COVER LETTER GUIDE FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS

Employer Perspective:
Hiring managers will glance at the cover letter but concentrate on the resume. If the resume matches the specific job requirements, the cover letter is typically read fully.

When reading the cover letter, the employment manager will usually look to see if it is a generic cover letter or if it is specific/personal to the company. They may look closer at the ones who have a connection to that company (i.e. referral, networking event at college).

Content of a Cover Letter:
Regardless of what type of cover letter you are writing, the basic format is the same. Use the formula below as a general guideline for all cover letters:

I. Opening paragraph
   ● Expresses your interest in the organization and/or position
   ● Include how you heard about the organization (i.e. website, referral, networking event)
   ● Demonstrates your knowledge of the organization or industry – THIS IS KEY

II. Body
   ● Highlights a few major skill sets with examples to prove you possess that skill
   ● Focuses on you and how your qualifications match their needs
   ● Could be 1-2 paragraphs

III. Closing
   ● Reiterates/Summarizes your interest and fit within the organization
   ● Requests action – either an interview or follow up

Additional Tips:
   ● Keep it to one page
   ● Make an appointment with a career counselor/advisor to look over your cover letter
   ● Make sure it is error proof (grammar, spelling, sentence structure)
   ● Be concise and state skills with specific examples that are relevant to the position
   ● Don’t make it generic – that first paragraph should show the reader that you’ve done your research and have knowledge about the company and industry
JOB SKILLS INVENTORY CHECKLIST

**Purpose:** The purpose of this skills inventory is to help you come up with different skills that you may be having a hard time thinking of yourself.

**How to use the Skills Inventory:** The following is a sample list of skills found in a cross section of careers. Circle every skill that applies to you. Write down examples of situations in your professional life that demonstrate these skills. Then incorporate these skills into your cover letter.

- administering medication
- administering programs
- advising people
- analyzing data
- analyzing problems
- auditing financial reports
- being thorough
- budgeting expenses
- calculating numerical data
- checking for accuracy
- classifying records
- coaching individuals
- collaborating ideas
- collecting money
- comparing results
- compiling statistics
- comprehending ideas
- conducting interviews
- conducting meetings
- coping with deadlines
- counseling/consulting people
- creating new ideas
- deciding uses of money
- defining a problem
- delegating responsibility
- determining a problem
- developing a climate of enthusiasm, teamwork, and cooperation
- developing plans for projects
- displaying artistic ideas
- editing work
- enforcing rules and regulations
- entertaining people
- estimating physical space
- evaluating programs
- event planning
- expressing ideas orally to individuals or groups
- finding information
- gathering information
- generating accounts
- handling complaints
- handling detail work
- imagining new solutions
- interacting with people at different levels
- inventing new ideas
- listening to others
- maintaining a high level of activity
- making decisions
- managing an organization
- meeting new people
- meeting people
- motivating others
- negotiating/arbitrating conflicts
- operating equipment
- organizing files
- organizing tasks
- overseeing operations
- persuading others
- picking out important information
- planning organizational needs
- predicting futures
- preparing written communications
- prioritizing work
- promoting events
- proposing ideas
- public speaking
- questioning others
- raising funds
- reading volumes of material relating to the public
- reporting information
- running meetings
- selling ideas
- selling products
- setting priorities
- setting up demonstrations
- setting work/committee goals
- summarizing information
- supervising employees
- taking personal responsibility
- teaching/instructing and training individuals
- thinking in a logical manner
- thinking of creative ideas
- writing for publication
- writing letters, papers, proposals
- writing reports