

# RÉSUMÉ TIPS: THINKING LIKE AN EMPLOYER

Hawa Patel  
Career Leader, Centre for Career Action



UNIVERSITY OF  
**WATERLOO**



**CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION**

# Hawa Patel

Career Leader, Workshop Facilitation

My pronouns are she/her

Completed my fourth year of Biomedical Sciences  
with a minor in Sociology

Fun facts:

- My favourite movie is a tie between the first Grown Ups movie and Interstellar



# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Waterloo is located on the territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples and is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

O:se Kenhionhata:tie Land Back Camp: <https://www.facebook.com/osekenhionhatatie/>  
Outside of KW area? Check out: <https://native-land.ca/>

# WE AIM FOR THIS TO BE A SAFE(R) SPACE

We are entering this space with the intention of creating as safe a space as possible for you. Safe space means something different for everyone, but we promise you that we will try our best!

- Participate in the way that feels most comfortable for you! Take what works for you, leave what doesn't.
- Ask questions whenever! Please use the chat during presentation time, but you can use your mic during the Q&A if comfortable.
- Feel free to send me a direct message to participate anonymously
- If having tech issues, our fabulous student staff will be able to troubleshoot with you. We appreciate patience if any tech problems arise on our end 😊
- Please be respectful of other participants and facilitators

**What are you hoping to get  
out of this workshop?**

**What are you currently  
using your resume for?**



# OBJECTIVES OF TODAY

- 1) Identify the skills and experiences that you have
- 2) Understand what an employer is looking for from a job posting
- 3) Learn ways to connect your skills to what the employer is looking for
- 4) Present this information in your resume

# STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME

1



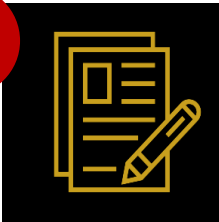
**IDENTIFY** your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.

2



**ANALYZE** job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.

3



**DESIGN & CREATE** a document that showcases how you could contribute through your skills/experience.

4



**REFINE** your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

# STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



**IDENTIFY** your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



**ANALYZE** job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



**DESIGN & CREATE** a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



**REFINE** your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.



# SKILLS CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE



Image from: <https://blog.jobactive.gov.au/how-to-write-about-skills-experience-your-resume>

- Formal / informal training, courses, workshops
- Relevant skills/experience:
  - Paid jobs
  - Volunteering
  - Student club
  - Extracurricular activities
- Relevant projects/achievements
- Awards and recognitions

<b>Role/Activity/Project/ Class/Club</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Skills/Attributes</b>
Took Biol 130 (Introductory Cell Biology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Completed a DNA extraction and sequencing project and created a presentation for the class (received a grade of 89%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Project management- Communication and presentation skills</li> <li>-Laboratory skills (DNA extraction and bacteria culture)</li> </ul>
Organized Fundraiser for Environmental Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Organized and scheduled club meetings, annual clothing drive, bake sale events</li> <li>-Created posters and advertising material for events</li> <li>-Managed the club's community bank account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Microsoft Excel, Canva</li> <li>-Event planning, organization, and management</li> <li>-Budget and financial reviews</li> </ul>
Part-time Waiter at a Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coordinated activities with other staff to ensure tasks were done quickly and accurately</li> <li>-Commended twice by manager for excellent customer service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time management and problem solving</li> <li>-Customer service and relationship building</li> </ul>

**What skills do I want to (further) develop?**

# STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



**IDENTIFY** your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



**ANALYZE** job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



**DESIGN & CREATE** a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



**REFINE** your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

## **THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE**

---

**“Recognize that most employers are using the résumé to screen you out rather than to select you in.”**

---

**Derek Chapman, Ph.D.,**  
Professor of Industrial Organization and Psychology  
at the Haskayne School of Business

## THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

---

“Imagine a doctor's résumé... do you want the doctor's résumé to say, **“has worked with patients”** or **“familiarity with medical practices”** or do you want her to say **“successfully performed 20 surgeries”** and leave all that other stuff off? [Use] the highest value points and leave the other stuff to be implied.”

