

# Cover Letter Checklist for Law Firm Applications

*A complete pre-submission checklist for aspiring legal professionals*

*Use this checklist before submitting any cover letter to a law firm — whether applying for internships, associate positions, or lateral roles. Every box checked increases your chances of making a strong first impression.*

## 1. RESEARCH & PERSONALISATION

---

- Addressed to a specific named partner or hiring contact  
*Avoid generic 'Dear Sir/Madam' — research the correct name on the firm's website or LinkedIn*
- Mentioned the firm by name at least once in the body
- Referenced a specific practice area, recent case, deal, or publication of the firm
- Explained why you are interested in this firm specifically — not a generic reason
- Tailored the letter to the role advertised (associate, trainee, intern, etc.)

### Research Tip

- Check the firm's website, Legal 500, Chambers & Partners, and recent news articles
- Mention a specific landmark case or transaction they handled — shows genuine interest
- Reference their stated values or pro bono work if it aligns with your experience

## 2. OPENING PARAGRAPH

---

- Clearly stated the position you are applying for in the first sentence
- Opened with a compelling hook — not 'I am writing to apply for...'
- Mentioned where you found the job posting (firm website, referral, job board)
- Conveyed genuine enthusiasm for the firm within the first paragraph
- Kept the opening paragraph to 3–5 sentences maximum

## 3. BODY — LEGAL SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

---

- Highlighted at least two specific legal skills relevant to the role  
*e.g., legal research, contract drafting, client advising, litigation support*
- Cited a concrete example or achievement for each skill mentioned
- Mentioned relevant law school coursework, moot court, or clinic experience if applicable
- Included any prior law firm, judiciary, or in-house experience
- Demonstrated commercial awareness — awareness of the business context of law

- Avoided overly technical jargon that may not suit all readers

#### **Drafting Tip**

- Use the CAR method: Context → Action → Result for each example
- Quantify where possible: 'drafted 15+ contracts' or 'reduced turnaround by 30%'
- Match the tone of the firm — magic circle firms expect formal prose; boutiques may prefer direct language

## **4. BODY — MOTIVATION & FIT**

---

- Explained what draws you to this specific practice area
- Linked your career goals to what the firm offers
- Showed awareness of the firm's client base or industry focus
- Avoided copying from your personal statement or CV verbatim
- Demonstrated cultural fit without being sycophantic

## **5. CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

---

- Reiterated your enthusiasm and interest in the role
- Included a clear call to action — invited an interview or further discussion
- Thanked the reader for their time
- Signed off professionally: 'Yours sincerely' (named recipient) or 'Yours faithfully' (unnamed)

## **6. FORMATTING & PRESENTATION**

---

- Length is one page — no more, no less
- Font is professional: Times New Roman, Garamond, or Arial — size 11 or 12pt
- Consistent margins (1 inch / 2.5 cm on all sides)
- Your full contact details are at the top: name, email, phone, LinkedIn (optional)
- Date and firm address block included above the salutation
- No spelling or grammatical errors — proofread at least twice
- Saved and submitted as a PDF unless stated otherwise

#### **Formatting Tip**

- Use the same header/font style as your CV for a cohesive application package
- Single line spacing within paragraphs; one blank line between paragraphs
- Use a PDF to ensure your formatting is not altered on different devices

## 7. TONE & LANGUAGE

---

- Tone is confident but not arrogant
- Language is formal and precise — consistent with legal writing standards
- No colloquialisms, abbreviations, or informal phrases
- Active voice used throughout where possible
- No use of first-person overuse — varied sentence structure
- No filler phrases: 'I feel', 'I believe', 'I think' — replace with direct statements

## 8. FINAL PRE-SUBMISSION CHECK

---

- Read aloud to check flow and identify awkward phrasing
- Had at least one other person review it — ideally a legal professional
- Confirmed the firm's name is spelled correctly throughout
- Confirmed the recipient's name and title are correct
- Confirmed the role title matches exactly what was advertised
- Application deadline has not passed
- Attached CV and any other required documents
- Email subject line is professional and includes the role reference if provided

**lawmento.com**

*Practical legal resources for students, graduates, and legal professionals.*

## Continue Your Legal Journey with LawMento

Scan any QR code below to explore courses, free resources and our community



### Explore Our Courses

Practical expert-led legal courses designed for students and professionals.



### Explore Our Bundles

Curated course bundles—more learning, better value for your career.



### Explore Masterclasses

Deep-dive sessions by industry experts on high-demand legal topics.



### Explore E-books

In-depth e-books on career paths, law practice areas and more.



### Free Resources

Templates, guides and PDFs — completely free for our community.



### Free Checklists

Ready-to-use legal checklists covering key practice areas.



### Career Guide

Step-by-step career roadmaps for law students and young lawyers.



### Follow on Instagram

Daily legal updates, tips, and career content — follow @lawmento.official



### Connect on LinkedIn

Legal insights and professional updates — follow LawMento.



### Join WhatsApp Community

Get daily legal insights for FREE.