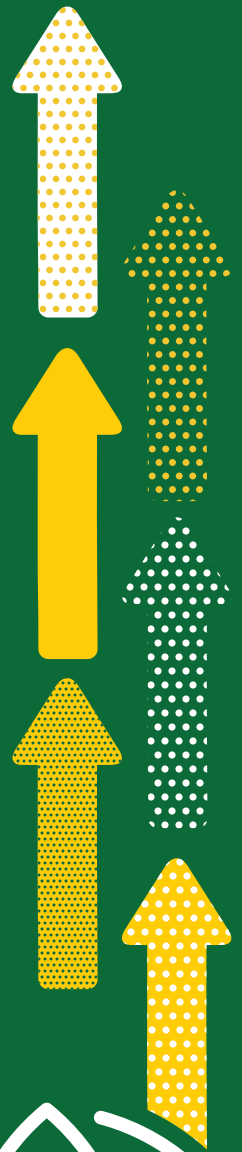


# PLANNING FOR CAREER SUCCESS THE CAREER SERVICES



The **TOP TIPS AND KEY POINTS** that will **SUPPORT YOUR CAREER SUCCESS** no matter the degree, discipline or year of study you're currently in as a USask student or alumni.



## IN THIS GUIDE:

- ✓ Cover letter and resume templates and top tips
- ✓ How to decipher and utilize a job posting
- ✓ Interview prep top tips
- ✓ Career Services resources



# COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

**First Name Last Name**

Firstname.lastname@usask.ca

Personal Phone Number

City, Province

LinkedIn Link

Date

**Name of Hiring Manager**

Position Title

Company Name

City, Province

**RE: Title of Position (#Job Number)**

Dear Hiring Manager's Name or Hiring Committee,

**FIRST PARAGRAPH**

Introduce yourself and connect yourself with the position and company you are applying to. This paragraph should answer the following questions:

- What inspired you to apply for this position and work for this organization?
- How do you plan to contribute to this specific organization's goals?
- What makes you passionate about this industry?

**BODY PARAGRAPHS (one to two paragraphs)**

These paragraphs are meant to connect your unique experiences to the job posting requirements. Reflect on the following:

- What makes your skill set, personality, experiences and background an asset to the company?
- What personal achievements, paid employment and volunteer work make you a unique and well-suited candidate?
- What two to three detailed examples will describe the above?

**LAST PARAGRAPH**

In two or three sentences:

- Reiterate why you are the best fit for this position and why you are excited about the opportunity to work for this company.
- Thank them for reviewing your application and welcome further conversations and opportunities.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

(digital or handwritten)

Your Name (typed)

Enclosed: List all other documents included in your application.



**Need help choosing the right words? Review our list of helpful words and phrases to use in your cover letters and resumes.**



**Your cover letter should never be longer than one page.**



## First Name Last Name

Firstname.lastname@usask.ca | Personal Phone Number | City, Province | LinkedIn link

**SUMMARY OF SKILLS or HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

This section should highlight:

- Technical and transferable skills relevant to the job posting qualifications
- Three to five detailed bullet points
- Sub-categories, if relevant

**EDUCATION****Degree or program name**

Completion Date

Thesis, if relevant

University Name, Location

**CERTIFICATIONS, & TRAINING (if applicable and relevant)**

Certification Title

Expiry Date

Special Training

Completion Date

**POTENTIAL HEADINGS:**

WORK EXPERIENCE, RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SUPPLEMENTARY EXPERIENCE, ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE, VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE, CLUB LEADERSHIP, PROJECT AND COURSE WORK EXPERIENCE

Position Title / Program / Course Name

Start Date – End Date

Organization/Company Name, Location

Bullet points should include:

- Overview of duties, responsibilities, and skills
- Statements should follow **Action Verb + Task (Skill) + How You Developed It**
- Quantifying details to strengthen your statement
- Example **(Recommended a social media marketing relaunch that led to a significant increase in brand awareness and a 21% increase in follower engagement.)**

**ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS (optional)**

Conferences, workshops or academic competitions (case/poster/STEM competitions)

