

Lunch and Learn Ask Me Anything Event Notes

1) How can I present my current experience and knowledge as transferable on my résumé and during job interviews?

- Know your audience and look at the posting and see the language they use. Reframe some of the experiences – translating TA and teaching experiences to career advising jobs for example. Look at the job and carefully think about what they are looking for and reframe and leverage your experiences. Your student roles count towards work experience and rather than simply stating them under education, consider pulling some of your work experiences out.
 - Example: A student as applying for a job and noted they did not have much experience that applied, but as they looked at their school/academic experience, they realised that they had about three years of coding experience.
- **Follow-up:** How do I leverage this experience for a job that requires 4 years of experience, does my bachelor's and graduate experience count?
 - Still encourage you to apply, just be careful with how you word it and don't let the experience section discourage you from applying. You can still leverage your years of work experience as a graduate student here, but carefully look at the wording used by the employer.
 - If you match 70-75% of the job requirements, go for it and apply because no candidate will ever meet all requirements and get 100% of a match.

2) Is there a certain time of the year when the hiring tends to be faster than the rest of the year?

- It is hard to say when hiring takes place or what their hiring process/timeline is. While government hiring process might take months, there are some companies and organizations that are looking for immediate starting.
 - There are multiple reasons why companies have vacancies, for instance, someone may have retired, or someone is going on maternity leave – these are predictable, but it is less predictable when people quit in which case there is more of an immediate hiring process. There are certain places that recruit new graduates 8 months in advance, like big accounting firms, or governments and all, but for some of the other reasons, they hire all year round.

3) What can we do to connect with employers or people who are already managers? Would LinkedIn be a good alternative?

- There are many ways to connect with hiring managers, one way is to attend employer information sessions and networking sessions. Employer information sessions are spaces where individuals from companies speak about their work, and these are on [WaterlooWorks](#) and there are additional networking events that happen outside of the university and there is [Partnerships 4 Employment \(P4E\)](#) Job fair as well. These are only a few ways.
- In terms of networking events, some folks might find it more difficult to connect or speak in big settings. Try to follow-up with the people you connect with, send a personalised message about what resonated about their presentation etc. and if there might be future opportunities. This exceeds networking as well, even if you are reaching out to someone from a company, send a personalised message, look at their company/organization. When speaking to a hiring manager or recruiter you can ask about current openings and positions.
- When reaching out to someone on LinkedIn, remember 3 things, introduce yourself, why are you messaging and then a call to action (how to connect with – schedule availability, ex. If you have 20 minutes in the next 2-3 weeks?). Being specific and asking to schedule a brief chat, for instance, is more helpful than simply asking for assistance. Aside from LinkedIn there's 10 thousand coffees, you will be able to sign up and will be matched you with an alumnus once a month – you can fill in your job interests etc.

4) Where does the job market stand since there have been a lot of layoffs in some fields? Are we heading to a recession?

- There have been a lot of layoffs in the tech sector, sometimes they are happening at the mid-level and not at the entry level. Looking at labour market statistics, in the last 6 months the unemployment rate in Canada was lower than before. In terms of recession, it does not seem to be impacting all sectors in the same way, so the one piece of advice is to use multiple strategies for job search rather than one.
 - If you are interested in reading more about the labour market statistics, a good resource is [Trading Economics](#).
- Hiring managers/ individuals at higher level would have more information about the budget so in informational interviews, it would be worth it to ask what the current state of hiring and roles is. You can also do labour market info research, [Job Bank of Canada](#) is a good area, you will be able to look at the job trends as well as hiring trends. Speaking to management will provide better responses, in terms of informational interviews, you can ask about there being layoffs in certain sectors and hiring freezes and you can ask whether they will impact the future roles/hiring.
- There is an expected soft landing in 2024, not necessarily a recession, as the economy is more vulnerable. Pandemic impacted a lot of jobs and many people

have been looking into remote work rather than in-person, so looking at these trends would be helpful.

- Last year we had an alumni panel, and someone spoke about their layoff experience and their major advice was to continue networking, because that allowed them to find a new job shortly after. So, while there are layoffs, there is movement as well.

5) How do you ask for a reference or referral when you do not have anyone to ask it from? Should we apply without the referral?

