

HOW TO FIND A RESEARCH JOB

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The Centre for Career Development



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Centre for Career
Development



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- 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



MY RESEARCH EXPERIENCES

COOP1

- Research Assistant @ Department of Physics & Astronomy, UW

COOP2-3

- Research Student @ Hospital for Sick Children

COOP4

- Research Assistant @ Management Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, UW
- Collaborated with the Medical Physics Department @ Grand River Hospital

COOP5

- Research Student @ Hospital for Sick Children



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>

TODAY'S AGENDA

1



WHY do research?

2



How to **FIND** research positions.

3



How to **FUND** your research experience.

4



How to be **SUCCESSFUL** in a research position.

5



Open **Q&A** session.



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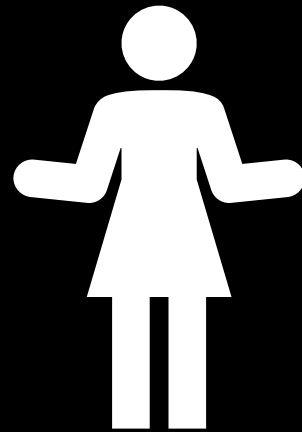
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WE AIM FOR THIS TO BE A SAFE(R) SPACE

- Participate in the way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Take what works for you, leave what doesn't.
- Ask questions whenever!
- Feel free to ask your questions in private at the end, if you prefer.
- Please be respectful of other participants and facilitators



WHAT TERM & PROGRAM ARE YOU IN?





WHY DO RESEARCH?

WHY RESEARCH?

- Transferable skills
- Technical skills
- Apply knowledge from academic experiences directly
- Share your work, publish, attend conferences
- Beneficial to have on your CV if applying to graduate or professional school



Credit: C&EN/Shutterstock



FINDING RESEARCH POSITIONS

WATERLOO WORKS

What kinds of postings to expect from WaterlooWorks:

- Faculty/staff from UW (e.g., professors)
- Other institutions (e.g. Grand River Hospital, Sunnybrook Hospital)
- Research & development within an industry (e.g. Junior Researcher @ Company)

Tips:

- Depending on whether you're a co-op or non-co-op student, browse different WaterlooWorks job boards: <https://uwaterloo.ca/co-operative-education/waterlooworks-student-help/search-jobs>
 - Different opportunities for co-op jobs, casual/part-time work, work-study positions, or volunteering
- Branch out to different faculties/departments
- Write a cover letter

FINDING POSITIONS EXTERNALLY

- Cold emailing professors
- Browse institutional websites for opportunities
- Google is your friend! Explore external job search sites
- Optimize your search query
 - Try using keywords:
<institution>+”research”+”student”
 - May need to finetune keywords



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Temerty Faculty of Medicine', 'Student Mental Health Resources', 'Handbook, Module Info & Forms', and 'Find a Prof'. Below this is the 'Medical Biophysics UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO' logo. A navigation menu includes 'About', 'Research', 'Summer Student Program' (highlighted with a yellow box), 'Graduate Studies', and 'Current Students'. The main content area features a banner for '2023 Medical Biophysics VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE'. Below the banner is a Google search bar with the query 'sickkids research student'. The search results show 'About 530,000 results (0.32 seconds)'. The top result is from SickKids, with the URL 'https://www.sickkids.ca › research-training-centre › su...'. The title of the result is 'SickKids Summer Research (SSuRe) Program', and the snippet reads: 'The SickKids Summer Research (SSuRe) Program provides professional and career development opportunities for undergraduate students who are working on a research ...'.

WHAT IS A COLD EMAIL?

A strategic way of sending highly personalized emails to individuals you do not know with hopes of establishing a professional relationship.

COLD EMAILING, STEP 1 – DO YOUR RESEARCH & REFLECT

1. If you find a professor you want to work with, take the time to **review their research**.
2. **Reflect** on how their research aligns with your goals and interests.
3. **Connect** your skills/experiences to their research. How will you enhance their project?



