and client3. Firm's business strategy4. Training program5. Cases or lawyers that you would like to work on/with6. Firm's culture• For each of the three, must explain why it links back to you.• After the three are discussed, conclude on a point about the training program and why it links back to you which enables you to move on to part 3.	<p>my prior [experiences/interest] in [x practice area] as a trainee at [x] firm.</p> <p>Quality of work/client: Reading about [x]'s role in advising [x on merger/transaction/acquisition/of x] I was impressed by [x's strong cross-border capabilities/in-depth legal knowledge/utilisation of technology]. I enjoyed learning/applying this at [work experience/module/essay] and would be excited by the opportunity to apply this as a trainee at [x].</p> <p>Firms Business Strategy: [Reading/discussing/learning] about the firm's business strategy, I noted its [recent merger/international approach/business model]. I admired this approach because it [highlight's the firm ability to innovate to meet new client demands/caters to a diverse client range/operates a unique structure]. As an undergraduate, I have [attended workshops/modules/written essays] which highlights how [x]'s strategy will foster growth and thus an ideal environment as a trainee.</p> <p>Training Programme: <u>Intake</u> Small: [x]'s small intake of [x] trainees are also appealing as it grants trainees exposure to complex transactions and direct client contact early on. After [insert pro bono/work experience] I have gained experience working directly with clients which would enable my success in a small trainee intake at [x].</p> <p>Medium/larger: [x]'s trainee intake of [x] trainee is also appealing as it will enable trainees the opportunity to work collaboratively, which is important considering the [values/goals/team structure] at [x].</p> <p><u>Structure</u> From [reading about/attending an open day] about [x], I became interested in [x]'s [non-rotational/entrepreneurial/high-client exposure/training program structure]. This approach enhances [x]'s success as it [provides high-client exposure early in training/teaches trainees early responsibility/ teaches trainees how to establish client relationships/ensures diversity in seats] which ensures [x] has a competitive advantage as [client's prefer longstanding relationships/specified client advice].</p> <p>Culture: Learning about the [values/goals/traits] that [x] embraces such as [entrepreneurial/business-minded/collaborative] I found that</p>
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	<p>these [values/goals/traits] would contribute to [x]’s competitive advantage as [client’s will value [x]’s [values/goals/traits] as it ensures a more commercially minded outcome/it reflects their own client base/employees are more motivated to work].</p> <p>Conclusion I am excited by [[x]’s training strategy mentioned earlier] because I [enjoy early responsibility/enjoy deadlines/enjoy collaborative work] as exemplified by [STAR method].</p>
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Paragraph 4: Why You?

Checklist	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200-250 words. Explain three key traits you possess. Explain why they are important at the firm. Make them quantifiable and link back to your specific experiences. 	<p>I possess the ideal combination of skills to become a successful [lawyer/paralegal/work experience student]. For example, I have demonstrated strong [communication/collaboration/time management/resilience/organisation/leadership/teamwork skills] through [insert experience] where I achieved [insert result]. I developed [x] skill when I [STAR method]. [Insert skill] is also important because [explain why it will make you a good lawyer/paralegal/work experience student]. I developed this skill when I [STAR method] ...</p>

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

Checklist:	Example:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 words. Summarise your intention to apply. Sign off the cover letter. 	<p>I am confident that the competencies I have developed from my degree, work experience and other activities listed above will enable me to excel as a trainee at [x] firm.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read my application. I look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>[Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully],</p> <p>First Name, Last Name</p>

