

# Cover Letter Writing Guide

**UCN Centre for Career & Work-Integrated Learning**



University College of the North  
Centre for Career & Work-Integrated Learning

# Table of Contents

<b>What is a Cover Letter and What Should It Include.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How Should You Break Down The Content.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How to Deconstruct a Job Posting.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Page Format.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Content Format.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Transitional Phrases.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Blank Cover Letter Template with Header.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Standard Cover Letter Format.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Bulleted Cover Letter Format.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Prospecting Cover Letter Format.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Cover Letter Checklist.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Sources.....</b>	<b>22</b>

## What is a cover letter and what should it include?

A cover letter is used when:

- you're applying to a posted position
- you're submitting your résumé to an organization that is not currently hiring (in this case, it's sometimes called a "letter of introduction" or a "prospecting letter")
- you're applying for graduate school, a co-op program, an internship, work placement, scholarship etc.

In terms of content, you may include information like specific competencies, credentials, types of experiences or demonstrated accomplishments.

Cover letters responding to job postings should:

- Identify the organization, specific position and, if possible, the specific individual to whom you are addressing the letter
- Speak to the requirements of the position (look at the posting and outline how your experience matches the criteria)
- Describe how your experience and competencies will benefit the organization (if you have no direct experience, highlight your transferable experience)

Letters of introduction or prospecting letters should:

- Identify the type of position you're interested in and explain how you know to contact them
- Outline how your experience and competencies will bring value
- Indicate when and how you're going to follow up

Source:

University of Victoria. (2019). *Cover Letter Basics*. Retrieved from: [https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/Cover\\_letter\\_basics.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/Cover_letter_basics.pdf)

## How should you break down the content?

Every cover letter is different, so this is just a suggestion of what you may want to include.

### Introductory paragraph

- State your purpose and why you are applying
- List the job title and organization name
- Show that you've researched the organization by referencing its mission/vision statement
- Indicate your enthusiasm and state what you'll bring to the organization

### Middle paragraph(s)

- Use an active voice and group information around the job requirements (e.g. your organizational skills)
- Avoid starting every sentence with "I"
- Use transition phrases (e.g. additionally, also)
- Give solid examples of your past experience and the competencies you bring to the organization

### Closing paragraph

- Thank the organization
- Cover any "add-ons" (e.g. criminal record check, age limit, citizenship/residency, driver's license)
- Provide your contact information (if applicable)
- Restate your interest in the position and express interest in an interview

Source:

University of Victoria. (2019). *Cover Letter Basics*. Retrieved from: [https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/Cover\\_letter\\_basics.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/Cover_letter_basics.pdf)

## Should all cover letters be specific, or can a general cover letter work?

Your cover letter should make it as easy as possible for the employer to see how you fit their needs. A general cover letter that doesn't address the particular job posting won't cut it.

## How to Deconstruct a Job Posting

There are many types of job postings. Some have a complex list of job requirements and some are very minimal. The best way to understand the job posting is to deconstruct it.

### Step 1:

Print the Job Posting (if online) or obtain a copy of the job posting from the source you found it (newspaper, job board, etc.). Obtain a copy of the job description, if available. Usually you will have to find the job description directly from the company website or by obtaining a copy directly from the company.

### Step 2:

Reviewing the job posting, use a highlighter to mark the required qualifications in one color, and the skills and abilities (competencies) in another color, along with any job duties you've previously performed.

Required Qualifications could include:

- Specific educational requirements (e.g. second year standing, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, specific diploma)
- Specific experience (e.g. one year of customer service experience, experience with AutoCAD, familiar with a lab environment)
- Specific licenses or courses (e.g. Class 5 Driver's License, training in presentation delivery)

NOTE: Employers often list the most important qualifications higher in the posting.

Skills and Abilities could include:

- Demonstrated Communication skills
- Ability to work with minimal supervision
- Problem-solving capabilities

### **Step 3:**

Consider your background and write down how you meet each criteria in the job posting on a sheet of paper. When writing your cover letter, be sure to discuss how you meet each of these criteria. Be sure to focus on your key qualifications and strengths relative to the posting.

If you don't have experience in every area, don't worry. Aim to meet a minimum of 75% of what the employer is looking for. Showcase your competencies and demonstrate that you have thought about the job posting and how you are a good fit for the position.

