

PREPARING FOR VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

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UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO



CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION

A Bit About Me



Graeme Beaton (he/him)

– pronounced GRAY-um

- Career Advisor at the Centre for Career Action (CCA)
- Experience in tutoring, research, freelance writing, social entrepreneurship
- Avid musician since high school (piano, guitar, vocals)

Whose land are we on?

We respectfully acknowledge that we work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River: land promised and never returned to the Six Nations.

Some incredible local community members on IG: Bangishimo Johnston @bangishimo, Amy Smoke @amysmoke, C. Elizabeth Best @lizbot5000

Support: O:se Kenhionhata:tie – [Land Back Camp](#), @ose.kenhionhatatie on IG

Reports: [TRC Calls to Action](#), [National Inquiry into MMIWG](#)

Reading: [The Inconvenient Indian](#), [21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act](#), [This Place: 150 Years Retold](#)

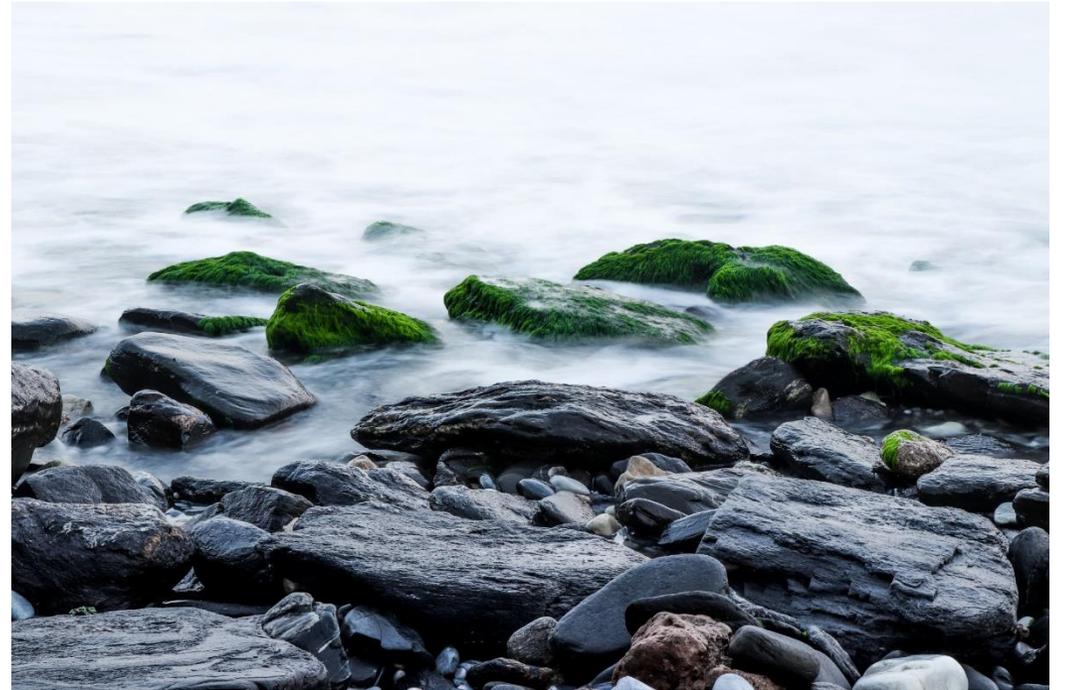
What land are you on? native-land.ca

A Safe(r) Space

Going into this workshop, the intention is to create as safe a space as possible.

A safe space means different things for everyone, but we'll do our best! Let's keep two things in mind:

- **Choice**
- **Respect**



How might we co-create this safe(r) space?

- Participate in a way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat during presentation time. Ask me questions whenever! At the end of the workshop, you can go mic on or mic off during Q&A
 - Feel free to send me a direct message if you have a question or comment you would like to share privately
- If you're having tech issues, our events specialist Lindy is here for support!
- Take what works for you and leave what doesn't.

**What topics do you
hope this
workshop will
cover?**



LEARNING GOALS

- 1 Identify the steps to prepare effectively for an interview
- 2 Describe the factors that contribute to a positive first impression
- 3 Apply effective strategies for answering interview questions in both an in-person and a virtual setting

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

What do you think students could do to get ready for an interview?

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Review resume
- Review job description
- Research employer (Mission, challenges, motivators, culture and strategic plan)
- Practice interview questions
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
- References
- Copy of your resume
- Know yourself and what you bring to the position

KNOW THE ROLE – WHAT IS THE EMPLOYER LOOKING FOR?