Brief description

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR CAREER DEVELOPMENT (optional)**

- Conferences
- Workshops
- Academic competitions (case/poster/STEM Competitions)

Date

**MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS (optional)****Membership / Association Title**

Date

Brief description

**HOBBIES AND INTERESTS (optional)**

- Competitive or recreational sports
- Arts and culture
- Involvement in appropriate social justice causes
- Casual, low responsibility volunteer work

**REFERENCES**

Reference name #1

Reference name #2

Reference name #3

Position title

Position title

Position title

Organization/company name

Organization/company name

Organization/company name

Phone number

Phone number

Phone number

Email

Email

Email

Find a list of optional sections to include in your resume.



# INTERVIEW PREPARATION



**THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW** is to determine whether you are right for the job and whether the job is right for you; think of the interview as a conversation between you and the employer—you are both learning about each other.

**BE PREPARED:** Re-read the job posting and your application package.

**REVIEW:** Research the company's website, social media and LinkedIn.

**UPDATE:** Make sure your LinkedIn is up to date and your personal social media has privacy settings set.

**PRACTICE:** Reflect on which experiences you want to highlight, (teamwork, conflict resolution, leadership etc.) and practice common interview questions. Answer behavioural questions by describing the **S**ituation, **T**ask/**O**bstacle, **A**ctions, **R**esult, and remember to **R**eflect (**STARR/SOARR**) on the situation and what you would do differently.

**WASP:** Prepare your 60 second introduction with a high-level overview of your **W**ork experience, **A**cademics, **S**kills, **P**ersonal note (that relates to the industry/position).

**GET ORGANIZED:**

**VIRTUAL:** Have a professional background and a quiet and uninterrupted space. Check your connection, microphone and video to ensure they are working properly.

**IN-PERSON:** Before your interview make sure you know how to get there, how long it will take, and where you'll park. Plan to drive by/ take the bus the day before.

**BREATHE:** It is OK to be nervous. If you need to, take a moment to pause before or in the middle of answering. Once or twice, it is OK to ask the interviewer to repeat or re-phrase the question.

**\$\$\$\$:** Research industry salary ranges for similar positions.

- Always ask them to explain the salary range for the position
- Never give them a set number, always a range based on industry average and your experience
- Be realistic with your entry level salary expectations
- Know that often summer position rates are not negotiable

**YOUR TURN:** When they ask "Do you have any questions for us?", say "Yes!".

Have three to five questions prepared about:

- Office culture
- Training, mentorship, professional development opportunities
- What a typical day might look like in the position
- Six months in, how will you know if you are succeeding
- What is the hiring manager's favourite aspect of working for the company

**STOP:** Until an offer is made, avoid asking about salary, benefits, vacation, etc.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Within 48 hours, send a thank you email to the hiring committee.



**Be dressed to impress, and arrive 15 minutes early.**



## SALARY NEGOTIATION AND CONTRACT REVIEW TIPS

Review your employment contract before signing it to understand what will be expected of you, and for full-time professional positions, ask if the salary is negotiable.

**Find more salary negotiation and contract review tips online.**



# INTERVIEW PREPARATION

## Job search tips

**NETWORK:** Hiring managers interview people who come personally referred before sorting through the pile of resumes they receive.

**EXPLORE:** Search job boards and attend career events to see all the options available to you. Career Services has a job board (CareerLink) and hosts annual career fairs and employer engagement sessions.

**INTERVIEW PREP:** Career informational interviews are private meetings with an experienced professional in the career area of your choice, and are a great way to grow your network and uncover hidden opportunities.

**SAVE:** Save a copy of the job posting you're applying for to reference it when creating your cover letter and resume. Re-read the posting before your interview, and share the posting and your documents with your references.

**MIRROR:** Study the job posting! You want to mirror the words and phrases in the posting while showcasing your strengths in the areas that seem to be most important.



If you aren't on LinkedIn, it is difficult to grow your professional network.

# COVER LETTER and RESUME TIPS

Before you start creating your job search documents you need to know yourself—take time to reflect on your unique strengths, experiences and qualifications. You also need to know your audience—review the job posting and research the company you're applying to.

