

# EDGE SKILLS IDENTIFICATION & ARTICULATION

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**WATERLOO**



# WHOSE LAND ARE WE ON?

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

June is Indigenous history month!  
Upcoming presentation: June 20

[On Land and Territorial Acknowledgements](#)



# What to Expect



- Principles of curiosity, care and respect
- Take things at your own pace and participate in a way that works for you: everything is optional
- Ask questions throughout! Via the chat or direct message
- Q & A at the end
- Take what works for you, leave what doesn't

# YOUR FACILITATOR

- MA in English literature
- Background in communications and fundraising
- Career Advisor on the undergrad team



**Stephanie, she/her**

# WHICH FACULTY DO YOU STUDY IN?

HEALTH

ENGINEERING

ENVIRONMENT

ARTS

SCIENCE

MATH

At the top/bottom of your screen, you should see a menu that says, “view options”. Click on that and select “annotate”. Please select a stamp and identify which faculty you are in. ☺



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# ARE ANY OF THESE YOUR SHORT/LONG TERM GOALS?

<b>Searching for a volunteer/part- time job</b>	<b>Searching for a full-time job</b>	<b>Networking with prospective employers</b>	<b>Applying for further education</b>	<b>Explaining to family/friends what you want to do after graduation</b>

At the top/bottom of your screen, you should see a menu that says, “view options”. Click on that and select “annotate”. Please select a stamp and identify which faculty you are in. 😊

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Know what makes a great candidate and build a body of evidence of your employment skills
2. Use job description analysis to identify skills employers want
3. Articulate persuasive evidence of your skill(s) in an interview response format

# WHAT ARE SKILLS?

- A skill is a **demonstrated** ability to do something well
- **Technical** skills vs. **transferable** skills
  - Technical: Skills learned for a specific purpose
  - Transferable: Skills used in multiple domains in your life



# **WHAT ARE THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR?**

# JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

**Employer:** Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

**Job Title:** Customer Experience Analyst

**Work Location:** Toronto

We are seeking a highly-motivated individual with the passion and enthusiasm to help develop and implement changes that will improve customer experience right across the organization. The student will analyze and evaluate different sources of information to identify trends, variances, gaps and insights.

## Required Skills

- Solid customer service skills with experience working in a customer-focused environment, including identifying and responding to customer needs
- Excellent communication (oral and written) skills
- Strong presentation skills
- Ability to interpret multiple data sources to draw meaningful conclusions and make recommendations
- Well-developed organizational skills including attention to detail, the ability to prioritize work and the ability to work collaboratively across multi-disciplinary teams.
- Must have vision, commitment and enthusiasm for change

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excellent written communication skills

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# THE SKILL ASSESSMENT CHART

<b>Skills employers want</b>	<b>Evidence I have it</b> (Consider club experience, research papers, lab reports, essays)
Solid customer service skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greeter at WUSA Club events</li></ul>
Excellent written communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collected, recorded and analyzed data to draw conclusions</li><li>• Created and edited written report</li></ul>
Strong presentation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Created presentation to report findings/conclusions</li></ul>
Ability to interpret multiple data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researched and reviewed academic journals</li></ul>
Well-developed organizational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planned, organized, and prioritized work</li></ul>

# JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

Employer: University of Waterloo  
Job Title: Research Assistant  
Work Location: Waterloo

The Research Assistant will be responsible for co-ordinating, planning, and contributing to project outcomes. The Research Assistant will assist the Research Associate/Project lead in meeting project deliverables and deadlines. Duties include: conducting literature searches, assist with preparation of reports, consult with stakeholders and assist with other ongoing projects, as needed.

## Required Skills

- Proficient with Microsoft office (including Outlook, Word, Excel, Power Point, MS Project)
- Proven ability to work well independently and take the initiative to lead a project forward
- Experience conducting qualitative and/or quantitative research

# THE SKILL ASSESSMENT CHART

Skills employers want	Evidence I have it
MS Office	
Works well independently	
Experience conducting quantitative or qualitative research	
What else would you fill in?	

**Reflection:** The job description lets us know that the role involves report writing, meeting project deliverable/deadlines, and consulting with stakeholders. How can we fill in the blanks with what we can infer from the job ad?

# SKILLS THAT EMPLOYERS WANT YOU TO HAVE

- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to work in a team
- Strong work ethic
- Analytical/quantitative skills
- Written communication skills
- Technical Skills
- Initiative
- Detail-oriented
- Verbal communication skills
- Computer Skills

Source: The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook 2023 Survey

10 Skills Employers Need	Skills in Job Description	Evidence you have it
Written communication skills	Excellent written communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created and edited written report</li> </ul>
Problem-solving skills		
Ability to work in a team		
Initiative	Works well independently	
Analytical/quantitative skills	Ability to interpret multiple data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researched and reviewed academic journals</li> </ul>
Strong work ethic	Organizational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned, organized, prioritized work</li> </ul>
Verbal communication skills	Strong presentation skills Solid customer service skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created presentation to report findings</li> <li>Greeter at WUSA Club events</li> </ul>
Leadership		
Detail-oriented	Attention to detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected, recorded and analyzed data to draw conclusions</li> </ul>
Technical skills	MS Office Suite Experience conducting quantitative/qualitative research	



# **GOING FROM IDENTIFICATION TO ARTICULATION**

How can you prove that you have these skills?