Source:

University of Victoria. (2019). Deconstructing job postings. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/career/applications/deconstruct/index.php>

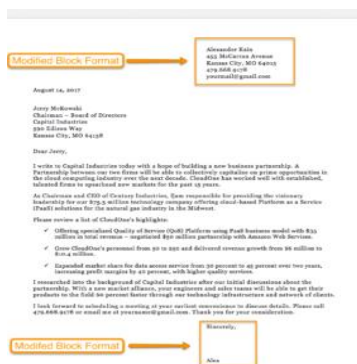
## Page Format

Before you begin writing, decide which layout you want to use. There are two common formatting styles: **block and modified block**. The block format has a left-aligned address and closing, while those in the modified block are right-aligned. While the block format is used more often, both are acceptable for a formal letter.

### Block format - left-justified address and ending



### Modified block format - centered address and ending



Source:

ResumeGenius. (2019). Business letter format: Templates, examples, tips & writing guide. Retrieved from: <https://resume-genius.com/business-letter-format#Business-Letter-Format>

**The following are the standard rules that should be adhered to when formatting the page of a formal letter:**

### **1. Alignment:**

All proper **business letters should be left-aligned**, any other type of alignment is considered unacceptable in most professional settings.

### **2. Spacing:**

Your letter should be **single-spaced**. In addition, there should be a space between the date, address, salutation, and each paragraph. Include four line breaks between the closing and your printed name to leave space for your signature.

### **3. Font:**

The standard font style is **Times New Roman**, size 12. However, you can use other sans-serif fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, Courier, or Geneva, also at size 12. Sans-serif fonts have been credited with increased readability because of their balanced typeface.

### **4. Lines:**

When using a letterhead, be sure to add a horizontal line underneath it. You can refer to our letters above to see some examples.

### **5. Margins:**

Keep your margins **between 1 to 1.5 inches**. Generally speaking, 1-inch margins are the most widely accepted format for professionals.

## Content Format & How to Write a Business Letter

The following tips cover all the parts of a business letter in order from top to bottom.

### Part 1 (a). Letterhead – Formal Letter Format

Most professional business letters include a letterhead (see the one above for an example) – which is comprised of your name, address, phone number, and email address.

Letterheads are meant to make your letter unique, as well as **help verify its authenticity to the recipient**. Likewise, you can include your company's logo on the letterhead for brand recognition and a more trustworthy appearance.

Check out the example letterheads below — both of which are acceptable methods for displaying your name and contact information. For more ideas, you can check out our cover letter templates. **See the letterhead sample:**

**Your Name**

Address, City, Province, Postal Code | Phone # | Email Address

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### Part 1 (b). No Letterhead – Formal Letter Format

Using a letterhead is always preferable when writing a business letter. However, if you decide to not use one, you must use the following format to maintain a professional appearance:

- Write your **contact information** on the top left of the page, just above the date.
- **Do NOT include your name** in this section — when selecting this style, it simply looks better to sign off with your name at the end of the letter.
- Only include your **street address, city, province, and area code**.
- Double check our business letter sample to make sure yours is perfect.

**Example of format when not using a letterhead:**

(if no letterhead) [1234 Street Address] [City, Province, Postal Code] [Email Address]
[Today's Date]
[Addressee Name] [Addressee Title] [Company Name] [1234 Street Address] [City, Province, Postal Code]

## Part 2. Date

The date should be the day on which you completed the letter, written in standard U.S. format (eg. October 28, 2017). It should be written underneath the letterhead, or underneath the address on the top left of the page.

## Part 3. Addressee – How to Address a Letter in 4 Steps

Write the recipient's (or "addressee's") address on the top left side underneath the date. Begin with the name of the addressee on the first line. Some research may be necessary to find the name (LinkedIn, the company's website, even Google search are all great tools).

- **Step 1:** Address them properly as **Ms.**, **Mrs.**, or **Mr.** Also, make sure to include their title — such as **Dr.**— if it applies.
- **Step 2:** Beneath their name, write their current title. If you are unsure what their title is, do the necessary research to find out if possible. If they have no title, leave it blank.
- **Step 3:** Include the name of their company underneath their title.
- **Step 4:** Write out their company's street address, city, province, and postal code. If they are located outside Canada, include the country name after the city.