- Still apply if you do not have a referral.
- The key to referral is to know the person. Advice would be to do some research on the organizations/companies/employers you are most interested in, check their LinkedIn and see if you have connections, you can go on LinkedIn – basically once you identify some people you might know, you can connect with them. Look at individuals who are/were doing jobs that you want to do, that way you can gain referrals and build a network with people you might want to work with.
- Also look at peers, such as colleagues that may have had co-op in organizations you might be interested in. Some companies have referral programs –some companies they are more informal than in other, where the process might be more formal than simply showing a resume to the HR.
- LinkedIn demo, looking into alumni connections, entering jobs and you can find folks in your field of interest and working with companies you are interested in. Prioritize first, second and third. You can look at location, where they work etc.

6) I was not selected for a job because I did not have volunteering experience, is volunteering experience important to get a job in engineering? Where can I find volunteering opportunities that can add to my experience?

- It reflects the values of the organization (Rennison), where they might value that volunteer experience. In terms of volunteer experience, be picky with what is helpful. There might be some organizations and employers that might value volunteer experiences while some other firms look at direct experience and practical skills for the role.
- If you did want to do some volunteering, there can be some goals, so you can look at organizations and volunteer with roles that work towards building your resume for jobs that you want to do. Apply for volunteer positions with the mindset of what you want to gain from the experience.

7) How can we showcase our skills and experience gained internationally when applying for a job in Canada? Especially when we do not have “Canadian experience”?

- Requiring Canadian experience in a job is illegal and discriminatory – they are not allowed to say that. This is not to say that it does not happen. There are policies in place to deal with that and it is important for you to know that. Knowing your rights as a job seeker is important and if they look for that experience, you can tap into resources to navigate that and also approach advisors and discuss this with them.
- You also should know that you have Canadian experience being a student in Canada. You can leverage your grad school experience as work experience. In terms of the bullet points, look at what the job requires and tailor your resume and articulate that in the bullet points. Focus on what (action verbs), how (mention tools), and what (the impact that your work had).

8) When applying for American jobs as a Canadian citizen, what would be the considerations regarding visas after graduation?

- There are some resources on campus to assist with those questions.
- In terms of learning more about the workplace, see if you know folks at the specific companies, how they went about it. There are some companies where they will hire individuals as consultants where they can work remotely from within Canada. Speaking to the US consulate and seeking information from there would be helpful.
- There is also a resource called “My World Abroad” (UW resource) and you can find some useful resources there.

9) What exactly do employers look for in the pool of résumés? what needs to stand out for the job I am applying for?

- Because there are so many applications, they rely on software to filter through resumes, which filters out resumes based on keywords. One key strategy is to carefully incorporate those keywords (from job postings) in your resume. You can tailor your resume and leverage your experience in lines with the job posting, so it speaks to the role. Use your best judgement based on the job postings to see what the employer values. Cover letters can be helpful as well, because you can mention your interests and the key is to really focus on the introduction paragraph and personalise that based on the company and job you are applying for/to.
- Also understand that hiring managers are trying to filter out resumes and cut the list short. So, place close attention to detail to ensure there are no typos and that the layout is neat. Hiring managers will notice the small/little details. Also place attention to formatting. Most managers will focus on the top half more so make sure you include the most relevant experience earlier. Also pay attention to the

font size so it is not difficult to read. Make sure that there aren't too many bullet points.

10) Along with the résumé, we sometimes need to make a profile or portfolio with the projects we have done, is this something that we can post with our application package for a job? Or is it something that we can show in the interview?

- There are so many ways you can prove that. There are ways you can prove that in your resume and cover letter. Hesitate to say to include in the package because the hiring manager can be looking at some very specific skills – you can utilize your LinkedIn and share some of your work there. In terms of websites, if that is typical in your field, sure, and you can include short links, but do not rely on those links because you cannot be certain that they will open those links, highlight your achievements through those bullet points.
- A scenario where a portfolio might be very helpful is when you are sending out a cold email and introducing yourself and inquiring about job openings.
- In terms of taking documents to interviews, be careful to protect your intellectual property. Also, in terms of further education, attaching that portfolio in an email to a professor you really want to work with can be helpful.