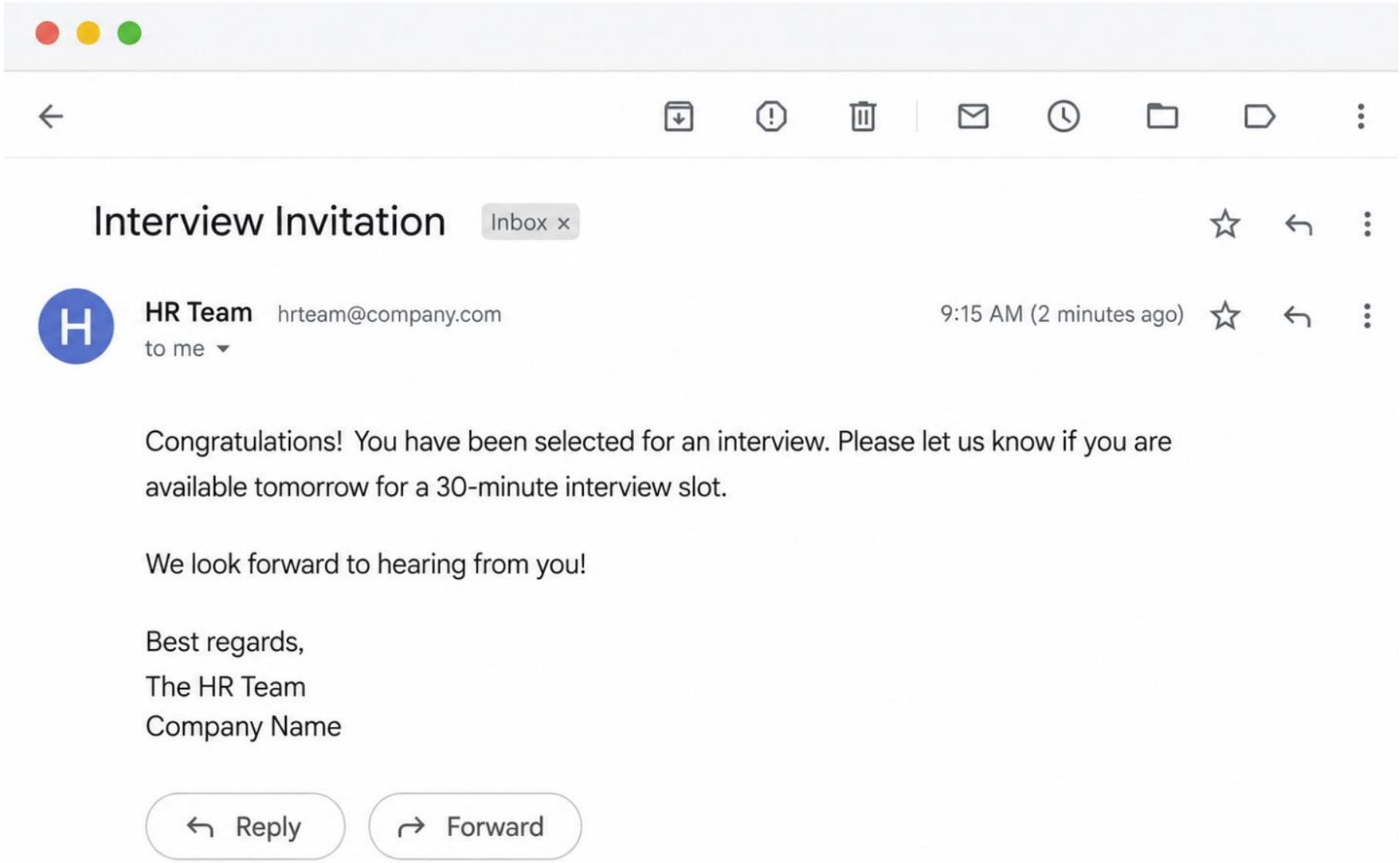
Preparing for Campus Housing Interviews

Alicia Flatt (she/her)

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Centre for Career Development



Source: 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.

Curious about the land that *you* are on?

Visit https://native-land.ca/



Artwork by local Indigenous artist Alanah Astehtsi Otisistohkwa (Morningstar) Jewell

Co-creating a safe(r) space

- A safe space means different things for everyone, but we'll do our best! Let's keep 3 things in mind:
  - Choice, Respect, Care
- Participate in the way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat or raise hand for questions/comments
  - Feel free to send me a direct message if you would like to share anonymously
- Ask questions whenever! We'll also dedicate time at the end for Q&A
- Take what works for you, leave what doesn't.