## Part 4. Salutation

The salutation you will use depends on the title of your addressee, your familiarity with them, and also the context of the letter.

If you are familiar with the addressee, then use their first name (unless they have specifically asked you otherwise).

- If the addressee has earned a **Ph.D.** or an **MD**, then refer to them as **Dr.** (or **Professor**).
- Military titles such as General, Colonel, Major, etc., should be honored as such.
- If you do not know the contact person or you are addressing a group, use an appropriate salutation such as **Hiring Manager, Director of Human Resources, Members of the**[Name] **Committee** (hiring committee, organizing committee, acceptance committee), **Board of Directors**.

When it comes to salutations, it is always better to err on the side of caution and be polite as possible.

## Part 5. Body

The body of the letter is located underneath the salutation, and is the field where you **get down to business** and discuss the reason you're reaching out to this person. Usually, the body includes several strategic paragraphs meant to inform, persuade, and convey gratitude.

1. **In the first paragraph**, get to your point quickly and state it concisely in the first line. Do not wait until the second paragraph to tell your audience what your main point is – they most likely won't get that far.
2. **In the second paragraph**, use evidence and persuasive reasoning to justify your main point. If needed, use an extra paragraph to further support your point via empirical evidence.
3. **The closing paragraph** should restate the point of the letter, and most importantly, include **a call to action**. A call to action is a passage that compels your reader to *do something*. Ask yourself, "*what do I want my reader to do right after reading this letter?*"

### Examples of calls to action:

- *"Please call me at [phone #] or email me at [email address] at your earliest convenience."*
- *"Please get in touch with me at your earliest convenience to schedule a meeting."*
- *"Please let me know how I may be of assistance during this period."*

## Part 6. Closing

You should always close with a positive sign-off, such as **“Thank you,”** **“Sincerely,”** or **“Respectfully.”** Remember to only capitalize the first word of this closing line, and to leave four lines of space between the closing line and your typed name to make room for your signature.

## Part 7. Enclosure

An enclosure note is an often neglected aspect of letter writing in the digital era. In fact, not many people actually know what ‘enclosure’ means. When you write “enclosure” in any letter **you’re implying that another document is attached to the file.**

Think of it as something akin to a “see attachment” note in an email. It alerts the reader to another part of your correspondence – and helps prevent them from overlooking a crucial document.

The image below shows where the word “enclosure” should be placed:



Knowing how to write a business letter is a fundamental skill for your professional life. A proper one will have most or all of the elements mentioned above. Be sure to carefully review the grammar, spelling, and format of your business letter numerous times before you send it out, to avoid leaving a poor first impression with your correspondent.

Source: ResumeGenius. (2019). Business letter format: Templates, examples, tips & writing guide. Retrieved from: <https://resumegenius.com/business-letter-format#Business-Letter-Format>

## Transitional Phrases

To add information:	To show cause/effect /result	To emphasize
<p>Transitions Use between complete sentences.</p> <p>; additionally, ; also, ; besides, ; for example, ; for instance, ; furthermore, ; in addition, ; in fact, ; likewise,</p>	<p>Transitions Use between complete sentences.</p> <p>; accordingly, ; as a result, ; consequently, ; hence, ; therefore, ; thus,</p>	<p>Transitions Use between complete sentences.</p> <p>; certainly, ; indeed, ; to be sure,</p>
<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <p>Additionally, In addition, In addition to that, Next, To add, To add to that,</p>	<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <p>As a consequence, Because of this, Consequently, Following that, For this reason, Subsequently,</p>	<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <p>Above all, More important, More importantly, Most important of all, To emphasize, Without a doubt,</p>
<p>Examples:</p> <p>During the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, the Bubonic Plague and other epidemics killed many people. In addition to that, civil unrest and clan warfare resulted in even more deaths.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>An optimum climatic period in Europe that lasted from 800-1200 BC was a time of population increase and wealth. As a consequence, great cathedrals were built, and new methods of agriculture were introduced.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>A series of four floods in Holland and Germany killed more than 40,000 people; certainly, the floods had a negative effect on agriculture, too.</p>

Source: University of North Texas. (2011). *Intensive English Language Institute: Research Paper Unit*. Retrieved from: <http://ieli.unt.edu/research-paper-unit>

