

# 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