WHAT WOULD A GOOD INTERVIEW WORKSHOP COVER?

Strategies we will cover today:

- **Strategy 1**: Reframe the purpose of an interview
- **Strategy 2**: Identify relevant skills
- **Strategy 3**: Prepare stories in advance using the S-T-A-R method
- **Strategy 4**: Understand and calm potential anxiety
- **Strategy 5**: Make AI work for you, not against you



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STRATEGY 1: REFRAME THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

THE GOAL OF AN INTERVIEW

The goal of an interview is:

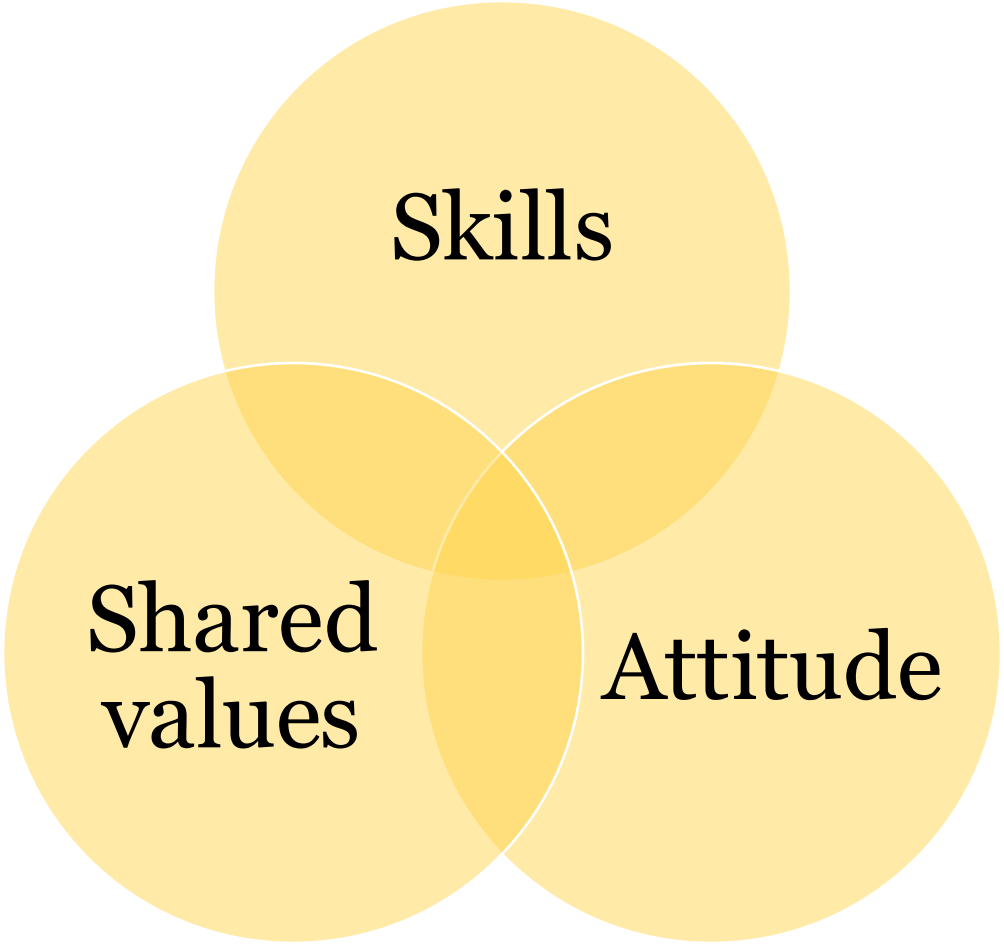
- A conversation to determine mutual fit.
- An opportunity to provide evidence of your skills, experiences, and potential.
- A chance to learn about the role, team, and organization.
- A way for employers to predict how you will perform in the job.
- An opportunity to build rapport

The goal of an interview is not:

- A test where there is only one "right" answer.
- An interrogation designed to make you fail.
- A chance to recite your résumé word for word.
- A measure of your worth or value as a person.
- A one-sided evaluation—you are assessing the employer, too.

STRATEGY 2: IDENTIFY RELEVANT SKILLS

WHAT DO YOU WANT AN EMPLOYER TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?



JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

What skills are they looking for campus housing staff?

JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

Employer: Liberty Tutoring
Job Title: Private Tutors for High School Math, Science & English

Do you love math, science, or english? Want to help students actually understand the concepts, not just memorize answers? Are you a creative, inspiring tutor who can make learning enjoyable and meaningful? If so, we want you on our team.

Teaching skills

Coaching/teaching experience

Excellent academic merit

Strong written/verbal communication skills

Strong organizational skills

Reliable/takes initiative

creativity

Required skills

- Work closely with students to solidify their understandi… and empowe… confidence
- …tests tailored to students' individual learning needs
- Evaluate students' progress and discuss results with students and/or their parents

- …nt graduate from university
- Outstanding teaching skills
- Excelle… …erit
- …perience
- Professional and reliable
- Patience, good communication skills, and creativity
- Very organized

SKILLS ASSESSMENT CHART

Skill	Evidence
Communication skills	Lots of customer interaction working retail
Leadership skills	High school club engagement
Organizational skills	Taking 5 courses while holding onto an extracurricular activity and doing well
Conflict management skills	Resolving disputes between roommates and friends in a calm way
Intentional equity focus	Reading articles and books from different authors, listening to podcasts on issues

STRATEGY 3: PREPARE YOUR STORIES IN ADVANCE

KNOW THE STORIES YOU WANT TO TELL

We learn about each other best when telling stories. Interviews are basically storytelling exercises.

Planning stories in advance can help you feel confident and prepared, no matter how they phrase the questions.

Some students tell us compiling their best stories is like making a playlist of their “greatest hits”.



Source: Penguin Vectors by Vecteezy

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANTICIPATE THAT REQUIRE STORIES



Source: Programming concept by lemono

Tell us about a time when you demonstrated_____ skill.

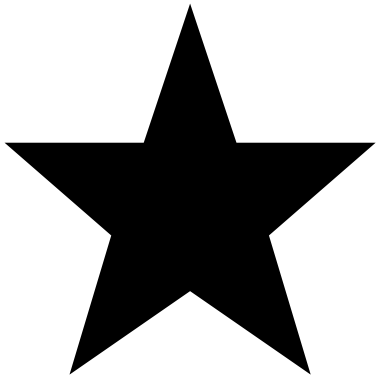
When was the last time you had to use ____ skill. What did you do and how do you know it was successful?

How have you managed conflict in the past when working on a team?

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STAR APPROACH



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

Q: TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU COMMUNICATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO A NON-SCIENTIFIC AUDIENCE

Situation	"Let's Talk Science" Volunteer
Task	Create workshop on global warming for 8th graders
Action	• Researched the 8th grade science curriculum • Consulted with professors and TAs on strategies to simplify information • Delivered the workshop to 20 students and kept them engaged by inserting analogies, videos and activities into the workshop
Result	Students expressed their newfound interest in global warming, and I was invited to deliver another workshop

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANTICIPATE THAT DON'T REQUIRE STORIES

Tell me about yourself.

Why are you interested in this role?

What do you know about campus housing at Waterloo?

What questions do you have for us?



Source: Question Vectors by Vecteezy

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

There are many ways to organize this answer. Here is a popular one:

Name and program

Relevant experiences

Relevant skills

Interest in the role and company



Source: Unknown author licensed under CC BY-ND

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS ROLE?



Source: Professional Vectors by Vecteezy

Employers want to hire people who genuinely want to work with their organization.

Do some research and reflection on what is interesting about this position.

Focus on how you want to contribute to their goals, rather than focusing on how this experience will serve you.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR US

Write down your questions and come prepared with around 5 (even if you don't end up asking them all!)

Start with questions that focus on the employer, before asking questions that focus on your own experience.

Ask questions you are genuinely curious about!

Try:

- What are some projects you are working on lately that you are excited about.
- I read that you recently got an award for _____. Congratulations, what went into making that possible?
- If I were the successful candidate, what could I start working on now to ensure I am ready for my first day?

STRATEGY 4: UNDERSTAND AND CALM POTENTIAL ANXIETY BEFORE AND DURING THE INTERVIEW

Calming Interview Anxiety

- Was there a time when you had to calm yourself down before a high-stakes event or activity? What did you do?
- If you had a friend who was nervous about an interview, what tips would you give them?
- *Chat storm!*



Source: beauQ via Pixabay

Building Your Interview Anxiety Toolkit

Physical
Deep breaths, relax your body

Mindset
Aim for a conversation, not perfection

Routine
Create a pre-interview ritual

Preparation
Practice out loud and prepare questions; consider creating high level notes to refer to!