<p>Transitions Use between complete sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>; for example,</li> <li>; for instance,</li> <li>; in fact,</li> <li>; in other words,</li> <li>; namely,</li> </ul>	<p>Transitions Use between complete sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>; also,</li> <li>; besides,</li> <li>; furthermore,</li> <li>; in addition,</li> <li>; in like manner,</li> <li>; in the same manner,</li> <li>; in the same way,</li> <li>; likewise,</li> <li>; similarly,</li> </ul>	<p>Transitions Use between complete sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>; after all,</li> <li>; however,</li> <li>; in contrast,</li> <li>; instead,</li> <li>; nevertheless,</li> <li>; on one hand,</li> <li>; on the contrary,</li> <li>; on the other hand,</li> <li>; still,</li> </ul>
<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As an example,</li> <li>In other words,</li> <li>Specifically,</li> <li>To explain,</li> <li>To illustrate,</li> <li>To put it another way,</li> </ul>	<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the same time,</li> <li>Equally important,</li> <li>In the same way,</li> <li>In a similar way,</li> <li>Similarly,</li> </ul>	<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite this,</li> <li>Different from that,</li> <li>In contrast,</li> <li>In sharp contrast,</li> <li>To the contrary,</li> <li>Unlike that,</li> </ul>
<p>Examples:</p> <p>An historian from Oxford believes that agricultural methods used in the 14<sup>th</sup> century were dangerously inefficient. In fact, he suggests that the substantial decrease in population is directly related to improper farming practices.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>In Scotland in the 1430s, there was so little grain available that people made bread from tree bark. At the same time, clan warfare and political unrest caused social upheaval.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>Historically, the decline of the population in rural areas in England was attributed to widespread epidemics; in contrast, modern historians believe that a devastating change in climate caused crop failures, which, in turn, caused people to desert their land.</p>
<p><b>To show time/ change of subject</b></p>		<p><b>To show summary</b></p>
<p>Transitions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p>		<p>Transitions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p>

<p>After that, Finally, First, In the meantime, Later, Next, Second, Then* Third,</p> <p>* Do not use a comma</p>	<p>Finally, In conclusion, In summary,</p>
<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <p>At first, At last, At the beginning, At the end, Initially, Last of all, The next day, The next time, To begin with,</p>	<p>Expressions Use at the beginning of a sentence.</p> <p>In closing, Last of all, To close, To conclude, To sum up, To summarize,</p>
<p>Examples:</p> <p>Starting in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans were engaged in building huge cathedrals; at the same time, they were intent on recapturing control of the Holy Land from the Arabs.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>To summarize, the detrimental change in climate in Europe in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century was the biggest contributing factor in the decline of civilization, resulting in deaths from disease, civil unrest, and warfare.</p>

Source: University of North Texas. (2011). *Intensive English Language Institute: Research Paper Unit*. Retrieved from: <http://ieli.unt.edu/research-paper-unit>

# Your Name

Address, City, Province, Postal Code | Phone # | email address

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[Today's Date]

[Addressee Name]

[Addressee Title]

[Company Name]

[1234 Street Address]

[City, Province, Postal Code]

Dear [Name],

In this paragraph, deliver a friendly and clear introduction. State the main point/s of the letter here. Keep this section short and to the point.

In this paragraph, explain the importance of the main point by providing compelling and persuasive reasoning. You can use facts, data, and other quantifiable metrics to support your claim.

In this paragraph, continue to provide background information to back up your reasons.

Close by restating the main point/s of the letter, and if you can, include a call to action.

Respectfully/Sincerely,

[Your Signature]

[Your Typed Name]

**BLANK COVER LETTER  
TEMPLATE WITH  
HEADER**

Source:

ResumeGenius. (2019). Business letter format: Templates, examples, tips & writing guide. Retrieved from: <https://resumegenius.com/business-letter-format#Business-Letter-Format>



## WHAT DOES A COVER LETTER LOOK LIKE?

Here are a few examples of what a cover letter might look like. We've included samples for a 1) standard cover letter, 2) bulleted cover letter and 3) prospecting cover letter. We've included the corresponding job postings on page 4 as a reference. Need help? Use the **DECONSTRUCT A JOB POSTING** work sheet as you develop your cover letters.