# TALKING ABOUT SKILLS: INTERVIEWS

## Common concerns

- What will they ask me?
- What if I don't have an answer or give the wrong answer?
- What if I don't understand the question?
- What if I'm so nervous that I go 'blank'/forget what to say?

## Strategy for success

- Practice, practice, practice!

# TALKING ABOUT SKILLS: BEHAVIOURAL-BASED QUESTIONS

Typically will begin with:

- **Tell me about a time when** you set a goal for yourself. How did you go about ensuring that you would meet your objective?
- **Give me an example of a time** you faced a conflict while working on a team. How did you handle the situation?
- **Describe a situation in which** you were under a lot of pressure. What was going on, and how did you get through it?

Philosophy: What you've done in the past will predict your future behaviours

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

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

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

## Situation

- Provide background and context
- Who, what, where, when...
- Be brief (you are just providing the context here)

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

## Task

- Describe what you needed to do
- What goals did you need to reach?
- Include challenges and expectations

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

## Action

- Explain what you actually did and how you did it
- Include tools you used
- Focus on relevant talents (skills/attributes/characteristics/competencies)
- Should be the longest part of your response

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

## Result

- Describe the outcome of your actions
- What did you accomplish?
- Did you receive any positive feedback or recognition?
- What did you learn?



# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

**Q: Tell me about a time you communicated scientific knowledge to a non-scientific audience.**

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

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

**Q: Give me an example of a time you took initiative.**

## **STAR Activity – Part A**

**Instructions:** You are the interviewer! You just asked a candidate the following question: “Give me an example of a time you took initiative”.

As you listen to the facilitator’s response, write down the **Situation, Task, Action and Result** on your handout.

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

## STAR Activity – Part A

**Q: Give me an example of a time you took initiative.**

**Sample answer:**

When working at McDonald's in the kitchen I found out from my manager that a bus full of school students were on their way back from a field trip and that they were stopping in for lunch. This was happening right in the middle of our normal lunch hour. I had already made sure that we had all of our inventory ready to go, but I needed to ensure that we would meet our standard service requirements. By utilizing my leadership skills, I delegated extra people from cashier to operate the cook stations. I also requested that employees not take their breaks during this time to accommodate the rush, and assured them that they could take them later. We are a good team and they were happy to change their routine for the day. I also reminded the cashiers to explain to waiting customers that we had higher than normal volume and to thank them for their patience. In the end, by 1:00pm we had served all of the customers within our standard service requirements, with no mistakes in the order. The staff were then able to take their breaks and we continued on with the day as usual.

# ★ THE STAR APPROACH

**Q: Give me an example of a time you took initiative.**

<b>Situation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working at McDonald's in kitchen</li><li>• School field trip during lunch rush</li></ul>
<b>Task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that standard service requirements were met</li></ul>
<b>Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delegated people from cashier to operate cook stations</li><li>• Requested that breaks not be taken during this time</li><li>• Asked cashiers to explain to customers about higher than normal volume and to thank them for their patience</li></ul>
<b>Result</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By 1:00pm we served all of the customers, meeting service requirements</li><li>• Delivered strong customer service, with no mistakes</li></ul>

# REFLECTION

Please use the chat to share your reflections on the following prompts. P.S - there are no right or wrong answers!

What is the impact of missing details in the Action and/or Results sections? Or skipping entire sections?

# REFLECTION

Please use the chat to share your reflections on the following prompts. P.S - there are no right or wrong answers!

What is the impact of saying interview responses slowly or quickly?

# SKILL ARTICULATION

## STAR Activity – Part B:

1. Choose a behaviour-based question that you anticipate an employer to ask in an interview
  - Be sure to indicate the question on your paper
2. Create a written STAR response

# CHOOSE ONE BEHAVIOUR-BASED QUESTION BELOW:

Refer to page 2 of Skills I and A handout, Written Star Response | Part B section

- Describe a situation where you had to juggle several tasks at once and tell me how you prioritized your work
- Tell me about a conflict you have had in the past and how you dealt with it
- Give me an example of a time you found yourself in a situation that required you to exercise good judgment
- Tell me about a time you had to tell someone something you knew they would not like/want to hear
- Explain a time when you were faced with a problem and walk me through how you solved it



# SKILL ARTICULATION

## Verbal STAR Activity:

1. Practice your response out loud in a mirror or record yourself on your phone

# INTERVIEWER CONSIDERATIONS

- What do they hear as your central message?
- What skills were highlighted in your answer?
- Could you have provided more or less detail in any portion of the STAR response?
- What was their impression of you based on your answer?
- How was your body language/eye contact/tone?

# MOVING FORWARD

- Seek new academic/life experiences
- Getting involved on and off-campus
- Keep working on your skills chart
- Other considerations: writing your résumé
  - Visit us at the Centre for Career Action
  - Check out [careerhub.uwaterloo.ca](http://careerhub.uwaterloo.ca)

# FIND YOUR EDGE

[uwaterloo.ca/edge](http://uwaterloo.ca/edge)

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# QUESTIONS?

# 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.*

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