Nursing Cover Letter Tips / Outline

Much like a resume, you will want to tailor your cover letter depending on the position. However, you want to keep in mind it is a professional document and make sure it is not too casual, but not too stiff and formal.

The purpose of a cover letter introduces your resume and gives you, as a candidate, the opportunity to convince the employer to read your resume. Additionally, it helps you speak in more detail about your resume and expand on why you will be successful in the position you’re applying to; in addition to strengthening your chances of securing an interview as it demonstrates your written communication skills.

Some basic things to keep in mind when writing your cover letter:

▪ Remember it’s not all about you but about your “fit” and how you will bring success to the company.
▪ Don’t be lazy. Your cover letter must not be the same for every position. IT NEEDS TO BE UNIQUE to every job; it needs to be specific.
▪ Research the employer (website, social media accounts, news, etc.) to get more information to utilize in your cover letter; trying to find those actionable items that you can present to the employer with you being the solution! Be sure you have that job description handy as well.
▪ Avoid common or unsupported claims that are vague or general. If you have strong written and verbal skills, or an ability to work in a fast-paced environment, you need to write a sentence backing up that claim as to why it is true. Otherwise, it is fluff. Rely on examples from your clinical or professional experience to support your claim.
▪ Read, re-read, and read again; then have someone read it out loud to you. Avoid having typos and grammatical errors.

In your cover letter, you will want to stick to a standard business professional format:

▪ Keep it 3-4 paragraphs in length; no more than 5 sentences per paragraph. DO NOT go over 1 page!
▪ The Greeting: It should be tailored to the name and organization and not a general ‘Dear Sir or Madam’ or ‘To Whom It May Concern’. If you are unable to discover a name (either from the job description or directly from the company) then utilize a ‘Dear Recruiting / Hiring Manager’ heading.
▪ Introduction: Introduce yourself and be specific about the position and the company; your interest and how you would be a good fit. Be sure to identify a mission, or passion statement, as to why you want to work for the company (other than a job/paycheck). In doing so, take this opportunity – if you know someone at the company – to name drop.
  
  For example: After following the progress of (Name of the company) and your commitment to high nurse/patient ratios, of which I am a fierce advocate to protect patient safety, I was excited to learn of your Registered Nurse position through Jane Smith, who works as an RN currently within (Name of the company).

▪ Body: Be more specific about the details/skills that will help you be successful in the position and a benefit to the company. Leave out information about school/credits taken - that is not relevant to the job. You can highlight the skills you’ve obtained through specific courses and clinical work within your program that highlights your ability to be successful in the position. Avoid starting every sentence with the word “I” or “My” – be a little creative in your writing style.

To take this a step further, in that research we discussed, see if you can define a problem they’re currently experiencing, a new process they’re implementing (and you have experience/knowledge in) and share how you can be the solution to that issue!

▪ Call to Action/Closing: You will want to thank them for their time/consideration as well as an interest in connecting with them further to discuss the position and your qualifications. You should also provide contact information (one phone number) for them to call and schedule the interview. Leave out any additional statements from this area.

The purpose of these letters is to be short, sweet, and to the point. Remember this is a marketing document to get your foot in the door for the interview! So keep it focused on your interest in the position, what you can do for the company, as well as how to reach you.