- Experience
- Education
- Knowledge
- Technical Skills
- Transferable Skills
- Personal Attributes



KNOW THE INTERVIEW DETAILS

- How many people will interview you? Who are they?
- How long will the interview be? Is it supposed to be 20 minutes?
- What components will it include?
 - Technical?
 - Application?



Knowing this information can help relieve anxiety and reduce surprises!

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: FIRST GREETING

- **Test your Tech:** test run the software with a friend to ensure a smooth experience
- **Be early:** set up your computer, close extra tabs, turn off notifications and open the program
- **Start with a strong introduction:** say hello, smile and look into your camera
 - “Thank you for taking the time to with me today.”
 - “I’ve been looking forward to our conversation”
 - ”It’s nice to meet you!”
- **Be prepared for small talk:** remain positive, find a common interest, avoid oversharing or controversial topics

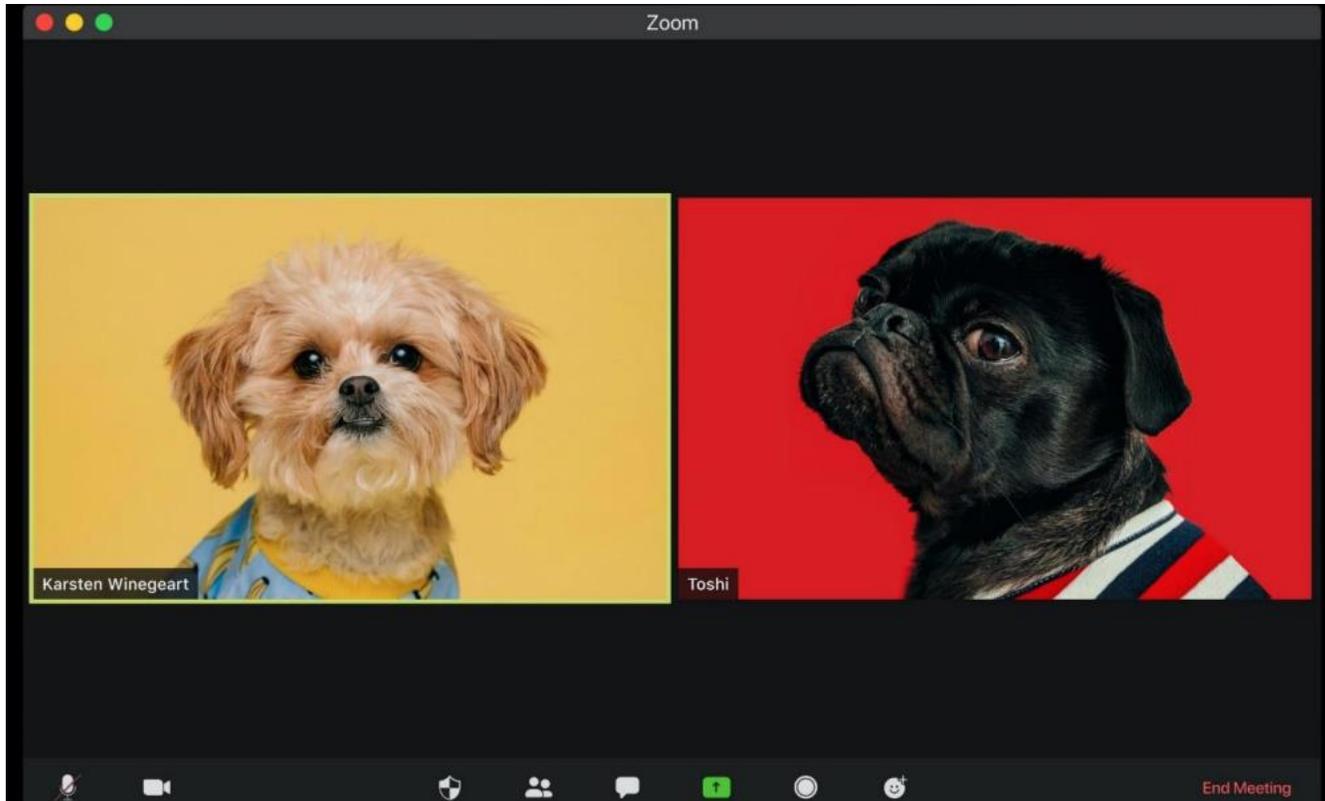
VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: APPEARANCE

