

Academic CVs and Cover Letters

Facilitators:

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Graduate Career Advisors

Centre for Career Action



Meet Your Facilitator



Kira Bruschke (she/her)



Ellen Gong (she/her)

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

- Support O:se Kenhionhata:tie Landback camp: https://www.landbackcamp.com/get_involved
- Find out more about the land on which you live and work on: <https://native-land.ca/> or <https://www.whose.land/en/>
- Learn about Indigenous Initiatives at UWaterloo: <https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenous>

Let's make this a safer space

Listen and learn from each other with grace

Ask questions throughout the workshop

Participate in a way that works for you!

Feel free to get up, stretch, keep your camera on or off

Remain respectful of others – we do not tolerate harmful behaviour in this space

Learning Goals

- 1) Practice reading through an academic job ad to determine the department's needs and their values.
- 2) Identify and assess how specific experiences can serve as evidence in a cover letter
- 3) Articulate your research/teaching expertise effectively in a cover letter
- 4) Identify the components of an effective CV
- 5) Evaluate the structure and organization of a CV depending on the needs identified in the job posting

INTRODUCE YOURSELF & WHAT YOU HOPE TO DISCUSS TODAY

Job Posting Analysis

Let's look at a job posting on University Affairs and identify the major components.

- 1) What are the requirements for this job? (skills, experience, knowledge etc.)
- 2) What are the responsibilities listed in this job ad?
- 3) What stands out as important? What does the job ad reveal about the university or department?

RESEARCH BEYOND THE POSTING

Department websites, Informational Interviews, latest news, etc

WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a (1)**persuasive** document that
(2)**directly connects you to the
department/institution**, articulating your
(3)**future contributions**

A COVER LETTER IS PERSUASIVE

Persuasion in a cover letter is achieved by:

- ❖ Including evidence from your other documents (CV, Research Statement, Teaching Statement, etc) that supports your claims
- ❖ Conveying confidence and focus in your research and teaching
- ❖ Telling a strong, centralized narrative arc connecting your past, current, and future research

A COVER LETTER DIRECTLY CONNECTS YOU TO THE INSTITUTION

You connect to the institution by:

- ❖ Connecting your research/teaching to the research/teaching being done (or not being done) at the institution you are applying to
- ❖ Framing and emphasizing aspects of your research/teaching according to the job ad, especially your future contributions
- ❖ Maintaining a thorough connection between your experiences and the department throughout the entire letter

A COVER LETTER ARTICULATES YOUR FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Articulating future contributions means:

- ❖ Spend more space on future research/teaching plans
- ❖ Connect those future research/teaching plans to the institution, as in:
why is your future plan beneficial to the institution?
- ❖ How do you see yourself contributing to the department, not only in terms of research and/or teaching but also service

GENERAL RULES

- 1) 2 pages max
- 2) 11-12 font size
- 3) Personalize
- 4) Future-oriented and focused
- 5) Provide evidence

INTRODUCTION

- 1)What position are you applying to?
- 2)Who are you?
- 3)Why are you applying (to this job)?

MAJOR SECTIONS

- ✓ Research
- ✓ Teaching
- ✓ Service

**MAJOR SECTIONS VARY ACCORDING TO
JOB POSTING!**

RESEARCH SECTION

- ❖ Can be up to 3 paragraphs or cover these three areas: 1) Research Overview, 2) Current Research, 3) Future Research
- ❖ Articulates research in a clear and direct manner and connects research to the department
- ❖ Emphasizes the impact of your research and maintains a connection between past and future research plans



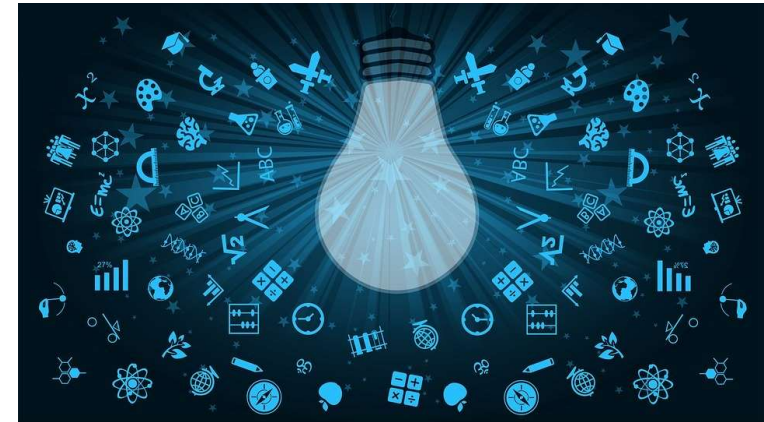
WHAT IS A RESEARCH OVERVIEW?

