Cover Letter Guide

Job Posting
- Carefully review each job posting, highlighting key words related to skills, knowledge and experience.
- Remember: Always save or print a copy of each job posting you apply to, as you will need to review this before an interview.

Content
- Create a tailored cover letter for each job you apply to.
- Your cover letter should emphasize your competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities), talents and accomplishments that make you the ideal candidate for that particular position.
- Use variety in your sentence structure and use transition/linking words (found on the back page) to connect one idea to the next.
- Review your cover letter for spelling and grammatical errors and consider having someone at the Student Employment and Career Centre (SECC) review your job search documents; book in for a Resume Talk through CareerLink in the “Appointments” module.

Organization/Layout
- Keep your cover letter to one page and single spaced.
- Your letter should include one introductory paragraph, one to two main body paragraphs and one closing paragraph.
- Ensure that your contact information (including your name, address, telephone number and email address) is listed at the top of the page; other considerations include your LinkedIn profile and/or your personal website.
- We recommend that you use a reference line (RE:) to clearly indicate the purpose of the letter; this line can include the job title, location preferences and competition number or position inquiry.
- It is very important to address your cover letter to a specific person or company rather than sending out a generic letter.

Formatting/Design
- If you are having trouble keeping your cover letter to one page, consider using narrower margins or choosing smaller line spacing.
- Use a common font style (Calibri, Times New Roman, 11 or 12 point size), throughout your document, ensuring the font style chosen matches your resume or CV.
- Be sure to include your electronic signature as this allows you to author your cover letter.

Social Media and Your Job Search
- Review all of your social media accounts and privacy settings.
- Consider creating a LinkedIn profile which allows you to upload your resume content and connect with professionals locally and around the world.
- For tips on how to build a professional student LinkedIn profile check out the Leverage LinkedIn article at students.usask.ca/articles/linkedin.php.

Checklist

Know Yourself and Your Audience
- Can you comfortably articulate your values, knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and interests as they relate to job search documents?
- Did you perform an adequate amount of research on the prospective employer?

Production and Format
- Is your cover letter limited to one page?
- Did you use a reference line (RE:) to indicate which position you are applying for rather than stating the position in the first paragraph?
- Did you grab the reader’s attention by explaining why their organization appeals to you in the first paragraph?
- If a particular person suggested you apply for the position, did you mention his or her name in the first paragraph?
- In the second paragraph, did you communicate your strengths and competencies as they relate to the job posting?

Proofread and Critique Your Letter
- Have you reviewed your document for spelling and grammar errors?
- Were you concise and to the point in your cover letter?
- Did you include your electronic signature?

Sending Your Letter
- Did you create an original letter for each employer rather than sending a template cover letter?
- When sending your letter electronically, did you attach your cover letter and resume as one PDF document, include a clear subject line and write a brief introductory message in the email body that references your attached document?
- Have you been keeping track of what positions and organizations you have applied to so that you can follow up with the employers you have sent correspondence to?

Additional Letters
- Within two days of an interview or meeting, did you send out thank you correspondence to the interviewer(s)?
- Have you written a letter of declination if you do not wish to accept a position that you’ve been offered?
Dear Ms. Reynolds:

Engineering Plus is at the forefront of the manufacturing industry in Canada and prides itself on being a top leader of design in the automobile sector. Currently, I am in my final year of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan and would welcome the opportunity to work for your company full time, beginning May 2019, to further develop my skills in the areas of product design and development. I pride myself on being detail oriented, which is imperative to meeting quality assurance standards and testing procedures.

I recently completed a 16 month Engineering Internship with an engineering firm in southern Saskatchewan, specializing in farm machinery. My role was to manage and oversee the design of an automated hay baler. Throughout this experience, I acted as a liaison between plant engineering personnel and equipment suppliers, preparing quotes and technical documents, gathering operational data for design purposes and coordinating production with a team of 15 employees. My strong leadership competencies, mathematical skills, and ability to meet deadlines and complete tasks unsupervised would be a valuable asset to Engineering Plus.

In my final year of university, not only will I be focused on my academic work, including a Capstone Design Project, I will also play an instrumental role on the University of Saskatchewan Space Design Team (USST). Our team of 25 students, representing three colleges, will go on to compete in both the University and European Rover Challenges.