### Cover letter 1: standard cover letter

**Jane Smith**

3800 Finnerly Road, Victoria, BC • V8W 3P2 • 250-555-5555 • sample@uvic.ca

This should match the heading on your résumé.

November 1, 2012

Professor Snape  
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry  
1234 Spookytime Lane  
Hogwarton, England V8N 2B9

Include the organization address.  
Address the letter to a specific individual if possible.

Re: Position and competition number (if provided on the job posting)

State why you're writing. Mention the job and organization by name. Identify what interests you and highlight how you can add value.

Dear Professor Snape,

I am writing to apply for the Recreation Assistant Position with Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (Sports Division) as posted on the UVic posting site. Throughout high school and university I have been involved in peer support and special needs assistance. I have a strong belief that recreation should be available to all members of our society.

Use real and detailed examples to highlight your qualifications.

While working as a counsellor at Camp Thunderbird, I gained experience leading groups of teenagers in outdoor activities. This experience also allowed me to work with teens with special needs, helping to accommodate them so that they could get the most out of the Camp Thunderbird environment. Additionally, I have been volunteering as a peer helper at the University of Victoria, where I counsel students who are having a difficult time. These experiences have opened my eyes to how important it is to be inclusive and supportive in all environments.

Focus on why you'll be an asset to the employer, not how you'll benefit from the job.

My volunteer background also includes coaching athletics at the high school level, where I worked mainly with girls basketball and volleyball teams. My coaching experience has helped me develop the interpersonal communication and leadership skills that will help me excel as an Recreation Assistant. My enthusiasm and dedication are key attributes that I bring to everything I do. I also have a Class 4 driver's license.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss this position in greater detail.

Tell the employer what other competencies you have to offer.

Sincerely,

Thank the employer for considering your application and request an interview.

Jane Smith

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[www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer](http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer)

Source: University of Victoria. (2019). *What does a cover letter look like*. Retrieved from: [https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/What\\_does\\_a\\_cover\\_letter\\_look\\_like.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/What_does_a_cover_letter_look_like.pdf)





## Cover letter 2: bulleted cover letter

This type of cover letter may be appropriate if you want to include an extensive list of qualifications, or if it's appropriate for your sector (e.g. technical sectors).

**Jennifer B. Student**

1000 Invisible Lane • Victoria, BC • Phone: 250-555-5555 • Email: sample@uvic.ca

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May 1, 2012

Albus Broadsetter  
Ministry of Magic  
Integrated Apparitions Bureau  
London, England V8N 2B9

Dear Mr. Broadsetter,

I recently attended a Co-op and Career Fair open to students in the Bachelor of Commerce program, and was impressed by the breadth of public services offered by the Integrated Apparitions Bureau. After reviewing the key objectives of the bureau and learning of the GoProject initiative, I understand the need for innovation in marketing this project and am excited to be considered for the Marketing Analyst position. I am a strong academic performer with comprehensive training in research and marketing and the high degree of professionalism and technical skills required to support your team in its goals.

As a student leader with more than three years' experience in marketing, I can offer:

- Familiarity with marketing principles and personal management, demonstrated by my success in several university-level marketing courses while working part-time
- Ability to produce marketing materials, both online and in print
- Creative and innovative thinking with experience running a small community-based arts collective
- Strong research and analytical skills, developed through case competitions and volunteer experience with Researchers Ltd.
- Significant experience with standard marketing software (Corel, Microsoft Publisher, Photoshop) and statistical/database software (SPSS, Excel, Access)

As a self-motivated business student with a genuine interest in the GoProject, I look forward to sharing my strengths in an organization devoted to providing quality services to all the constituents in BC. I meet all of the funding criteria outlined in the position description and am available to begin immediately.

Thank you for considering my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Jennifer B. Student

This should match the heading on your résumé.

Include the organization address.  
Address the letter to a specific individual if possible.

State why you're writing. If you have a connection with an employer, identify this in your cover letter.

Focus on why you'll be an asset to the employer, not how you'll benefit from the job.

You may consider using a bulleted cover letter to simplify your writing or cover a long list of qualifications. Make sure to vary your bullets from the wording in your résumé – don't just repeat your résumé.

Thank the employer for considering your application and request an interview.