A Research Overview is a summary of your research and accomplishments:

- ❖ Defines your research overall, while also connecting it to the department
- ❖ Briefly names the methods/theories that you use in your research
- ❖ Lists academic accomplishments: relevant publications, major awards (include value!), and articles under review

TEACHING SECTION

- ❖ Can be up to 3 paragraphs or cover these three areas: 1) Pedagogical Overview, 2) Past Teaching Experiences, 3) Future Teaching
- ❖ State your overall pedagogical beliefs and practices, as evidenced in past experiences
- ❖ Future experiences: what could you can teach and develop at the institution you are applying to?
- ❖ Who could you supervise?



WHAT IS A PEDAGOGICAL OVERVIEW?

Like a research overview, but focusing on pedagogy (think of it as a mini-teaching statement):

- ❖ Defines your pedagogical values overall and the areas of teaching expertise, connecting them to the department
- ❖ Details the teaching methods and practices across your teaching experiences
- ❖ Names any teaching training/awards received

SERVICE SECTION

Can include but not limited to:

- ❖ Developing policies, curriculum, admissions, etc.
- ❖ Student Associations/ Committee work
- ❖ Relevant experiences in on-campus or off-campus positions (volunteering, outreach etc.)
- ❖ Future service contributions



CONCLUSION

Summarize the value you bring to the position, department, and (optional) institution.

Connect to department goals, whether they be research-focused, teaching focused, or both!

Storytelling in Cover letters

“While very few scholars have focused all of their work around a central interest, your task is to *find* a central interest or concern that can encompass many (not necessarily all; do not force it) of your work. The effect of the storytelling cover letter is that it can make you look focused and consistent, and the bonus is that central interests are often expressed in very simple and recognizable academic language: “I work on the representation of LGBTQ+ communities”; “I work on people’s relationship with food”; “I work on youths’ relationship with social media.””

From Dr. Lai-Tze Fan’s “How to Write an Academic Cover Letter” on *Hook & Eye*

CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION



Now your turn (5-7 min)

- 1) Write a sentence that focuses your research and/or teaching around a central interest.
- 2) Share that sentence in the chat if you'd like!

**Anything we can
clarify?**

5 MINUTE BREAK

CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION

The Academic CV

The steps to take to reflect and organize a CV so that it is tailored to the position you are applying for

Step 1: Reflection

Take an inventory of what you've done, including:

- ❖ Academic and professional accomplishments
- ❖ Teaching/research experience and competencies
- ❖ Work/volunteer/service experience
- ❖ Reference



Step 2: Organize & Target

A CV is tailored, and can be organized in various ways:

- ❖ Organize the sections according to relevancy to the position, highlighting your achievements
- ❖ Naming the sections and subsections appropriately
- ❖ Add Summary of Qualifications and bullet points to personalize and frame your experiences in a persuasive manner



Header and Research/Teaching Interests

Wallis Gans

2237 - 200 University Ave West, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G5

519-888-4567, wallis.gans@uwaterloo.ca, LinkedIn: ca.linkedin.com/in/wallisgans/

Research Interests

Sustainable water management
Groundwater contamination
Soil and groundwater remediation
Groundwater modelling

Teaching Interests

Environmental assessment practices
Hydrogeology
Groundwater modelling
Water resource systems

Summary of Qualifications

4-6 bullet points outlining:

- 1) x years y experience (research and/or teaching)
- 2) # of publications, including in *big journal name*
- 3) \$ of funding, including *prestigious award name*
- 4) Technical skills, related expertise, industry experience, training or certification (as relevant)
- 5) Relevant soft skills, connecting to service

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS: WHAT IT COULD LOOK LIKE

Summary of Qualifications

- 7+ years independent research and consulting experience related to groundwater management, including project experience with modelling and remediation
- 5+ years undergraduate teaching experience on topics ranging from advanced mathematics to environmental assessment practices
- Successful grant record, including NSERC and Mitacs; published in *Journal of Groundwater Research*
- Solid technical background in statistical software and Matlab; strong programming skills in C++ and R developed through academic and consulting projects
- Engaging presenter with a commitment to interactive and pedagogically sound teaching practices, including incorporating innovative teaching approaches
- Eligible for P. Eng designation

EDUCATION SECTION

In addition to your degrees, you are encouraged to include:

- ❖ The title of your dissertation and MA thesis or MRP
- ❖ Supervisor for PhD and MA; can also include committee members and external committee members
- ❖ Relevant Courses in your PhD and MA

EDUCATION SECTION: WHAT IT COULD LOOK LIKE

Education

Candidate for Doctor of Philosophy

Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario September 2012-present

Dissertation: The dissolution of dense non-aqueous phase liquids in fractured geologic media

Supervisor: Dr. Super Visor

Relevant courses: Integrated Water Management, Sustainable Operations, Advanced Numerical Methods for Environmental Applications