Support
Practice with someone you trust

Self-talk
Use grounding phrases, be kind to yourself

Other tools?

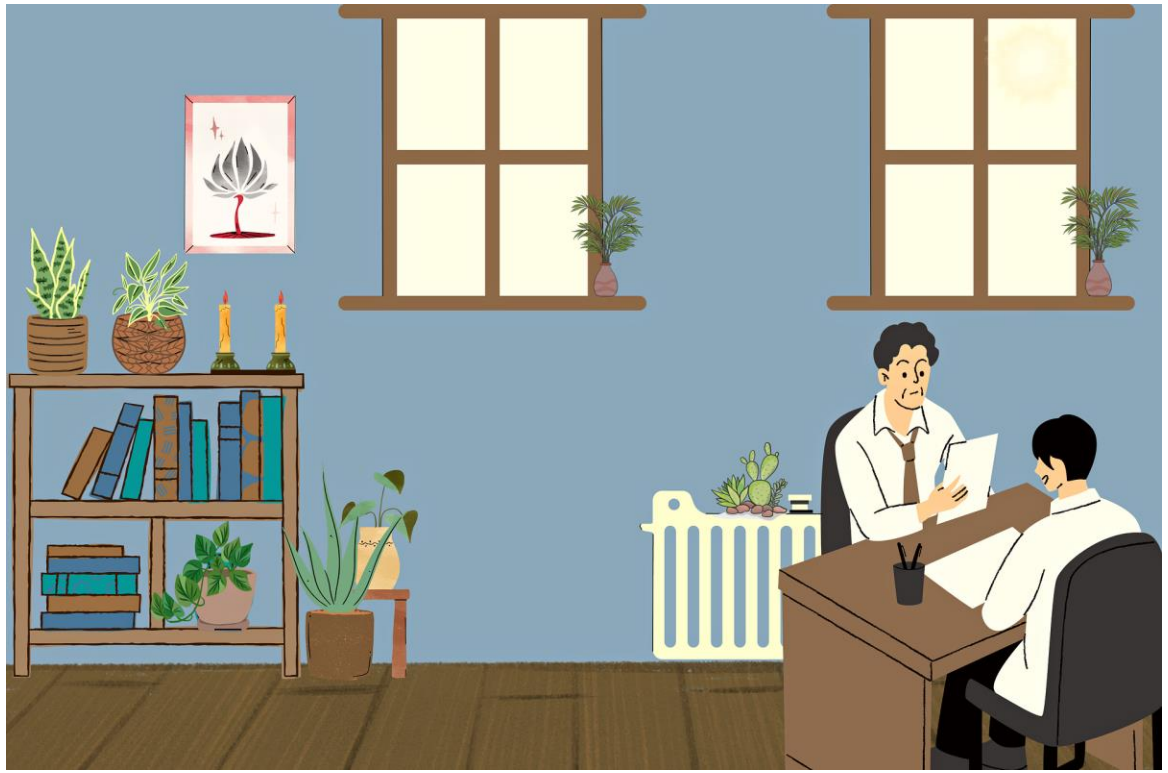
What to say when you don't know what to say

- "That's a great question. Let me take a moment to think about it."
- "Could you rephrase the question? I want to make sure I understand what you're asking."
- "I haven't encountered that situation directly, but here's how I would approach it if I were in that role."
- "While I haven't experienced that exact situation, I've had a similar experience that demonstrates a related skill."
- "I'm not certain of the answer, but here's how I would go about finding the information or solving the problem."

STRATEGY 5: MAKE AI WORK FOR YOU, NOT AGAINST YOU

Ways AI tools can support your interview prep

- Researching the role
- Generate interview questions
- Improving your answers
- Generating ideas
- Building confidence
- Practicing



Source: Elf-Dance via Pixabay

What might a prompt look like when using AI to prepare for your interview?