Credit: leverageedu.com/blog/research-design

COLD EMAIL, STEP 2 - CONSTRUCT THE EMAIL

- Informative subject line
 - “Meeting to discuss undergraduate research opportunities in <topic>”
 - “NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award Inquiry”
- Be concise
- Be formal
 - Use Dr. <name> if applicable
- Communicate your genuine interest
 - Mention something about their research that is fascinating to you
 - How is their research connected to your goals
- Call to action
 - “I would be interested in having a virtual or in-person meeting if you are accepting students”
- Attach transcript, CV/resume, writing samples, if applicable



Credit: BCIT.ca

EXAMPLE

Hello Dr. Jane Smith,

My name is Karina, and I am starting my 3B term of Life Physics with a specialization in Medical Physics. I am reaching out to inquire if your research group is hiring a co-op student for the Winter 2023 term.

I found your research project on the USRA Placement List – the description interested me since radiation therapy is a significant topic covered in my program specialization.

<Insert 2-3 sentences about relevant experiences and how they will help you succeed in their lab>. I am looking to join another research group to broaden my knowledge of computation and cancer treatment. I believe my previous experiences have developed the skills necessary to make a positive contribution to this research project.

I have attached my resume and unofficial transcript to this email if you want to learn more about my skills, qualifications, and experiences.

If you are accepting co-op students, I would love to get more information about this project. I am more than happy to have a virtual or in-person chat/interview.

Looking forward to your response.

Thank you,
Karina



COLD EMAIL, STEP 3 – WAITING FOR A RESPONSE

- Organize a meeting – it is invaluable to hear about research from the source
- Rejection is okay!
- Most professors would love to employ you but do not have the:
 - funding
 - time commitment to supervise



EXPAND YOUR RESEARCH NETWORK: ASK FOR CONVERSATIONS!

- A powerful networking strategy: “Ask for conversations, not jobs”
- Reach out to other folks involved in research to learn more about work and careers in research. This might look like:
 - Approaching a professor or TA after lecture/lab, or during scheduled office hours
 - Asking someone you already know & trust for a warm referral (e.g., “do you know anyone that I would benefit from connecting with?”)
 - Reaching out to researchers, students, or alumni on LinkedIn with a personalized, concise message



FINDING FUNDING

EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- UW Undergraduate Awards Database
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/database>
- NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA)
 - https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/USRA-BRPC_eng.asp
- SSHRC and CIHR Undergraduate Research Awards – Black Students only
- Some hospital institutions will have their own funding opportunities
 - Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Studentship – Sinai Health
 - SickKids Summer Research (SSuRe) Program





HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

in a research position

DEVELOP TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Myth: Technical skills are more important than transferable skills

- Literature review → Critical reading & analysis
- Presenting scientific information → Communication
- Learning specific jargon → Self-directed learning
- Fixing a procedure, debugging code → Problem-solving

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- There will be a steep learning curve – don't be afraid of it!
- Catch up with the jargon
- Be willing to learn new skills
 - Coding, challenging experimental procedures



WHAT KIND OF SUPERVISION DO YOU NEED?

- How often do you want to meet to discuss your progress?
- Grad students are phenomenal resources!
- Midterm evaluation



Credit: aje.com

CO-OP RESEARCH CERTIFICATE

An additional certificate in addition to your diploma.

[HTTPS://UWATERLOO.CA/CO-OPERATIVE-EDUCATION/FIND-YOUR-CO-OP-JOB/ALTERNATE-CO-OP-OPPORTUNITIES/CO-OP-RESEARCH-CERTIFICATE](https://uwaterloo.ca/co-operative-education/find-your-co-op-job/alternate-co-op-opportunities/co-op-research-certificate)

Requirements:

- Completion of 3+ research work terms
- Completion of PD13: Research in the Workplace
- Completion of the Co-op Research Certificate Capstone activity involving a 15-minute presentation with the use of a visual aid

A QUICK SUMMARY

- Research is an amazing opportunity to develop skills that are transferable to many career paths
- Look on WaterlooWorks
- Look externally
 - Search the web for opportunities
 - Cold email professors
- Investigate whether you qualify for extra funding



QUESTIONS?

FAQs

Do I need good marks to land a research job?

Do I need previous relevant experience to secure a research job?

Do I need to have taken a class with the professor that I want to work with?

Can I get academic credit for research?

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



**Job Search Tactics
Résumé
Cover Letter
Interview Prep
Career Exploration
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**Individual Appointments
Drop-ins
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