

Cover Letter Guide

Content

- Create a tailored cover letter for each job you apply to
- Your cover letter should emphasize the 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 action words in your statements
- 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 ResumeTalk through CareerLink

Organization/Layout

- Keep your cover letter to one page and single spaced
- 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 and competition number or position inquiry
- It is very important to tailor your cover letter to a specific person or company rather than sending out a generic letter; if you are not able to find the name of the contact person, you may address your letter to "Human Resources", "Hiring Committee" or "Selection Committee"; avoid addressing your letter "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam"
- Your letter should include one introductory paragraph, one to two main body paragraphs and one closing paragraph

Format/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
- Be sure to include your electronic signature as this allows you to author your work

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 [Leverage LinkedIn students.usask.ca/articles/linkedin.php](https://students.usask.ca/articles/linkedin.php)

Checklist



Know Yourself and Your Audience

- Can you comfortably articulate your values, knowledge, skills, abilities 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 re-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 mass produced copy?
- 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) or employer(s)?
- Have you written a letter of declination if you do not wish to accept a position that you've been offered?

COVER LETTER

Every resume should be accompanied by a cover letter. The primary purpose of the cover letter is to acquaint a prospective employer with your unique talents and skills as they relate to the job posting. Cover letters should be tailored to each job you are applying for and should include clear examples of how you've developed the skills required to be successful in the position as they are outlined in the job posting. Keep in mind your cover letter and resume are complementary documents and together should show the prospective employer why you would be a good fit for their organization.

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

Avoid using "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam." Addressing your letter to the "Hiring Committee" or "Human Resource Personnel" is more appropriate if the job posting does not indicate a specific person's name.

Finish off with a strong conclusion by conveying your qualities that would be valuable to the employer.

ANITA CAREER
201 – 110 Penniless Road
Broke, SK S7N 2C4
306-555-1234
abc123@mail.usask.ca

September 3, 2016

Debbie Reynolds
Human Resources Manager
Engineering Plus
1000 – 100 Street East
Saskatoon, SK S2P 9S1

Re: **Project Engineer #A875**

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 2017, to further develop my skills in the areas of product design and development. I pride myself on being detailed 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, 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 me 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,



Anita Career

Enclosures: Resume, Letters of Recommendations (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.

#dontplagiarize
#beunique

The first paragraph of the cover letter should align you with the prospective employer. Answer the following questions to convince the employer that they should keep reading.

1. What inspired you to apply to this organization? (Besides the fact that they have a vacant position!)
2. What makes your skill set, personality and background an asset to the company? How are you a unique, well suited candidate?
3. In what way could you contribute to this specific organization's goals; research their mission, vision and values

Communicate your competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities) and experiences as they relate to the job posting. 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
- **Work-integrated Learning:** Experiential learning, community engaged learning, clinical placements, practicums, field-based instruction, internship, co-op placement
- **Work Experience:** Paid, volunteer

NETWORKING LETTER

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.

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

Avoid using "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam." Addressing your letter to the "Hiring Committee" or "Human Resource Personnel" is more appropriate if the job posting does not indicate a specific person's name.

Referencing important details that your contact has mentioned about the position or organization show your attention to detail, interest and commitment to learning about the prospective employer.

Anita Career
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306.555.1234
abc123@mail.usask.ca

September 30, 2016

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 stands alone in terms of sustainable and enhanced food quality. I had the opportunity to speak with you directly on September 21, 2016 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 2017, 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 2017 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,



Anita Career

Enclosures: Resume, Transcript of Grades

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#dontcopy
#inyourownwords

If you have any personal contacts in the company or if a person referred you to the position or organization, this is the best place to mention them.

Communicate your competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities) and experiences as they relate to the job posting. 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
- **Work-integrated Learning:** Experiential learning, community engaged learning, clinical placements, practicums, field-based instruction, internship, co-op placement
- **Work Experience:** Paid, volunteer

Action Words

Management/Leadership

Accelerated	Consulted	Established	Initiated	Oversaw	Reviewed
Achieved	Contracted	Executed	Instituted	Planned	Scheduled
Administered	Controlled	Evaluated	Judged	Presided	Spearheaded
Analyzed	Coordinated	Facilitated	Lead	Prioritized	Strengthened
Appointed	Decided	Governed	Lobbied	Produced	Supervised
Assigned	Delegated	Harmonized	Managed	Recommended	
Attained	Designated	Hired	Motivated	Reconciled	
Chaired	Directed	Implemented	Named	Reorganized	
Conducted	Enforced	Improved	Negotiated	Reported	
Consolidated	Enhanced	Increased	Organized	Restructured	