## Cover letter

**FORMAT:** Use proper section breaks, capitalizations, bolded fonts and bullets to clearly organize your document.

**AT THE TOP:** Include the position title and job ID number (if there is one).

**GREETING:** Avoid using generalities such as "To whom it may concern" and instead use the hiring manager's name or use "Hiring Committee".

**INTRO:** Connect yourself to the position and company you are applying to.

**MIDDLE:** In detail, describe two or three specific examples that illustrate your strengths and qualifications.

**LAST:** Summarize and reiterate what makes you a unique asset and why you are the best fit for this position. Be sure to thank the employer for taking the time to read your application.

**SIGNATURE:** Sign your name.

**REVIEW:** Make sure the content is relevant and there are no spelling or grammatical errors.

**STAND OUT:** Customize each application to specific job postings.

## Resume

**LANGUAGE:** Use wording from the job posting in your resume (and your cover letter).

**PERSONAL INFO:** Include your name, phone number, USask email, and link to your LinkedIn profile.

**HIGHLIGHT SECTION:** Connect your strengths to the job posting requirements.

**BE SKIMMABLE:** Format your resume properly.

**HEADINGS:** Be strategic and choose the best section headings to use for your resume, starting with the most relevant.

**STATEMENTS:** Use the formula: **Action Verb** + **Task (Skill)** + **How You Developed It**

For example: **Maintained positive collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders to effectively coordinate a two-day outdoor family appreciation picnic for 1000+ participants and a \$7,500 budget.**

**REFERENCES:** If references are not required, state "Available upon request" and if references are required, ask for permission and include three.

**REVIEW:** Check content order, formatting, and spelling and grammatical errors.

**DETAILS:** Set yourself apart by adding **quantifying** details to strengthen your statement. For example, "Coordinated annual mailouts of over **5,000** invitations, formal letters, and information packages".

**SAVE AS PDF:** When applying, save your application as a PDF.



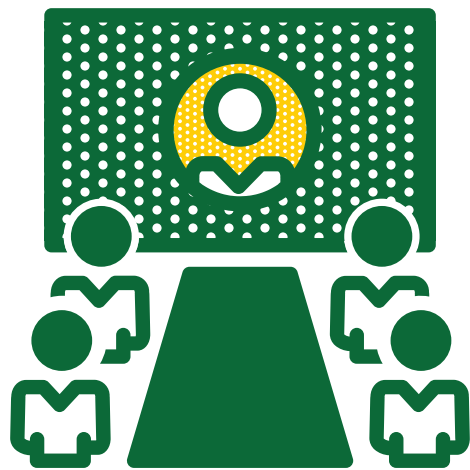
Recruiters spend as little as six seconds reviewing an application

# CAREER SERVICES

**GET  
PRE  
PARED**

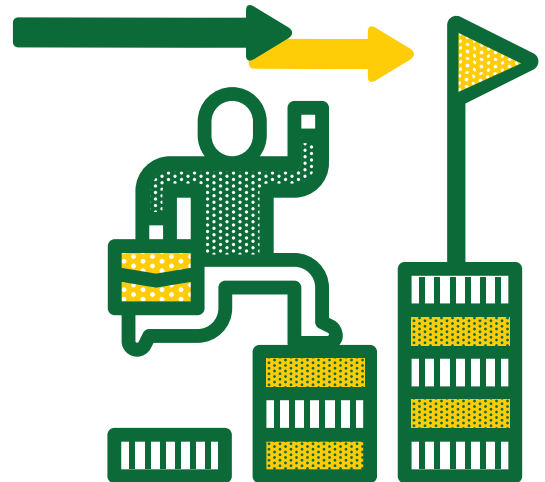


**DEVELOP  
COMPETENCIES**



**FIND  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**CREATE  
CONNECTIONS**



## Career Services

G50, Lower Marquis Hall (*below the bookstore*)

306-966-5003 • [career.services@usask.ca](mailto:career.services@usask.ca)

As a new student, current student, or alumni the Career Services team is here to help you every step of your career journey!



**USASK.CA/CAREERSERVICES**



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