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[www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer](http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer)

Source: University of Victoria. (2019). *What does a cover letter look like*. Retrieved from: [https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/What\\_does\\_a\\_cover\\_letter\\_look\\_like.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/What_does_a_cover_letter_look_like.pdf)



### Cover letter 3: prospecting letter

A prospecting letter, also known as a letter of interest or inquiry letter, is sent to prospective employers who may be hiring, but who haven't listed a specific job opening.

**James B. Student**

2000 Lightning Lane • Victoria, BC • Phone: 250-555-5555 • Email: sample@uvic.ca

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May 1, 2012

Andy Warhol  
National Judicial Institute  
250 Albert St.  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1

Dear Mr. Warhol,

I could not pass up the opportunity to inquire about a potential employment opportunity at the National Judicial Institute. I am presently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution Program at the University of Victoria. In my attached résumé, you will see I have a proven ability to design, plan and lead high-impact programs, possessing the organizational and administrative acumen needed to translate a strategic vision into a results-producing action plan. In addition, I am motivated and enthusiastic, and would appreciate the opportunity to contribute to your organization's success.

With strong communication skills and a dynamic presentation and public speaking style, let me note that one of my greatest strengths is my ability to build relationships within and outside an organization. My experience working with community groups is as extensive as it is diverse. As a consultant and program manager, I was often tasked with the administration, development and implementation of strategies to assist and/or improve various programs, using my natural ability to establish consensus among cross-functional lines.

**Key competencies:**

- Proven ability to **design, plan and lead high-impact training programs** and curriculum, possess the organizational and administrative acumen needed to translate a strategic vision into a results-producing action plan
- Strong interpersonal skills including **listening, communication and mediation skills**
- Manage the creation and development of training programs and materials and evaluation systems to **meet the needs of internal and external stakeholders**
- Continuously capitalize on best practices and lessons learned in order to optimize use of available resources and **ensure the key program objectives are met**
- Demonstrated ability to communicate at all levels of an organization
- Advanced ability to **think conceptually and strategically**, through understanding and analyzing complex situations or problems, identifying patterns or connections and developing innovative solutions, in an environment of change

I am goal oriented, driven, and not afraid of hard work. I will follow up to see if we can arrange a meeting in the future.

Sincerely,  
James B. Student

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[www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer](http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer)

This should match the heading on your résumé.

Include the company address.  
Address the letter to a specific individual if possible.

State why the company interests you and how your skills and experience would be an asset to the company.

Focus on why you'll be an asset to the employer, not how you'll benefit from the job.

Source: University of Victoria. (2019). *What does a cover letter look like*. Retrieved from: [https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/What\\_does\\_a\\_cover\\_letter\\_look\\_like.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/What_does_a_cover_letter_look_like.pdf)



## COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Keep these tips in mind as you develop your next cover letter.

- Gather background research on the organization, and direct your letter to a specific person if possible. Use "Dear Hiring Committee" if you don't have a contact name.
- State why you're writing. Mention the job and organization by name. Identify what interests you and highlight how you can add value.
- Focus on why you'll be an asset to the employer, not how you'll benefit from the job. You want to reinforce that you're qualified and suitable for the specific position.
- Use detailed examples to highlight your accomplishments and demonstrate your qualifications. It's not enough to say that you have the competency; employers want specific evidence of how and when you've used it.
- Tailor your cover letter to the job posting. Address the responsibilities of the position as well as the necessary skills.
- Be concise. Avoid summarizing your résumé or using extraneous wording like "as my résumé shows". Use fewer words and make each statement count.
- Use professional language, correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Avoid starting every sentence with "I" or using negative statements. Use the **ACTION VERBS LIST** resource to use diverse verbs.
- Be yourself. Use a writing style that's clear, straightforward and genuine. The organization will be surprised if you're different from the way you portrayed yourself in your cover letter.
- Be aware of the tone that your letter is setting. Does it match the type of candidate is the employer looking for? (E.g. If the organization wants someone with energy and confidence, make certain that your letter conveys this).
- Thank the organization for considering your application and express your interest in hearing about regarding next steps.

Source: University of Victoria. (2019). *Cover Letter Checklist*. Retrieved from: [https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/Cover\\_letter\\_checklist.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/student-docs/curriculum-material/apply-for-jobs/coverletters/Cover_letter_checklist.pdf)

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