1. **Sound:** find a quiet space and a room with some sound insulation
2. **Background:** have a clean, simple and professional background
3. **Camera Angle:** ensure your camera is at eye-level
4. **Lighting:** use natural light or a lamp. Ensure you are not backlit!
5. **Dress:** dress appropriately and professionally from head to toe



Photo by Christina @ wointechchat.com on Unsplash

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: BODY LANGUAGE



1. **Posture:** positive body language
2. **Eye contact:** look into the camera
3. **Facial Expressions:** smile when appropriate
4. **Voice:** be mindful of if you need to slow down
5. **Practice your answers out loud!**

**WHAT MAKES YOU... YOU?
BE YOURSELF!**

THE QUESTIONS

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Classic

Behavioural

Situational

Skill Testing/Problem
Solving

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- Why did you apply?
- Why should we hire you?
- Organizational knowledge
- Short/long-term career goals
- Strengths/weaknesses
- Tell me about yourself



OUTLINE FOR “TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF”

- When/how did you become interested in this field?
- What have you done since then to grow your knowledge, skills and/or experience?
- Can you tie this into the job/role?
- Give yourself about 2 minutes (give or take) for this answer



Photo by Beci Harmony on Unsplash

BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

BEHAVIOUR-BASED QUESTIONS

Past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour.

Typical behavioural questions begin with:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Describe a situation in which...
- Recall an instance when...
- Give me an example of...

STAR APPROACH



Situation	Background and context
Task	What you needed to do
Action	What you did and how you did it
Result	The outcome of your actions

Q: TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU COMMUNICATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO A NON-SCIENTIFIC AUDIENCE

Situation	“Let’s Talk Science” Volunteer
Task	Create workshop on global warming for 8 th graders
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researched the 8th grade science curriculum• Consulted with professors and TAs on strategies to simplify information• Delivered the workshop to 20 students and kept them engaged by inserting analogies, videos and activities into the workshop
Result	Students expressed their newfound interest in global warming, and I was invited to deliver another workshop

SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

- Actual (hypothetical) situation from job
- Can be very general but also can be very specific
- Typical questions begin with:
 - What would you do if...
 - Describe how you would...
 - What approach would you take...
 - Say you were faced with...

SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

What would you do if you were almost finished working on a project that had a tight deadline but upon review you realized you'd made a mistake at the beginning that would require you to start over?

How would you resolve conflict with a co-worker?

SKILL TESTING AND PROBLEM- SOLVING QUESTIONS

SKILL TESTING/PROBLEM SOLVING QUESTIONS

Skill testing

- Technical questions
- Hands-on

Problem Solving

- Written or spoken
- Demonstrate structured thinking
- Show your process (the right answer may not matter)

TRICKY SITUATIONS

WHAT DO I DO ABOUT...?



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- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Silence
- Stumped

WRAPPING UP AN INTERVIEW

How do you best answer the following:

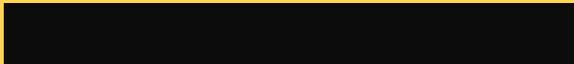
- Is there anything else that you'd like to add?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about yourself?
- Do you have any questions for us?



QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE END OF AN INTERVIEW

- What do you expect a co-op student to have accomplished in the first month?
- What aspects of the role do you believe to be the most rewarding or the most challenging?
- What are the key priorities for someone in this role?
- Can you give me an example of the types of projects the previous co-op student was involved in?
- What type of training would there be for the successful candidate?
- In what ways can I prepare for this job, if I am the successful candidate?
- For jobs on WaterlooWorks Co-op job board only, you can ask about salary

**Before we wrap
up...we want to hear
from you!**



PRO TIPS

1. Based on your analysis of the role, the organization, and your own experiences, go into the interview with 5 things you want them to know about you
2. Treat the interview like a conversation, not like an exam
3. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role/organization
4. Make sure you have a list of questions to ask
5. Send a thank you/follow up email (not standard practice in co-op)

CCA SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

Resources: CCA Appointments and Workshops/Events



Job Search Tactics
Résumé
Cover Letter
Interview Prep
Career Exploration



Individual Appointments
Drop-ins
Workshops
Online Resources

uwaterloo.ca/career-action

Thank you! Any Questions?



Don't hesitate to reach out! You can reach me at gdbeaton@uwaterloo.ca