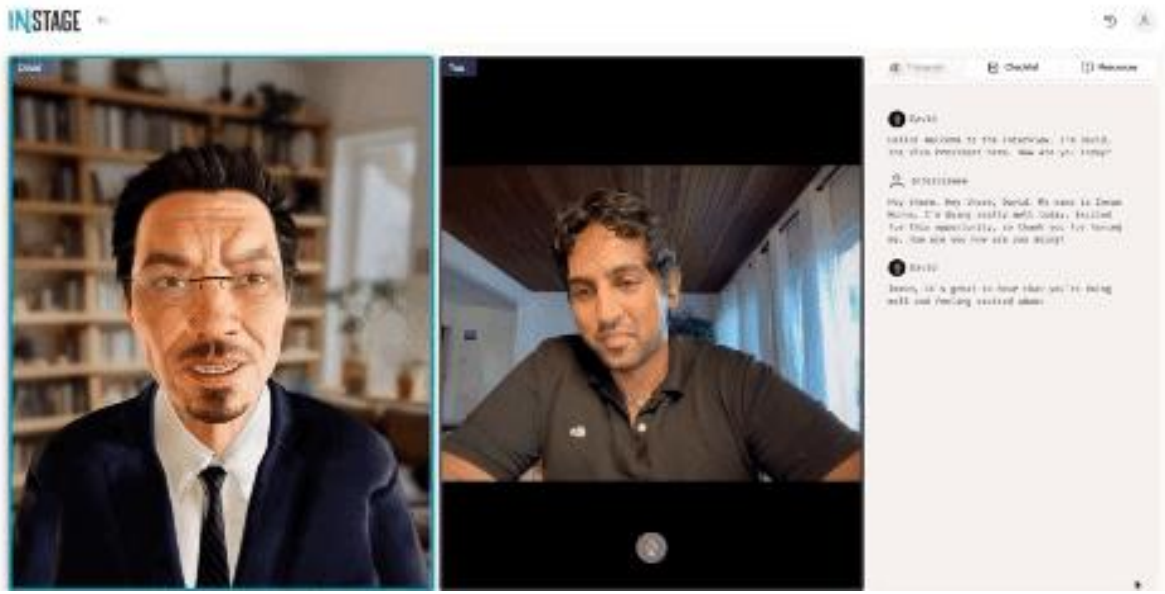
Source: via GIPHY

Take 1 minute to brainstorm a potential prompt before our chat storm!

Example Prompts

- "Summarize this job posting and identify the top 5 skills they're looking for."
- "What questions might an employer ask based on this job description?"
- "What values or competencies seem most important for this role?"
- "Help me organize this experience using the STAR method."
- "Does my answer clearly demonstrate the skill of teamwork?"
- "Help me identify examples from my experiences that demonstrate leadership."
- "Help me identify my top five strengths for this role."
- "What accomplishments from my experiences am I overlooking?"

INSTAGE – AI Practice for Waterloo Students



- Software that uses lifelike computer characters and AI technology to create a safe environment to practice and get feedback in real-time.
- Can input job descriptions to practice tailored questions related to roles learners are interested in
- Receive a feedback report after each practice session to track progress, make improvements, and develop skills and confidence

When using AI gets a bit prickly

- Using AI during the actual interview
- Over-rehearsing AI-generated "perfect answer"
- Using AI to answer questions you don't understand
- Relying on AI in take-home or asynchronous interviews without checking rules



Source: via Pixabay

SCENARIO:

Situation:

It's the day before the interview - you have researched, reflected, and practiced.

What are your final steps to prepare?

How might that differ if it's in person or virtual?



Remember...

- Research with purpose! Understand the role, employer, and what they're looking for
- Prepare flexible STAR examples that highlight your skills, and practice communicating them out loud with confidence
- Every interview is a chance to learn and improve – employers are not looking for perfection!
- Draw on strategies that have helped you navigate other high-pressure situations and incorporate them into your interview preparation
- Use AI to strengthen your preparation, not to replace your own experiences and authentic voice
- **YOU'VE GOT THIS!**



Source: Ann H via Pexels

Centre for Career Development Student Services



Career advising

One-on-one appointments for:

- Résumé & cover letter writing
- Interview practice
- Career exploration
- Work search strategies
- Further education support

Book via WaterlooWorks



Workshops and events

Topics include but not limited to:

- Résumé & cover letter writing
- Interview strategies
- Job search strategies
- P4E Job Fair
- Further Education Fair

Register via WaterlooWorks or Portal



Drop-in advising

Same day, peer-led 20-minute conversations for:

- Résumé review
- Cover letter review
- Quick interview prep

Registration on WaterlooWorks daily at 8 a.m.



Online resources

- CareerHub
- Recorded workshops for flexible learning

We'd love to hear from you!

Please complete the survey linked in the email with the slides, for a chance to win one of 5 prizes of $20 added to your WATcard.

It helps us improve!



Source: University of Waterloo

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?