You will find that I am a committed individual who takes pride in producing quality work, providing innovative solutions and communicating effectively with multiple stakeholders. I look forward to meeting you and your team to further discuss how my education and experience would be beneficial to Engineering Plus. You may reach me at the above telephone number or email address to arrange an interview.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

ANITA CAREER
Broke, SK
306-555-1234
abc123@mail.usask.ca

September 3, 2018

Debbie Reynolds
Human Resources Manager
Engineering Plus
1000 – 100 Street East
Saskatoon, SK S2P 3G1

Re: Project Engineer #A875

Enclosures: Resume, Letters of Recommendation (3)

The examples utilized within this guide are fictitious. No association with any real person, company, organization, product, e-mail address, place, or event is intended or should be inferred.
ANITA CAREER  
Broke, SK  
306.555.1234  
abc123@mail.usask.ca  

September 30, 2018  

Mr. Joel Robinson, Senior Researcher  
Agri-Impact  
987 Bright Futures Avenue  
Regina, SK S5H 8G2  

Re: Agricultural Research and Field Testing Opportunities  

Dear Mr. Robinson:  

As an industry leader in crop development, Agri-Impact is best known for sustainable and enhanced food quality. I had the opportunity to speak with you directly on September 19, 2018 at the University of Saskatchewan’s Campus Career Expo, where it was mentioned that a number of opportunities are available for new graduates. As of May 2019, I will have obtained my Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Crop Science, where I have honed my research skills and applied them to improving the quality and nutrition of crops. I am keen to transfer the knowledge, skills and abilities I have acquired within the crop science field to an entry-level position within your organization.

In my previous experience as a Research Assistant with NuGrowth Botanicals, I worked as a contributing member of the Crop Development Team. My role involved extensive fieldwork including seeding, spraying and harvesting of research plot trials. This experience highlights my ability to produce innovative and sustainable food production and, when complemented with my education, would be of high value to Agri-Impact.

As a participant in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources’ Canadian Agri-Marketing Association (CAMA) Student Chapter, I will have the opportunity to develop additional skill sets relevant to Agri-Impact. For example, through collaborating with a team of five to compete at the 2019 National Agri-Marketing Association competition in Denver, I will refine my leadership skills; and through networking opportunities with local growers and agriculture-related businesses, I will further enhance my marketing and communication skills.

Through our conversation, I understand a wide variety of career opportunities are emerging as a result of the continued expansion of your progressive organization. I will contact you by telephone in the second week of October to ensure you have received my job search documents, as well as to enquire about possible employment within the company. Please feel free to contact me at 306.555.1234 to discuss my qualifications and interest in Agri-Impact. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

Best regards,

[Signature]

Anita Career  

Enclosures: Resume  

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NETWORKING LETTER  
(Non-advertised Job)  

A networking letter is used when you are interested in applying to an organization that does not have an advertised position. Be sure to do your research on the organization that you are applying to so that you understand what they are about, what potential opportunities might exist and how you might be a good fit for their team. Your letter should include clear examples of how you’ve developed the skills and qualifications that would be of benefit to the organization.

Avoid using “To whom it may concern” or “Dear Sir/Madam.” Addressing your letter to the “Hiring Committee”, “Selection Committee”, “<Company Name> Personnel” or “Human Resource Personnel” is more appropriate if the job posting does not indicate a specific person’s name.

Using transition/linking words help guide the reader to understand the direction of your thought, from one significant idea to the next.

Referencing the type of position here means that you do not have to repeat it in the first paragraph.

Communicate your competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities) and experiences as they relate to the type of position you are seeking. Choose only the most relevant highlights from your resume and don’t be afraid to utilize a cross-section of your life experiences.

Potential Experiences:
- **Academic:** Class assignments, individual/group projects, study abroad, research, thesis
- **Work-integrated Learning:** Experiential learning, community engaged learning, clinical placements, practicums, field-based instruction, internship, co-op placement
- **Work Experience:** Paid, volunteer
Employers who hire USask students and alumni look to candidates that display career readiness competencies such as oral and written communication skills.

### Communications (Oral and Written)

Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to people inside and outside the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

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### NACE’S CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES*

*Adapted from the Career Readiness Materials developed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

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### Reference

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