---

Director of Product Management, Primal

# THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

## What are employers looking for?

- Accomplishments and results – not duties performed
- Relevant knowledge/skills/education/experience
- Personality (and how it fits)

## What problems do they notice?

- Vague, confusing or irrelevant content
- Poor written communication
- Lack of visual appeal/formatting consistency
- "Here's what you can do for me"

# JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

## **Administrative Assistant | Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada**

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is an international leader in providing innovative services for people with MS and their families and advancing research into the cause and cure of multiple sclerosis. Reporting to the Finance Department, the successful candidate will be involved in the regular processing of financial transactions at the chapter, division, and national office level as well as a number of Finance projects supporting different business units. We are looking for an enthusiastic individual to fill an Administrative Assistant position with us.

### **Specific job responsibilities:**

- Enter bank deposits from regional locations into accountingsystem
- Processing of accounts payable and accounts receivabletransactions
- Review financial statements and maintain cash flow schedules for all locations on a monthly basis
- Complete financial analysis for various projects
- Assist with budget analysis and preparation of budget templatesfor next fiscal year
- Generate tax receipts for donations to fundraising events, process credit cards and encode cheques for fundraising events
- Assist with formatting and distribution of financial statements as required and other finance members with filing as required

### **Required qualifications:**

- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office suite, including strong working knowledge of Excel
- Familiarity with accounting software with working knowledge being a benefit
- Detail and deadline oriented and able to work in a fast pacedenvironment
- Demonstrate a strong attention to detail with a high level of accuracy
- Possess excellent time management skills with the ability to prioritize multipletasks
- Ability to solve problems and practice good decision-making
- Strong communication skills, both oral and written, accompanied by solid interpersonal skills

# JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

## Administrative Assistant | Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is an international **leader** in providing innovative services for people with MS and their families and advancing research into the cause and cure of multiple sclerosis. Reporting to the Finance Department, the successful candidate will be involved in the regular **processing of financial transactions** at the chapter, division, and national office level as well as a number of Finance projects supporting different business units. We are looking for an **enthusiastic** individual to fill an Administrative Assistant position with us.

### Specific job responsibilities:

- Enter bank deposits from regional locations into accounting system
- Processing of **accounts payable and accounts receivable** transactions
- Review financial statements and maintain cash flow schedules for all locations on a monthly basis
- Complete **financial analysis** for various projects
- Assist with **budget analysis** and preparation of budget templates for next fiscal year
- Generate **tax receipts** for donations to fundraising events, process credit cards and encode cheques for fundraising events
- Assist with formatting and distribution of financial statements as required and other finance members with filing as required

### Required qualifications:

- Working knowledge of **Microsoft Office suite**, including strong working knowledge of **Excel**
- Familiarity with **accounting software** with working knowledge being a benefit
- Detail and **deadline oriented** and able to work in a fast paced environment
- Demonstrate a strong **attention to detail** with a high level of accuracy
- Possess excellent **time management** skills with the ability to prioritize multiple tasks
- Ability to **solve problems** and practice good decision-making
- Strong **communication** skills, both oral and written, accompanied by solid **interpersonal** skills



# DRAWING CONNECTIONS

Draw connections between what employers want and what you have.

<b>What employer wants</b>	<b>Evidence I have it</b>
<b>Time management</b>	Effectively balanced role as high school club president with 4 courses; maintained top 2% academic standing.
<b>Verbal communication</b>	Prepared and delivered 15-minute presentation to a panel of judges; received feedback that ideas were clearly communicated and convincing.
<b>Microsoft Excel</b>	Created functional Excel spreadsheet to track club meetings; increased efficiency of scheduling process.

# STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



**IDENTIFY** your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



**ANALYZE** job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



**DESIGN & CREATE** a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



**REFINE** your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

# RESUME SECTIONS AND STYLING

## Name

Location, Telephone, Email

LinkedIn, Website, Portfolio

Summary of Qualifications

Relevant Experience

Relevant Projects

Volunteer Experience

Education

Awards & Scholarships

Professional Memberships

Publications

Presentations

Activities and Interests

- Include any relevant experience.
- Prioritize/order/place your resume sections based on relevance.
- Maintain visual appeal and clarity to capture employer attention.
- Consider industry standards – 1 or 2 pages?

# SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A “highlight reel” of 4-6 points that demonstrate your fit for the job.

- Relevant experience/accomplishments related to your field/industry.
- Relevant knowledge/skills/expertise (language, technical, transferrable).
- Education/awards that complement practical experience.
- Relevant personal characteristics and attributes.
- Specialized training/education relevant to the objective.

*\*Reference where or how you developed the above.*

# SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

---

- Current First-aid and CPR certification.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Familiar with Microsoft Office Suite.
- Fluent in French.
- 2 years of office work experience.
- Enthusiastic individual with an academic background in accounting and finance.

VS

# JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

## Administrative Assistant | Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is an international **leader** in providing innovative services for people with MS and their families and advancing research into the cause and cure of multiple sclerosis. Reporting to the Finance Department, the successful candidate will be involved in the regular **processing of financial transactions** at the chapter, division, and national office level as well as a number of Finance projects supporting different business units. We are looking for an **enthusiastic** individual to fill an Administrative Assistant position with us.

### Specific job responsibilities:

- Enter bank deposits from regional locations into accounting system
- Processing of **accounts payable and accounts receivable** transactions
- Review financial statements and maintain cash flow schedules for all locations on a monthly basis
- Complete **financial analysis** for various projects
- Assist with **budget analysis** and preparation of budget templates for next fiscal year
- Generate **tax receipts** for donations to fundraising events, process credit cards and encode cheques for fundraising events
- Assist with formatting and distribution of financial statements as required and other finance members with filing as required

### Required qualifications:

- Working knowledge of **Microsoft Office suite**, including strong working knowledge of **Excel**
- Familiarity with **accounting software** with working knowledge being a benefit
- Detail and **deadline oriented** and able to work in a fast paced environment
- Demonstrate a strong **attention to detail** with a high level of accuracy
- Possess excellent **time management** skills with the ability to prioritize multiple tasks
- Ability to **solve problems** and practice good decision-making
- Strong **communication** skills, both oral and written, accompanied by solid **interpersonal** skills

# SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

---

- Current First-aid and CPR certification.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Familiar with Microsoft Office Suite.
- Fluent in French.
- 2 years of office work experience.
- Enthusiastic individual with an academic background in accounting and finance.

VS

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

---

- 2 years work experience in fast-paced office environment
- Enthusiastic individual with diverse academic background in accounting and finance
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills strengthened through various volunteer positions
- Proficient user of Microsoft Office Suite; 4+ years experience working with Excel
- Fluent in French

# DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



VS

Sales Associate, Campus Bookstore | Ottawa, ON

- Helped customers at the store cash register.
- Used Microsoft Excel to enter data.
- Answered questions and provided customer service.

**QUALIFIERS & SPECIFIC WORDING**





# DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



**QUALIFIERS & SPECIFIC WORDING**



**VS**

Sales Associate, Campus Bookstore | Ottawa, ON

- Helped customers at the store cash register.
- Used Microsoft Excel to enter data.
- Answered questions and provided customer service.

Sales Associate, Campus Bookstore | Ottawa, ON

- Communicated **effectively** with **customers in-person, over email, and on the phone** to ensure satisfaction when responding to inquiries.
- **Improved** inventory management and tracking by creating **data storage spreadsheets** using Excel.
- Commended on **2 occasions for outstanding** problem-solving and customer service by the store manager.

# WRITING BULLET POINTS

- **Paint a picture with words** (help the employer envision you doing those jobs).
- **WHAT—HOW—WHY**

<b>WHAT you did</b>	<b>HOW you did it</b>	<b>WHY it's important</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Action or achievement verb (e.g., arranged, updated, prepared)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tool (e.g., programming language)</li><li>• Approach/methodology</li><li>• Adverb (e.g., effectively, accurately)</li><li>• Role (e.g., member, treasurer)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Result or accomplishment</li><li>• Outcome</li><li>• Impact</li><li>• Quantify where possible</li></ul>

- Accomplishments > duties (E.g., “Received best customer service award” vs. “waited on tables”)
- Use similar industry terms (you can often find these in the job posting).

# DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



VS

Communications Coordinator, University of Waterloo | Waterloo, ON

- Managed social media accounts.
- Drafted and sent out bi-weekly email newsletter.
- Assisted in office management tasks as needed.

# DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



**QUALIFIERS & SPECIFIC WORDING**



VS

Communications Coordinator, University of Waterloo | Waterloo, ON

- Managed social media accounts.
- Drafted and sent out bi-weekly email newsletter.
- Assisted in office management tasks as needed.

Communications Coordinator, University of Waterloo | Waterloo, ON

- Managed a **Twitter and Instagram** account **with over 15,000 combined followers**; designed, coordinated, and scheduled social media content **using Canva and Hootsuite**.
- Collected weekly department updates from **4 different teams** and curated a bi-weekly email newsletter to maintain **faculty-wide communications**.
- Supported office manager in **coordinating room bookings, tracking office inventory, and handling incoming and outgoing mail**.

**What if your resume is being run by an ATS?**

**(ATS = Applicant Tracking System)**

# STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



**IDENTIFY** your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



**ANALYZE** job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



**DESIGN & CREATE** a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



**REFINE** your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

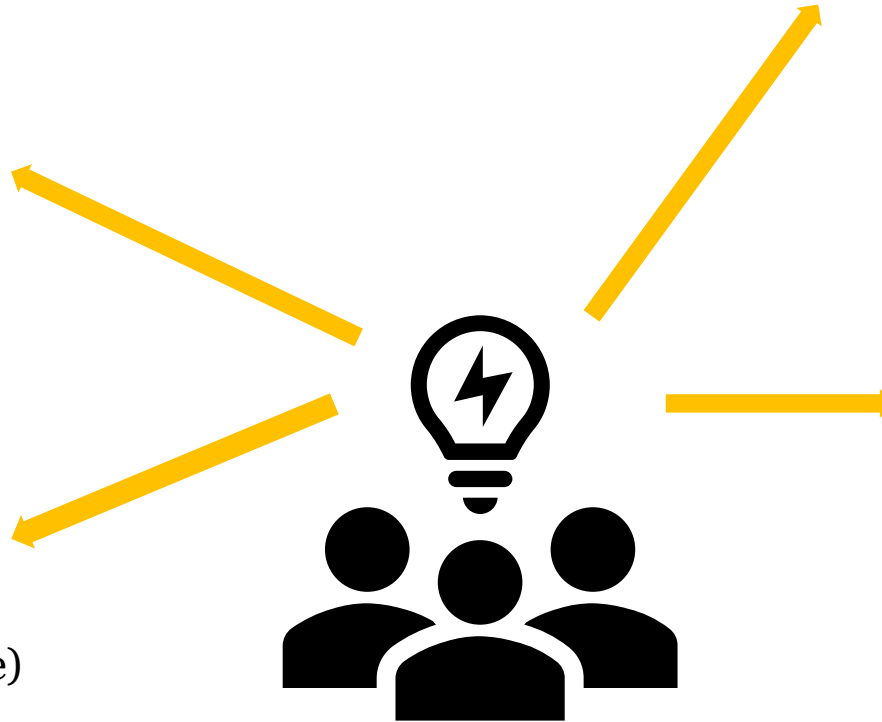


# REFINE

Collect feedback from trusted friends, peers, mentors

Check out other people's resumes

(what do you like, what do you not like)



Visit the Centre for Career Action

Ask past supervisors you trust

(volunteering, internship, etc.)



# TIPS TO CONSIDER

- Starting point → identify relevant skills, experiences, goals.
- Understand the employer perspective.
- Analyze job descriptions to assess employer needs.
- Draw connections between what employers want --- evidence you have it.
- Prioritize sections of your resume based on relevance.
- Be specific about skills and accomplishments in bullet points.



# 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](http://uwaterloo.ca/career-action)

# 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.*

**QUESTIONS?**