Master of Applied Science

Water Resources Engineering, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario December, 2011

Thesis: Hydrogeologic analysis of an urbanized aquifer to assess the impact of Nitrate concentrations

Supervisor: Dr. Dok Tor

Relevant courses: Open Channel Hydraulics, Water Process Chemistry, Advanced Water and Wastewater Treatment, Groundwater Modelling

Bachelor of Engineering

Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario December, 2009

Fourth Year Design Project: Statistical modelling of fluctuations in the watertable in a municipal field

Supervisor: Dr. Univer Sityprof

EXPERIENCE SECTIONS: WRITING BULLET POINTS

- ❖ Bullet points strongly recommended for your experience sections: research, teaching, industry, service, and additional experience.
- ❖ Bullet points are a persuasive tool that gives a more detailed (and tailored) picture of what you did in those roles and conveys personality.

EXPERIENCE SECTIONS: WRITING BULLET POINTS

Each bullet point should convey:

- ❖ WHAT you did + HOW you did it + WHY you did it
- ❖ Focus on accomplishments/impact of actions, not duties
- ❖ Prioritize the most relevant point first, focusing on aspects of your experiences that relevant to the position you are applying for

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- ❖ In reverse chronological order, list your research positions that you have held and (if applicable) the research project,
- ❖ Include a bulleted list that highlight your major accomplishments/skills in that position, focusing on research accomplishments and skills.
- ❖ These positions include but are not limited to: Doctoral Research, Master's Research, Research Assistantships, Visiting Scholar, and Research Member

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Experience

Doctoral Researcher

Department of Civil Engineering, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario September 2012-present

- Developed original method for visualizing two-phase flow in fracture planes
- Designed physical model experiment to examine dissolution of dense non-aqueous phase liquids in fracture planes
- Developed statistical model in R describing non-equilibrium dissolution in fracture planes
- Revised existing numerical contaminant transport model to include non-equilibrium dissolution (in progress)
- Designed and validated original method for the analysis of chlorinated hydrocarbons using solid phase micro extraction (SPME)

Now your turn: Writing a Research Experience bullet point

- 1) Write at least two bullet points to highlight the accomplishments/skills in your doctoral or Master's research
- 2) Share in the chat (anonymously) if you wish

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Separate into subsections to differentiate Instruction, TA, and Supervision. Can be organized in a 3 potential ways:

- 1) Each course as an experience; reverse chronological order with a bulleted list articulating the pedagogical achievements/methods in that course
- 2) Each experience (i.e., Instructor or TA) at an institution is bulleted; reverse chronological order with a list of courses given under the title of the position
- 3) Courses are simply listed in reverse chronological order

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (V1)

Teaching Experience

Independent Instruction

Digital Lives

(Fall 20XX, 20XX, 20XX; Winter 20XX)

University of Waterloo, ON

- Designed syllabus to offer an examination of how digital communication technologies create and promote online identities and social spaces
- Modelled lessons and scaffolded assignments to build core competency in the fields of rhetoric and medium-specific analysis
- Integrated experiential learning into instruction, group work, and assignments to elicit authentic self-reflection in regards to media consumption and online presence
- Encouraged students to creatively investigate and communicate the historical and cultural contexts of media and media use through presentations and assignments
- Offered students to participate in local campus or city events related to the class, such as Kitchener's Night\Shift placehacking festival

The Super Hero

(Winter 20XX)

University of Waterloo, ON

- Designed syllabus to critically examine the superhero figure in comics, film, games, and TV, focusing on the intersections of race, gender, class, and disability
- Created writing-intensive, low-stakes weekly blog writing assignment, integrating students' comments into my lecture material, much to students' satisfaction
- Developed low-to-high stakes written assignments to develop core competencies in close

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (V2)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Sessional Instructor

Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Waterloo

September 20XX - April 20XX

Name of Course

Name of Course

- Redesigned both components of the second-year course, including determining learning objectives, assessment methods, and choosing appropriate readings
- Created lesson plans using a systematic interactive approach to maximize student engagement

Undergraduate Research Supervisor

Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Waterloo

May 20XX-August 20XX

- Designed undergraduate research projects in collaboration with undergraduate researchers to facilitate learning for students
- Mentored students through the research process, including facilitating the development of independent problem-solving skills

Undergraduate Research Projects Supervised:

Name of Project

Name of Project

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Industry Experience

Consultant, Kerr Wood Leidal Associated Ltd., Vancouver, British Columbia, July-August 2013

- Created and analyzed model of the Hollyburn, British Columbia, water distribution system and provided recommendations for upgrades to the system
- Developed model for the Hollyburn, British Columbia wastewater collection system
- Analyzed sewer flow data for Esquimalt, British Columbia to characterize inflow and infiltration
- Developed computer program to manipulate large SCADA system flow data files

