

How to Find a Job with No Paid Work Experience

Christine Abraham

Career Leader, Centre for Career Development



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Centre for Career
Development



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

Learning opportunity:

INDG 201 The Indigenous Experience in Canada



WHO IS THIS WORKSHOP FOR?

- Useful if you are a new undergrad and unfamiliar with professional work experience tailored to your field of study or interests.
- Students enrolled in co-op programs wanting to be prepared for their first placement
- Wanting to stand out as a good candidate when applying for jobs
- This is also very useful for students who are not in co-op programs
- For students planning on professional or graduate schooling and want to learn of opportunities to curate a standout application
- Anyone!



[This Photo](#) by Unknown
Author is licensed under
CC BY-NC

OVERVIEW

- You will get a chance to learn...
 - About accessible opportunities that can boost your resume
 - Tips to help you promote the skills and experience you already have
 - Understanding the importance of:
 - volunteering, shadowing, networking, academics, clubs, etc. in gaining experience and bolstering your resume
 - About opportunities like work-study programs, being a TA
 - About various awards, grants etc.
 - Resources that can help you accomplish these things!
 - How to apply these to improve your resume



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**



Housekeeping: **co-creating** a safe(r) space

- Participate in the way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat or raise your virtual hand to ask questions during presentation time.
 - Feel free to send me a direct message if you have a question or comment you would like to share anonymously
- Ask questions whenever! We'll also dedicate time at the end for Q&A
- If having tech issues, we'll do our best to troubleshoot
- **Take what works for you, leave what doesn't.**



SOCIAL LOCATION + ACCESSIBILITY

- Accessibility: opportunities discussed within this workshop may be difficult to access for some students (i.e. unpaid work)
- It is a privilege to take on extracurriculars, volunteer hours, etc.
- This workshop will aim to provide as many helpful options and potential opportunities that are accessible to all students
- We will look at making use of ANY type of experience that you do have and how to effectively promote yourself through them





WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO HEAR ABOUT TODAY?



PART 1: USING WHAT YOU HAVE TO BUILD A RESUME

SKILLS CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE



- 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?

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 high school club president with 4 courses; maintained top 2% academic standing.
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 track club meetings; increased efficiency of scheduling process.



WRITING 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	<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

- 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).





REFINE

- Collect feedback from trusted friends, peers, mentors
- Check out other people's resumes (what do you like, what do you not like)
- Ask past supervisors you trust (volunteering, internship, etc.)
- Visit the Centre for Career Development!



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.



PART 2: FINDING OPPORTUNITIES + GAINING EXPERIENCES

VOLUNTEERING

- Learn in environments often tied into your interests and hobbies whilst providing skills that can translate well to a workplace environment.
- Learn a variety of skills such as quality leadership, problem-solving, time management, organization, etc.
- Can be flexible with your time and contribute at a pace you can manage
- It can help you connect with your community which can be a form of networking
- Volunteering itself is a privilege that not everyone might have the ability to do – know it is only one avenue of getting experience there is more we will discuss in this presentation
- RESOURCES to find volunteer opportunities:
 - [Volunteering - Waterloo Region](#)
 - [Volunteering Canada](#)
 - [Waterloo Works](#)



NETWORKING

- Volunteering can often be a route to network with people
- Great way to build relationships within your field of study/interest that can
- Help you get a clear insight on potential career options.
- Networking can be done in many ways: virtually or in-person
 - CCD Online Workshops: Networking to Job Search, Networking at Conferences, Optimizing Your LinkedIn Profile
 - Networking events: WaterlooWorks (Use WaterlooWorks “Additional Networking & Professional Events” tab to find these events!)
 - Reach out!



JOB SHADOWING

- Following closely and observing an employee within a role or career
- Common in healthcare fields
- How can you find job shadowing opportunities?
 - Reach out to the organization, company, or professional you're interested in shadowing

Some more good reasons to job shadow include:

- Allows you to gain a deeper understanding of the role.
- Opportunity to learn new skills
- Professional development
- Networking opportunities



CLUBS + COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Great way to gain valuable social experiences
- Also to make personal connections but also gain valuable skills that can translate well into employment positions
- Can tie in your interests and hobbies into organizational and leadership roles that teach you about teamwork, time management, and introduce you to new people
- Potentially expand your professional network
- **RESOURCES:**
 - [WUSA Clubs](#)
 - [UW Athletics](#)
 - [UW Recreation](#)
 - [Intramurals](#)



USING ACADEMICS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE

- Consider applying for TA positions (learn teaching skills, problem-solving, communication) – only need your academics for this!
 - Each department has their own links to apply for positions (here are a few):
 - [TA - Chemistry Department](#)
 - [TA - ScIBus](#)
 - [TA - Biology Department](#)



CONTINUED...

- Mention large projects or papers you may have completed through an academic course
- Show that you are good at translating what you've studied to real-world projects and shows your dedication to a field of study.
- Want to pursue academic projects?:
 - UW Capstone Projects (Engineering)
 - Courses for ex.: BIOL 499, CHEM 494, EARTH 436, etc.
- Beyond individual projects and papers, within the academic setting many skills are taught and learned and you can use these as a highlight of your qualifications or resumes (i.e. labs = many hand-on technical skills!)