Communications

Addressed	Conferred	Directed	Inspired	Printed	Rewrote
Aided	Consulted	Documented	Interpreted	Promoted	Spoke
Arbitrated	Contracted	Drafted	Interviewed	Publicized	Suggested
Advised	Contributed	Elicited	Lectured	Published	Summarized
Appraised	Convinced	Edited	Mediated	Read	Talked
Arranged	Cooperated	Enlisted	Merged	Reconciled	Translated
Authored	Coordinated	Explained	Moderated	Recruited	Unified
Briefed	Corresponded	Expressed	Motivated	Represented	Updated
Clarified	Counselled	Formulated	Negotiated	Reported	Verbalized
Collaborated	Debated	Influenced	Persuaded	Resolved	Wrote
Composed	Defined	Informed	Presented	Revamped	

Research

Analyzed	Conducted	Experimented	Interpreted	Proved	Synthesized
Calculated	Correlated	Explored	Interviewed	Researched	Tabulated
Catalogued	Critiqued	Extracted	Investigated	Reviewed	Tested
Clarified	Diagnosed	Extrapolated	Located	Solved	Uncovered
Collected	Discovered	Gathered	Monitored	Studied	Verified
Compared	Evaluated	Identified	Observed	Summarized	
Computed	Examined	Inspected	Organized	Surveyed	

Financial

Administered	Budgeted	Evaluated	Maintained	Planned	Selected
Allocated	Calculated	Figured	Managed	Prepared	Tracked
Analyzed	Checked	Financed	Marketed	Projected	Verified
Appraised	Computed	Forecasted	Memorized	Reconciled	
Audited	Developed	Inspected	Ordered	Reduced	
Balanced	Estimated	Investigated	Organized	Researched	

Results Achieved

Achieved	Eliminated	Multiplied	Restored	Streamlined	Troubleshot
Adapted	Established	Opened	Revamped	Strengthened	Uncovered
Attained	Expanded	Pioneered	Revised	Structured	Unified
Completed	Furnished	Proposed	Revitalized	Submitted	Upgraded
Contributed	Implemented	Provided	Risked	Succeeded	Utilized
Cut	Improved	Raised	Saved	Supported	Widened
Decreased	Increased	Recommended	Simplified	Surpassed	Won
Lowered	Introduced	Reduced	Sold solved	Transferred	
Doubled	Maintained	Resolved	Stimulated	Transformed	

Creative

Abstracted	Customized	Established	Innovated	Painted	Sketched
Acted	Demonstrated	Fashioned	Instituted	Performed	Solved
Adapted	Designed	Founded	Integrated	Planned	Synthesized
Arranged	Developed	Generated	Introduced	Predicted	Visualized
Composed	Devised	Illustrated	Invented	Problem solved	
Conceptualized	Directed	Imagined	Made	Produced	
Cooked	Drew	Improvised	Modeled	Revitalized	
Created	Entertained	Initiated	Originated	Shaped	

Helping

Advised	Cared	Demonstrated	Familiarized	Provided	Served
Advocated	Carried out	Diagnosed	Furnished	Referred	Suggested
Aided	Clarified	Educated	Guided	Rehabilitated	Supported
Arbitrated	Coached	Empathized	Helped	Related	Volunteered
Assessed	Coordinated	Encouraged	Intervened	Represented	
Assisted	Counselled	Expedited	Mentored	Resolved	
Attended	Delivered	Facilitated	Motivated	Saved	

Administrative/Clerical

Approved	Complied	Maintained	Purchased	Set up	Validated
Arranged	Dispatched	Monitored	Recorded	Specified	Verified
Catalogued	Distributed	Operated	Resolved	Spearheaded	Word Processed
Charted	Documented	Organized	Retrieved	Standardized	
Classified	Executed	Prepared	Reviewed	Systematized	
Coded	Generated	Prioritized	Routed	Tabulated	
Collated	Implemented	Processed	Scheduled	Transformed	
Collected	Inspected	Proofread	Screened	Updated	

Technical

Adapted	Calibrated	Devised	Manufactured	Remodeled	Trained
Adjusted	Coded	Dissected	Mapped	Repaired	Upgraded
Applied	Computed	Engineered	Navigated	Replaced	Utilized
Assembled	Computerized	Fabricated	Operated	Standardized	
Built	Designed	Installed	Overhauled	Studied	
Calculated	Developed	Maintained	Programmed	Solved	

Teaching

Adapted	Consulted	Encouraged	Graded	Persuaded	Trained
Advised	Cooperated	Enforced	Guided	Schooled	Tutored
Assisted	Coordinated	Evaluated	Individualized	Served	
Clarified	Counselled	Explained	Informed	Set goals	
Coached	Developed	Facilitated	Initiated	Stimulated	
Communicated	Enabled	Focused	Instructed	Taught	

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER CENTRE

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