Consultant, Gore & Storrie Ltd., North York, Ontario January, 2012-August 2012

- Analyzed daily operational data for Nestle's Ottawa, Ontario, wastewater treatment plant, and provided operational assistance
- Conducted energy management study on all municipal wastewater treatment plants in Ontario to assess the economic benefit of fine bubble diffuse retrofits in aeration tanks

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Service and Leadership Experience

Member, Sub-Committee B (approves both external examiners for PhD defenses, and faculty members for independent PhD supervision) 2014-present

Reviewer, Journal of Water Resources Planning and Management, 2011-present

Member, Sustainable Waterloo, 2011-present

Member, Faculty of Engineering Graduate Review Committee, 2013-2014

Grant Writer, Proposal for the purchase of \$20000 gas chromatography auto-sampler, 2012

Coordinator, Environmental Engineering Graduate Orientation, 2013

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Publications

1. (In preparation) **Gans, W.**, and Visor, S. Two-phase flow in a variable aperture fracture: laboratory comparison of a two-dimensional numerical model. To be submitted to *Water Resources Research* by Summer 2015.
2. **Gans, W.**, and S. Visor. Two phase flow in variable aperture fracture: laboratory validation of a two-dimensional numerical model. In *Dynamics of Fluids in Fractured Rocks: Concepts and Recent Advances*, eds. E. Neer and U. Sityprof, 2014.
3. Tor, D., and **Gans, W.** Assessing the impact of Nitrate concentrations in urbanized aquifers. *Journal of Groundwater Research*, 2013.

Conference Presentations

1. **Gans, W.** and S. Visor. Dissolution of a residual DNAPL in a variable aperture fracture. *Proceedings of Spring Meeting of the University Consortium Solvents-In-Groundwater Research Program*, May 2015.
2. **Gans, W.**, and S. Visor. Groundwater flow and fracture. *Proceedings of National Groundwater Association (NGWA) Annual Summit*, May 2014.
3. Visor, S. and **W. Gans**. Behaviour of a single-component NAPL in a variable aperture fracture plane. *Proceedings, Sustainable Engineering Symposium*, February, 2012.
4. **Gans, W.**, and S. Visor. DNAPL flow in transparent fracture casts. *Proceedings of Water Resources Engineering Group of Southwestern Ontario Annual Conference*, April 2012.

HOW TO ORGANIZE PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Publications order (approx.):

1. Books
2. Edited Volumes
3. Refereed Journal Articles
4. Book Chapters
5. Conference Proceedings
6. Encyclopedia Entries
7. Book Reviews
8. Articles Under Review/Consideration
9. Manuscripts in Preparation
10. Web-based Publications
11. Other Publications (non-academic publications that may be relevant)

HOW TO ORGANIZE PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Presentations order (approx.):

1. Conference Presentations
2. Poster Presentations
3. Invited Talks
4. Panels organized

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Scholarships and Grants

Major Awards

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Postgraduate Scholarship D (NSERC-PGS D)	September 2014-present
\$21000/year for 2 years	
Mitacs Accelerate Fellowship, \$37000 8 months	April-November 2014

Undergraduate Awards

NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award \$7500	2009
June Lowe Entrance Scholarship \$2000	2004

Travel Grants

Graduate Studies Office Research Travel Assistantship \$300	2014
Graduate Studies Office Research Travel Assistantship \$300	2013

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBERSHIPS

Professional Development

LEADS Student Leadership Certificate, Student Success Office 2013-2014

R Statistics Essentials, Lynda.com 2013

WHMIS Training, WHMISOntario.com, 2009

Professional Memberships

Member, American Water Works Association (AWWA), 2012-present

Member, American Geophysical Union (AGU), 2012-present

Member, Geological Society of America (GSA) 2011-present

Member, Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), 2009-present

ADDITIONAL SECTIONS

Additional Sections can include:

- ❖ Research Creation/Projects
- ❖ Creative Writing/Art/Performances
- ❖ Workshops/Panels/Conferences Organized
- ❖ Additional Experience

Are there any sections that I have not mentioned?

Any questions or clarifications?

CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION





**Regular
Co-op
Undergrad
Masters, PhD, Postdocs
Alumni
Employees**



**Job Search Tactics
Résumé
Cover Letter
Interview Prep
Career Exploration
Grad School Prep**



**Individual Appointments
Drop-ins
Workshops
Online Resources**

uwaterloo.ca/career-action

Social Media



@CCAGrad



@uwaterloocareer

HOW DID WE DO?

We are always looking for ways to improve and your feedback is important. Complete the feedback survey delivered to your inbox at the end of this week.

Our mission is to educate and motivate all members of the University of Waterloo community to develop and take action to achieve current and future career goals.