RESEARCH EXPERIENCES

- Interested in pursuing graduate studies + careers in academia?
- If this is applicable to you, it is highly beneficial to gain work experience in the form of research!
- Reach out to professors whose work interests you
- Apply for awards that help engage students in research:
 - The NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards are a great (and paid) example of this ([NSERC Awards](#)) – do not require prior experience to apply!
- Research experience can entail a lot of teamwork, communication, improvement of reading and writing skills



CONTINUED...



- In general research Experience can be obtained via:
 - Volunteer with a professor in their laboratory
 - Honours Thesis and capstone project courses (mentioned earlier)
 - NSERC USRAs
- Here are some useful resources if you want to get involved with research at Waterloo!:
 - [Science Faculty - Research Experience + Opportunities](#)
 - [Undergraduate Research Assistantships \(Engineering\)](#)
 - [Undergraduate Research Assistantships \(CS\)](#)



WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS

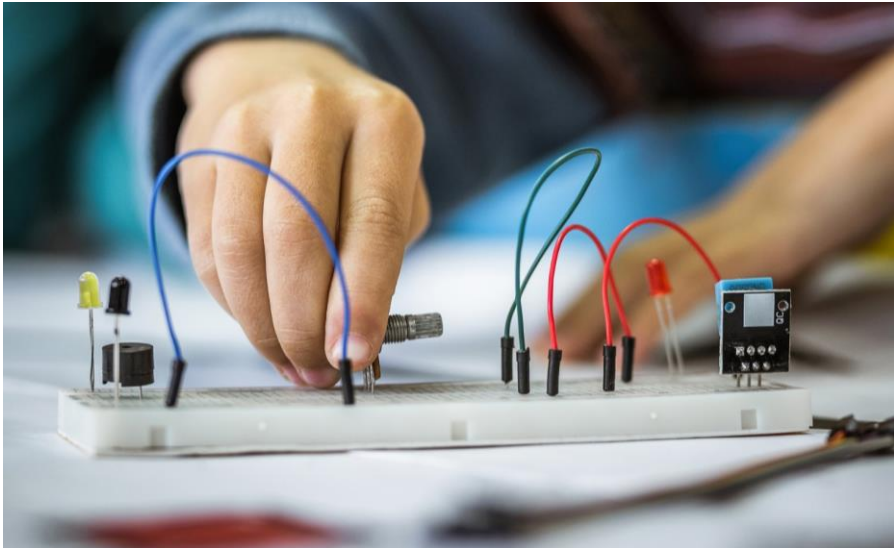
- Offers part-time, on-campus jobs for full-time students with financial need. The program will fund 75% of the student's salary, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per term. (UW Work Study Program)
 - Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or protected person
 - Be enrolled in a minimum 60% course load (40% for students with a permanent disability) during the current study period
 - Qualify for OSAP, or another province's student aid program, during the current study period
- Can coincide with and not hinder your studies this is a good option
- Use the work experience from here (regardless of it being "relevant" to your coops or jobs of interest)



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#)



PASSION PROJECTS + LEARNING SKILLS YOURSELF



- Free online courses in your spare time to garner relevant skills. E.g.,
 - Grow with Google
 - LinkedIn Learning, Coursera
- Using your hobbies/interests to your advantage?
 - Look into curating your own portfolio of work, creating a blog, etc. → showcases your work and skills
- Enrolling in competitions and where you can (example):
 - Take on projects that tailor to your interests
 - Potentially win funding, cash prizes, awards, scholarships, etc. while gaining valuable experience
 - Learning teamwork in some cases + getting a chance to network (with other students or with professionals who host these events)



MAKING OPPORTUNITIES MORE ACCESSIBLE

- Awards not only provide funding but can be expressed on resumes to highlight your achievements thereby making you stand out to employers
 - [Undergrad Awards - Financial Aids](#)
 - [How to Find and Apply to Scholarships](#)
 - [Student Awards - Financial Aid UW](#)
 - [Waterloo Bursaries](#)



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Centre for Career
Development

TO KEEP IN MIND...

- Job searching and the process of gaining work experience can be stressful
- This whole workshop may be overwhelming – however use this as a **GUIDE** to help you (you do not need to do everything mentioned – tailor it to what you can do and are interested)
- Reflecting:
 - Q: what is one thing you feel you can take away from this workshop?
 - even just referring back to these slides later, or reaching out to the NSERC office, etc.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)



WELLNESS RESOURCES

- [MATES Peer Support](#) (WUSA service)
- [OK2BME](#) (Free counselling for LGBTQ+ individual and couples up to 29 years old)
- [Co-Op Connection](#) (connecting students on co-op work terms)
- [Camino Quick Access Counselling](#)
- [Campus Life – After Hours Support](#)
- [Delton Glebe Counselling](#)
- [Empower Me](#) (multilingual, culturally sensitive, gender inclusive, faith inclusive)
- [Here 24/7](#) (toll-free call or text)
- [UW Counselling Services](#)



WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

These workshops are for you! We are always looking for ways to improve. Please complete the feedback survey delivered to your inbox after this session.





**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**

uwaterloo.ca/career-development



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Centre for Career
Development



QUESTIONS?

**UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO**



**Centre for Career
Development**