

RESUME TIPS: Thinking Like an Employer

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UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Centre for Career
Development

KARINA WILK (she/her)

- Career Leader, Workshop Facilitator @ Centre for Career Development
- 4B Life Physics, Medical Physics Specialization
- Past co-op experiences: University of Waterloo, SickKids Hospital, University of Toronto, Grand River Regional Cancer Centre
- www.linkedin.com/in/karinawilk
- Fun fact: I have a dog named Winnie



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.

Outside of KW area? Check out: <https://native-land.ca/>

Let's keep learning. Why not take a course?
INDG 201 The Indigenous Experience in Canada
<https://ucalendar.uwaterloo.ca/2223/COURSE/course-INDG.html>



WE AIM FOR 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 3 things in mind:

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



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 & market this information in your resume



**WHAT YEAR/TERM AND PROGRAM
ARE YOU IN?**



WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO GET OUT OF THIS WORKSHOP?

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING YOUR RESUME FOR?

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME

1



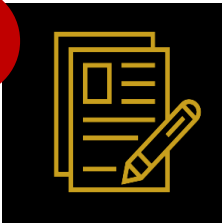
IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.

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



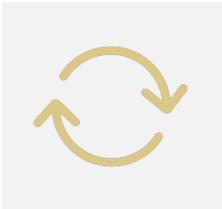
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ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



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



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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

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

What skills do I want to (further) develop?

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



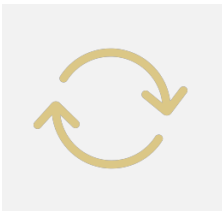
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THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

“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

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 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

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Specific job responsibilities:

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DRAWING CONNECTIONS

Draw connections between what employers want and what you have.

What employer wants	Evidence I have it
Time management	Effectively balanced role as club president and a full-course load while maintaining Honour Roll status.
Verbal communication	Prepared and delivered 15-minute presentation to a panel of judges; received feedback that ideas were clearly communicated and convincing.
Microsoft Excel	Created functional Excel spreadsheet to club meetings; increased efficiency of scheduling process.

JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS: Software Intern @ Microsoft

Responsibilities

Software engineers (SWEs) work with teammates to solve problems and build innovative software solutions. You are passionate about customers and product quality, and you provide technical guidance to Program Managers as they consider user needs and product requirements. You will also be expected to demonstrate an ability to learn and adopt relevant new technologies, tools, methods and processes to leverage in your solutions. As a SWE, you are dedicated to design, development and testing of next-generation software which will empower every person and organization on the planet to achieve more.

Applies engineering principles to solve complex problems through sound and creative engineering.

Quickly learns new engineering methods and incorporates them into his or her work processes.

Seeks feedback and applies internal or industry best practices to improve his or her technical solutions.

Demonstrates skill in time management and completing software projects in a cooperative team environment.

Qualifications

Pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering, computer science or related field.

Must have at least one additional quarter/semester of school remaining following the completion of the internship.

One year of programming experience in an object-oriented language.

Ability to demonstrate an understanding of computer science fundamentals, including data structures and algorithms.

DRAWING CONNECTIONS

Draw connections between what employers want and what you have.

What employer wants	Evidence I have it
Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Effectively balanced a part-time course load while working full-time demonstrated through received an academic award.
Learns quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Learned CAD within 2 weeks and effectively applied it to a project for a design course
Understanding of computer programming fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do you have relevant course work?What can you do if you don't have a technical skill?

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



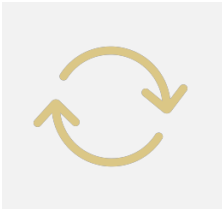
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RESUME SECTIONS AND STYLING

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.
- Make sure to reference where or how you developed the above skill

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SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

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- 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

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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

WRITING EXPERIENCE BULLET POINTS

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

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

Format = strong action verb + what + how + why + highlighting a skill

DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



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.

VS

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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.

strong action verb + what + how +
why + highlighting a skill



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



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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.

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

What if your resume is being run by an ATS?

ATS = Applicant Tracking System

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



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REFINE

Collect feedback from trusted friends, peers, mentors

Visit the Centre for Career Development

Check out other people's resumes
(what do you like, what do you not like)

Ask past supervisors you trust



A QUICK SUMMARY

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

PRO TIP

Create a master resume.

My master resume contains ALL of my experiences and different version of the same bullet for a specific experience/skill.

**ANY QUESTIONS? THOUGHTS?
LET'S DISCUSS!**

FAQs: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?

One or two pages?

How do you customize resumes when you plan to submit a lot?

Creative or plain resume? Colourful or black & white? Which one is better?

What if you don't have any skills?!?

Do I write in past tense? Do I write in past tense for my current experience?

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.



**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**

Book on Waterloo Works now!

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO



THANK YOU!

CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT