



Queen's
UNIVERSITY

STUDENT AFFAIRS
Career Services



QUEEN'S BEST

**Resume - Cover Letter - Interviews
Highlights**

Acknowledgments

Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory.

Students and Alumni

We would like to thank all the students and alumni who generously shared their applications to be used as examples in this guide.

Editors and Designers

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Sponsors

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Whether you are applying for a summer job, an internship, a volunteer opportunity, or your first role after graduating, the resources in this guide will help you communicate your skills and experiences effectively.

This guide provides an overview of common practices for creating resumes, cover letters, and preparing for interviews.

Each section includes examples adapted from Queen's students' own application documents to show you specific strategies and approaches each has used to best communicate their strengths and relevant experiences.

Consider looking at all the examples to find valuable strategies you can use when creating your own applications.

The examples and tips in this guide follow North American conventions for professional communication. While these standards are widely expected in this context, it is important to acknowledge that they reflect Western norms that are not universal and can be limiting in nature. Navigating these expectations is often necessary, but we encourage you to bring your voice and values into how you present yourself.

For more information on applying to jobs, preparing for interviews, job searching, exploring career options or further education, or anything else to do with your next steps, take a look at our many resources on our website careers.queensu.ca or book an appointment with a Career Coach through **MyCareer**.



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PURPOSE OF A RESUME

A resume is a document that presents your most relevant qualifications, including your knowledge, experience, skills, and attributes, to show how you can contribute to a particular role, organization, or field. A strong resume does not simply list skills but demonstrates them through specific examples. To be effective and to improve your chances of receiving an invitation to an interview, you should tailor (customize) your resume for each application to clearly show how your experience aligns with the requirements of the role.

Differences Between a Resume and Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The terms “resume” and “CV” are often used interchangeably, especially in an international context. In Canada, however, each has a distinct purpose: resumes are typically used to apply for jobs in an industry and focus on skills, experiences and accomplishments, while CVs are used for academic or research positions and emphasize educational background and academic achievements.

Looking for more on CVs? Check out our tipsheets on further education: careers.queensu.ca.



WRITING GREAT RESUMES:

KEY IDEAS

- 1 Start With the Job Description/Posting:** Carefully review the job posting to identify key qualifications, skills, and responsibilities the employer is looking for. Use relevant keywords and phrases from the posting throughout your resume. If there is no job posting, request more details or review similar jobs for more insights.
- 2 Know Your Field:** Research resume norms in your industry (e.g. one-page or two-page resumes), ask professionals in your field about what is expected.
- 3 Demonstrate - Don't Just List:** Show how you've applied your skills using the **WHO method** - **What** you did, **How** you did it, and the **Outcome**. Where possible, quantify your impact. Start each phrase with a skill or action to make your resume easier to scan and help connect past experiences to future opportunities.
- 4 Be Concise and Clear:** Be brief and focused in your descriptions. Avoid jargon, abbreviations, or acronyms that may not be universally understood. Be honest about your skills, but do make sure you recognize the full range of skills you have developed through work, school, and extracurriculars.
- 5 Format Matters:** Keep formatting and font consistent. Use clear headings and logical structure, balancing text with white space. Choose a format compatible with Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS); while many templates are ATS-friendly, avoid those that are overly designed or rely heavily on images.
- 6 Final Touches:** Proof-read carefully, choose an appropriate file name for your documents (i.e. last name and role/job number), follow application instructions (often specified within the posting or on the company website). Seek feedback from peers, mentors, or a career coach.

For more information on writing your resume, sign up for the free Career Prep Module in OnQ!



careers.queensu.ca

RESUME FORMAT

Firstname Lastname

email@email.com | Phone Number | Relevant Links

INTRODUCTION: PROFESSIONAL PROFILE, OBJECTIVE, OR SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- **Professional Profile:** 2-4 lines of text in paragraph form highlighting most relevant skills, experiences, and value for the role.
- **Summary of Skills:** bullet points with key skills such as programming languages, technical skills, professional skills (e.g. communication and interpersonal skills), languages, etc.
- **Objective:** a brief sentence outlining career goals or type of position you are seeking.

EDUCATION

Title Most Recent Education, Institution, Location

Expected Date

- **Relevant Courses:** include courses that inform your knowledge and skill relevant to your job goals
- **Awards:** include relevant awards related to the degree
- **Key Highlights:** include additional information such as thesis, major projects, research involvement

Title of Previous Education, Institution, Location

Month, Year

- Relevant details as required
- Can include certificates, diplomas, or other education

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Title/Role, Organization, Location

Month Start Date - Present

- List the most recent or current experience first
- Include formal and informal jobs, volunteer work, and internships
- Use bullet points that focus on skills and reflect keywords from the job posting
- Use WHO method (What + How + Outcome) to fully describe your experience
- Use quantitative and qualitative terms and demonstrate the end result of your efforts
- Quantify your points with information such as number of people involved or time spent on a project

Title/Role, Organization, Location

Start Date - End Date

- Keep bullet points consistent in structure and verb tense (past tense for previous roles)
- Prioritize bullets that show impact or transferable skills
- Where possible, quantify results (e.g. coordinated 3 events with over 100 attendees)
- Tailor this section to emphasize achievements over tasks

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Title/Role, Organization, Location

Start Date - End Date

- This section can include extracurriculars, clubs, side projects, part-time work, or volunteering
- Include additional roles that demonstrate skills, commitment, or leadership
- You may list positions without bullets if space is limited
- If space allows, include brief skill-focused bullets as in the Relevant Experience section

OTHER SECTIONS

Additional sections may include Interests and Hobbies, Awards, Certifications, Projects, Volunteer Experience (if you want it separate from "Additional Experience"), etc.

Kiran Arya
(716) 555-0100 • kiranarya@sampleemail.com

Objective

Enthusiastic and conscientious first-year Art History student with experience in tourism and food services, seeking summer employment to build on strengths in punctuality, responsibility, and initiative while gaining new skills and work experience. Fully bilingual: French-English.

Food Service Experience

Server – Jiffy Grill, Kingston ON

January 2025-Present

- Provided efficient morning service in a fast-paced breakfast setting
- Balanced multiple tables while maintaining accuracy and attention to detail
- Supported kitchen staff with restocking and cleanup during peak hours
- Built rapport with regular customers to enhance their dining experience

Server – Swiss Chalet, Cornwall ON

October 2023-April 2024

- Delivered fast, friendly service in a high-volume, team-based environment
- Accurately took and processed orders using POS system
- Maintained cleanliness and organization of dining and prep areas
- Handled customer concerns professionally to ensure satisfaction

Tourism Experience

Volunteer Tour Guide - City of Cornwall, Cornwall ON

Summer 2024

- Led informative tours of City Hall for visitors, highlighting local history and civic functions
- Answered questions and adapted tours to suit different age groups and interests
- Represented the city with professionalism and enthusiasm to promote community engagement

Additional Experience

Volunteer Tutor - Cornwall Elementary School Cornwall ON

2022-2024

- Provided one-on-one homework help and reading support for elementary school students
- Built positive relationships with children to encourage learning and confidence

Golf Tournament Volunteer - Paul Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament, Cornwall ON

Summer 2023

- Assisted with event setup, registration, and coordination throughout the day
- Helped ensure smooth operations by directing participants and supporting staff as needed

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Art History

Expected 2029

Queen's University, Kingston ON

High School Diploma

2020-2024

Cornwall Collegiate and Vocational School

French Immersion, Honour Roll Graduate

Certifications

Smart Serve, Valid 2023-2027

G-License

Interests

Reading • Art • Yoga • Skiing • Hiking



Kiran is going to a summer job fair and is uncertain of what work they want. They printed resumes to share with employers at the event and kept the scope of their resume broad by:

- Using an objective as their introduction
- Emphasizing their skills such as punctuality, responsibility, and initiative
- Using sections that highlight different areas of experience
- Expanding on skills developed in their volunteer roles
- Placing education further down to keep the focus on work readiness

Cameron Sparks

Kingston, ON | (613)123 4567 | csparks@email.com | www.linkedin.com/in/c-sparks-fake-link/

PROFILE

Motivated and detail-oriented researcher with hands-on experience in cancer clinical trials and biology lab techniques including PCR, tissue culture, flow cytometry, and electronic data capture. Passionate about contributing to cancer research through both laboratory and population health approaches.

EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science (Honours) Life Sciences, Queen’s University
2026**

- Awards : Dean’s List 2024-2026
- Relevant Courses: Histology, Human Anatomy, Pathology, Epidemiology, Pharmacology and Toxicology, Health Studies

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Research Associate, Canadian Cancer Trials Group, Kingston ON

June 2025-Present

- Reviewed clinical trial data for completeness and protocol compliance, identifying issues early
- Issued and followed up on data queries to resolve inconsistencies and ensure data integrity
- Conducted data cleaning in both paper and EDC formats, maintaining high-quality standards
- Collaborated with site staff to clarify data and support smooth trial operations

Clinical Trials Assistant, Canadian Cancer Trials Group, Kingston ON

Sept 2024-June 2025

- Verified clinical and sample data, ensuring accuracy across trials and tumour bank projects
- Tracked inventory, managed sample shipping, and performed aliquoting with attention to detail
- Supported research that contributed to two peer-reviewed oncology publications

Student Researcher, Canadian Cancer Trials Group, Kingston ON

Sept 2023-April 2025

- Demonstrated attention to detail by verifying participant consent forms and clinical trial data for accuracy and compliance with study protocols
- Gained hands-on experience with ethical standards and regulatory procedures in cancer clinical trials
- Supported research integrity by ensuring proper documentation and consistent data practices across studies

NSERC-USRA Summer Research-ship, Kingston ON

May 2023-Aug 2023

- Designed and conducted a research project investigating molecular aspects of ovarian cancer
- Developed skills in lab techniques, including PCR, tissue culture, electrophoresis, and flow cytometry
- Maintained accurate lab records and followed protocols to ensure reproducibility and data integrity

PROJECTS

Epidemiology Capstone Project, Queen’s University, Kingston ON

Fall 2025

- Worked in a team of four to design and conduct a descriptive epidemiologic study for Advanced Epidemiology Methods
- Used Ontario public health datasets to analyze trends in pediatric ER visits for asthma using Excel and basic statistical tools
- Cleaned and organized raw data to support accurate trend analysis and visual presentation of findings
- Presented results in a written report and oral presentation, translating data into actionable public health insights

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lifeguard, Camp Otterdale, Lombardy ON

Summer 2021, 2022

- Supervised waterfront to ensure camper safety and emergency readiness
- Enforced rules and supported a safe, team-oriented camp environment

VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Rob Roy Pipe Band, Kingston ON, 2014-Present

MacCulloch Dancers, Ottawa ON, 2018-2022

- Entertained at local and international events including Glengarry Highland Games, Rural Expo, National Arts Centre, Nokia Brier, Canadian Tulip Festival, Fort Henry, and International Folk Festival (Charleroi, Belgium)

Cameron is targeting opportunities in cancer research at Kingston Health Sciences Centre by:

- Emphasizing relevant coursework
- Separating relevant experience from additional experience
- Detailing specific research tasks and lab techniques

While not typically required, he includes his current city to highlight his local availability and provides a LinkedIn URL for easy access to his professional profile.

PAUL KIDANE

paul.kidane@myemail.ca | (467) 555-6086 | linkedin.com/in/paulkidane-fakelink/

EDUCATION

Smith School of Business, Queen’s University <i>Bachelor of Commerce</i> – Awards: The Queen’s Commitment Scholarship Entrance Award (\$48,000), Work Study Program (\$2000)	Kingston, ON <i>Class of 2026</i>
St. Michael’s College School <i>Ontario Secondary School Diploma</i> – Awards: The Enzo Montemurro ’81 Award (\$3000), The Basilian Book Award (\$500) – Activities: Basketball; House Captain; Co-Founder: African Canadian Youth Group; Stock Market Club; Saints Program	Toronto, ON <i>2017 – 2021</i>

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Queen’s University <i>Queen’s Equity Ambassador</i> – Collaborated with youth-serving agencies in GTA to support equitable access to post-secondary education – Supported underrepresented students by providing application guidance, financial aid info, & campus resources to incoming students	Kingston, ON <i>May 2022 – Present</i>
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CIBC <i>Risk & Compliance Summer Analyst</i> – Completed 25+ Risk Group Topics, identifying control gaps in Complaints, Real Estate Secured Lending, & Mortgages, & supported compliance & process improvements – Selected as 1 of 36 SPARK interns (top 20%) for the 2024 Innovation Challenge, placing third as a team for presenting a tech transformation solution to CEO Victor Dodig	Toronto, ON <i>Summer 2024</i>
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CIBC <i>Real Estate Corporate Banking Summer Associate/Commercial Banking & Wealth Management Scholarship Recipient</i> – Underwrote \$1.1 B in bilateral & syndicated corporate debt for clients including Dream Unlimited, OMERS, & Blackstone – Distinguished as an exceptional co-op, earning the opportunity to collaborate in workshops with current bank executives – Selected as 1 of 300 interns for client-facing panel with talent acquisition team, highlighting impact among peers & bank leaders	Toronto, ON <i>Summer 2023</i>
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EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

BLK Capital Management (BLK) <i>Senior Analyst</i> – Selected as a trainee in a student-run global equity fund, receiving intensive training in accounting, valuation, industry analysis, and investment strategy – Placed 2nd in the BLK stock pitch competition in NYC, presenting to managing directors from top Wall Street firms	Cambridge, MA <i>Oct 2023 – Present</i>
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Smith Black Business Association (SBBA) <i>Senior Advisor (24/25), Director of Operations (22/23)</i> – Co-founded SBBA’s mentorship program to provide Black students with professional development opportunities including networking opportunities with CIBC, TD, Deloitte, & RBC – Coordinated SBBA Black Youth Business Conference for 120 black students promoting awareness of business careers & post-secondary pathways to leadership; secured support from sponsors including PWC, CPP, & BlackRock	Kingston, ON <i>Dec 2021 – Present</i>
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Queen’s Men’s Basketball Varsity Team <i>Player Assistant Coach</i> – Assisted Head Coach in coaching, execution of plays, & film sessions – Participated in practice by competing with players, leading drills, & demonstrating specific techniques	Kingston, ON <i>Sept 2021 – Dec 2023</i>
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Skills: Financial Analysis & Valuation, Leadership & Collaboration, Communication & Presentation, PowerPoint, Excel, Word
Blackleaf Capital: Portfolio Manager at a Canadian nonprofit that fosters education & investment training for Black students
Team Captain: Tri-Colour Classic Commerce vs Engineer basketball game raising \$250,000+ in donations for Childhood Cancer Research



Paul is targeting entry-level positions in the financial sector by:

- Using a single-page format common for the finance industry
- Quantifying impact where relevant
- Emphasizing finance-related experience
- Highlighting activities and engagement that show breadth of skill

DANIELA MBUGUA

613-555-2465 | d.mbugua@example.com | www.linkedinaniela.com/

SKILLS

Communication: Strong written and oral communication skills, with experience delivering presentations, producing status reports, and collaborating with stakeholders and subject matter experts.

Stakeholder Engagement: Skilled in relationship management and customer service, with a track record of resolving issues, building stakeholder relationships, and contributing to committees and working groups.

Health Education: Experience planning and delivering health education presentations and workshops through both work and volunteer roles.

Analytics: Proven ability to collect, analyze, and interpret health data from administrative and population databases, developed through academic training and clinical/work settings.

EDUCATION

Master’s of Public Health, Queen’s University, Kingston ON 2024-2026

Work Placement: *Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Public Health, Kingston, ON*

- Conducted community needs assessment related to youth mental health by collecting and analyzing local survey data
- Gained experience in knowledge translation, health equity analysis, and inter-agency collaboration by participating in team meetings and presenting insights to program leads

Bachelor’s Science, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC 2017-2021

Health Sciences, Population and Quantitative Health Concentration

Kinesiology, Minor

Dean’s Honour Roll, Spring 2020

Douglas College, New Westminster BC 2015-2016

University Transfer Program—Science

HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Project Coordinator | Fraser Health Authority, Surrey BC Apr 2024-Aug 2024

- Communicated with Project Executives and stakeholders, providing updates throughout all project phases to ensure success and improve solution quality.
- Streamlined and documented operational processes to support timely and effective project deliverables.
- Coordinated cross-functional teams and managed resource allocation to complete assignments.

Business Analyst | Maryland Global Initiatives Corporation (MGIC), Vancouver BC Jan 2024-Mar 2024

- Analyzed existing business processes to identify inefficiencies and develop recommendations for improvement.
- Reviewed key clinical guidelines and EMR clinical workflows to identify gaps for prioritization working with Health Management Information Systems team.
- Supported review of key updates to system with program SMEs to ensure that they meet key user requirements.

Business Support Analyst | Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver BC Mar 2023-Jan 2024

Clinical and Systems transformation Project

- Analyzed provider workflows and documentation to optimize Cerner software implementation tailored to healthcare settings.
- Managed change requests by tracking tasks, risks, and impacts, applying critical thinking and sound judgment.

- Used strong verbal and written communication to document workflows, build tickets, and responded to requests accurately.

Health Sciences Professional | Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver BC Nov 2020-Feb 2022

Case and Contact Tracing, Emerging Pathogens

- Delivered COVID-19 guidance on disease timelines and prevention while maintaining strict confidentiality and accurate documentation.
- Communicated positive test results with empathy, resolving isolation-related concerns through active listening and problem-solving.
- Referred cases to BC Health Authorities and BCCDC for out-of-province reporting and follow-up.

Shelter Support Worker | Community Builders, Vancouver BC May 2019-Nov 2020

- Facilitated shelter access through coordination with outreach teams and medical services to support guests’ housing and health needs.
- Connected marginalized clients with programs and services to support self-directed wellness.
- Responded to crises, including overdoses and medical emergencies, using emergency services and non-violent crisis intervention to deescalate conflict.

Student Obesity Medical Assistant | Obesity Medicine and Diabetes Institute, Coquitlam BC Sep 2018-Apr 2019

Co-Op Practicum

- Created educational handouts on nutrition, physical activity, and other topics using Google Docs for patient take-home materials.
- Facilitated group medical visits and addressed patient inquiries via email and phone to support understanding of clinic services.
- Maintained patient confidentiality while updating charts in MOIS and assisting with medical procedures like metabolic testing.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Student Representative | Health Sciences Student Union, SFU Sep 2019-Apr 2020

Health Peer Educator | Health and Counselling Services, SFU Aug 2019-Aug 2020

Sports Medicine Clinic Assistant | Athletics and Recreation, SFU Sep 2019-Apr 2020

CERTIFICATIONS

- Occupational First Aid, Level 2, June 2025
- Mental Health First Aid, Oct 2024
- Effective Intercultural Communication, Apr 2023
- Infection Prevention and Control, Oct 2025
- Naloxone Overdose Prevention Training, Oct 2025
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training , Oct 2025

Daniela recently connected with a professional contact in the healthcare field who asked for her resume, though no specific role has been identified yet. She created a flexible resume by:

- Highlighting relevant experience discussed during the meeting to align with broad healthcare roles
- Showcasing transferable skills in communication, data analysis, and patient support
- Keeping the format flexible to appeal to a range of clinical, administrative, and outreach positions
- Showing skills learned through active involvement in the university community.

Amir Amangeldi

613-555-3256 | 34aa3@email.ca | [linkedin.com/in/amir-amangeldi-fake](https://www.linkedin.com/in/amir-amangeldi-fake) | [amir-amangeldi.notgithub.io](https://github.com/amir-amangeldi)

EDUCATION

Queen's University, Kingston, ON
Bachelors of Computer Science Honours (3rd Year) Expected
Graduation: April 2026
Computer Science, Mathematics, and Analytics Specialization
Relevant Courses: Computer Architecture, Database Management, AI, Group Theory, Applied Methods in Statistics
Dean's Honours List Member - **4.05 Cumulative GPA**

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: Java, Python, SQL, JavaScript, HTML/CSS, R, MATLAB
Developer Tools: Git, Microsoft Office, VS Code, Visual Studio, PyCharm, Eclipse, RStudio, Power BI
Libraries: Pandas, NumPy, Matplotlib
Frameworks: PyTorch, Tensorflow, Flask, Node

EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant May 2025 – Present
Queen's University Mathematics & Statistics Dept. Kingston, ON

- Building an R package implementing advanced Gaussian process techniques for time series and tensor outputs to enhance the DynamicGP package for complex computer experiments
- Communicating research findings and technical progress through regular reports and meetings with supervisor
- Reviewing literature and analyzing existing methods and R code for emulating computer experiments
- Implementing advanced statistical models and optimization techniques in R for high-dimensional data analysis
- Writing technical documentation and co-authoring a research paper on the R package and statistical methods for the Journal of Statistical Software, supporting use for researchers

QMIND Project Developer September 2024 – April 2025
Queen's University AI Club Kingston, ON

- Collaborated in a design team of 5 to develop machine learning and AI projects with real-world applications
- Executed tasks assigned by the project manager, ensuring timely completion while meeting all expectations
- Reported on completed tasks and timeline progression at weekly team meetings and relayed concerns to manager
- Researched unfamiliar topics and understood the math behind projects to ensure thorough comprehension
- Summarized complex technical concepts into concise documentation, to be effectively relayed to the team

PROJECTS

Super Resolution Photo Reconstruction | *Python, PyTorch* September 2024 – Present

- Developing SRGAN-based image reconstruction for historical, medical, and satellite imagery
- Implementing deep learning models with PyTorch to train SRGANs for high-resolution image reconstruction
- Preprocessing a diverse dataset of over 1000 samples, optimizing training for low- and high-resolution image pairs
- Analyzed results of image reconstruction models and tuned hyper-parameters for SRGAN implementation, improving classification accuracy for real-world applications

Conference Database Web Application | *SQL, HTML/CSS, PHP* April 2025

- Developed PHP/MySQL conference management system with CRUD operations for attendee, sponsor, and session management
- Designed relational database schema (15+ tables) with normalized structure and foreign key relationships
- Implemented dynamic UI components with form validation and real-time SQL-driven updates
- Created conflict detection for session scheduling using SQL time and location constraint checks
- Generated financial reports using SQL aggregate queries calculating total conference costs

Boston Housing Predictive Model Analysis | *R* December 2024

- Developed three predictive models for Boston housing prices using real-world Kaggle data with 13 key predictors
- Analyzed R outputs to identify significant predictors using Cp statistics, plots, and summary information
- Built a hybrid model averaging polynomial Lasso regression and random forest outputs, reducing RMSPE to 2.395
- Worked with statistical packages such as tidyverse, glmnet, randomForest, and MASS for predictive modeling
- Authored a detailed final report comparing models and documenting project workflow, methods, and key findings

Other Projects: Portfolio Website, AI Weather App (HTML/CSS), Bad Ice Cream Game Adaptation (Java)



Amir is targeting QUIP internship opportunities in tech startups by:

- Emphasizing the knowledge and skills learned through his education
- Clearly highlighting relevant programming languages
- Drawing attention to specific projects and practical experience

Jordan Fletcher

jbletcher@sampleemail.com • 613 555 2765 • [Linkedin.com/in/Jordan-fletcher-fakelink](#)

SKILLS

Digital Marketing: Canva, Hootsuite, Mailchimp, Sprout Social, WebPublish, Qualtrics
Communication and Administrative: social media creation, blog development, presentation support, Google Workspace, Microsoft Offices
Professional: collaborative, detail-oriented, adaptable

EDUCATION

Queen's University – Kingston, ON
Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Indigenous Knowledges and Perspectives Major **2026**
• Relevant Courses: Media & Society, Communication Strategies, Cultural Policy, In Community Capstone: Research and Relationships

Smith Business Certificate **2025**
• Relevant Courses: Business Fundamentals, Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Intro to Finance, Fundamentals of Marketing, Organizational Behaviour

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Marketing and Events Lead **2023-Present**
Cultural Connections Student Caucus (Volunteer), Queen's University, Kingston ON
• Created branded promotional materials and managed social media to drive engagement with academic and community events .
• Planned and coordinated event logistics for events, ensuring smooth execution and high student turnout.
• Led outreach initiatives to increase visibility and participation, fostering an inclusive and vibrant student community.

Marketing and Community Engagement Assistant **Summer 2025**
Career Services, Queen's University, Kingston ON
• Created and executed multi-platform marketing campaigns (social media, video, print, email) to boost student and employer engagement.
• Collaborated with staff and stakeholders to design accessible, inclusive content using tools like Canva, Mailchimp, Sprout Social, WebPublish, and Qualtrics.
• Contributed to a 37% audience growth and 62% increase in Instagram followers, doubling impressions and strengthening brand presence across platforms.

Front Desk Clerk **Summer 2024**
Hochelaga Inn, Kingston ON
• Demonstrated attention to detail by managing bookings, check-ins, and payment processing.
• Provided professional customer services and demonstrated problem solving skills while handling concerns and inquiries with efficiency and care.
• Coordinated with housekeeping, vendors, and food services to ensure smooth service delivery.
• Contributed to business visibility by updating website content and promotional materials.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Drama Camp Assistant **Summer 2022-2023**
Young Imaginations Summer Drama Camp, Kingston ON
• Supported instructors in facilitating group activities, rehearsals, and performances for children aged 6–12.
• Fostered a positive and inclusive environment through active listening and creative problem-solving.
• Adapted daily plans to meet group dynamics and ensure smooth transitions throughout programming.

Cabin Leader **Summer 2019-2021**
RKY Overnight Camp, Kingston ON
• Supervised and mentored campers in a 24/7 residential setting, promoting teamwork and independence.
• Led outdoor and team-building activities, ensuring participant safety and engagement.
• Communicated effectively with staff and families, contributing to a cohesive and supportive camp community.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Peer Support Volunteer, Queers 4 Peers: supported outreach efforts and helped organize inclusive campus events
Blue Canoe Juvenis Festival Volunteer: helped youth drama productions by assisting with setup and backstage logistics
Intramural Ultimate Frisbee: worked with team to achieve second place in mixed-intramural championship 2024

Jordan is entering the workforce and seeking business-marketing position. To appeal to a wide range of employers they shape their resume by:

- Using a skills summary to connect their background in Indigenous Knowledges and Perspectives to business settings
- Highlighting marketing and communication skills developed through work and volunteer roles
- Including a business certificate and relevant coursework under education
- Focusing on transferable skills like collaboration, creativity, and organization

PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER

A cover letter is a document that introduces you to an employer and highlights why you are a strong candidate for a specific role and a good fit with the organization where you are seeking employment. Your cover letter should not repeat your resume, but should complement it by providing more context and elaborating on skills not easily communicated within a resume (e.g. communication or teamwork). While not every application requires a cover letter, a strong, tailored cover letter can be the difference between you and other candidates with similar skill sets.

There is no single “right” way to write a cover letter. It is important, however, to consider what the employer needs to know about your background, skills, and experience in order to understand how you meet the requirements of the role.



careers.queensu.ca

For more help with writing your cover letter,
sign up for the Career Prep Module!

WRITING GREAT COVER LETTERS: KEY IDEAS

- 1 Start With the Job Description/Posting:** Carefully review the job posting to identify key qualifications, skills, and responsibilities the employer emphasizes. Pay attention to repeated themes or keywords to understand what truly matters to the organization; these are strong indicators of what to highlight in your cover letter. If the posting is brief or vague, research similar roles to know what skills the job likely requires.
- 2 Research the Organization:** Not only do employers need to know that you can do the job, but that you understand the organization’s goals (mission and values) and that you fit with the team. Demonstrating how you align with their goals in your cover letter can help make a strong first impression.
- 3 Highlight Your Interest in the Role:** A cover letter is your opportunity to express why this position is meaningful to you, whether it aligns with your career goals, offers opportunities for growth, or allows you to contribute to a great organization. Communicating your genuine interest helps the employer see your enthusiasm and understand how you might fit more broadly within the organization.
- 4 Add Context:** Focus on details that cannot be covered by the resume. Provide context by describing experiences from your past (work, school, volunteer, clubs, or extracurriculars) that specifically demonstrate your skills.
- 5 Tailor Each Cover Letter:** While it takes time to write a unique cover letter for every position, customizing your letter shows effort and highlighting how your experience and skills align with the employer’s needs sets you apart from candidates with similar qualifications.
- 6 Format Matters:** Use a modified business letter format with consistent spacing and margins. Choose a clear, professional font.
- 7 Final Touches:** Proof-read carefully, choose an appropriate file name for your documents (i.e. last name and role/job number), follow application instructions (where lacking, save your cover letter and resume as a single pdf file). Seek feedback from peers, mentors, or a career coach.

COVER LETTER FORMAT 1

This guide is just a starting point. Adapt it to your unique story!

Firstname Lastname

email@email.com | Phone Number | Relevant Links

Date of Writing

Contact Name (optional)
Organization (optional)

Salutation: Begin with a professional greeting such as “Dear Hiring Committee” or “Dear Sunil Gupta.”

Introduction: State the role you are applying to and how you found out about it. Briefly highlight why you are a strong candidate by naming 2-3 qualities and/or skills you bring to the role.

Skills Connection: Choose a few key skills or qualifications from the job posting and illustrate how you meet these requirements by using concrete examples. These examples can come from work, school, extracurricular, or volunteer experiences. You can describe your skills with a story or highlight several in a focused paragraph.

Employer Connection: Tell the employer why you want to work for them. Let them know that you know what they do and why it matters to you. Show that you have researched the organization.

Call to Action: Reaffirm your interest in the role and thank the employer for considering your application. Indicate that you look forward to an opportunity to speak further about your skills and experiences.

Complimentary Close: Choose an appropriate sign-off such as “Sincerely,” “Best Regards,” or “Respectfully.”

Your First and Last Name

Cover Letter Quick Tips:

- It is no longer necessary to include the employer’s mailing address at the top of a cover letter.
- There is no single “right way” to write a cover letter. These basic formats only show a couple common structures.
- Use your letter as an opportunity to tell your unique story with specific examples from your past experiences.

COVER LETTER FORMAT 2

This guide is just a starting point. Adapt it to your unique story!

Firstname Lastname

email@email.com | Phone Number | Relevant Links

Date of Writing

Contact Name (optional)
Organization (optional)

Subject Line: Re: Job Title, Job Number (if applicable)

Salutation: Begin with a professional greeting such as “Dear Hiring Committee” or “Dear Sunil Gupta.”

Introduction: Introduce yourself, briefly highlighting key skills, qualifications and attributes.

Skill 1: Use the job posting to select (or combine) 2-3 key skills. Often these skills come from the “requirements” section of the posting. However, review the entire description to understand what is truly important to the employer. Choose skills that would benefit from additional context which cannot be captured by your resume. If you are applying for a technical role, the first paragraph is a good place to expand on your technical expertise.

Skill 2: In each skill-focused paragraph, clearly state the skill in the first sentence. Use language that reflects terminology found in the job posting to show alignment with the employer’s needs. Use experiences from your past (school, work, extracurriculars) to explain how you have gained or demonstrated that skill. Often it is more effective to focus on one or two specific examples rather than listing every instance where you have used a skill.

Skill 3: If a job posting has a long list of skills, group related skills, such as “teamwork” and “communication” or “organization” and “attention to detail,” and provide one clear example that highlights how you have applied those skills. You will not be able to cover all the skills required, so prioritize those that seem most relevant. If the job posting lacks detail, consider reaching out to the employer for a full job description or research similar jobs to identify relevant skills.

Make a Connection: Employers want to know not only that you can do the job, but that you have a genuine interest in it. Answering “why this job?” or “why this employer?” can help show a meaningful connection that will set you apart from other candidates.

Complimentary Close: Choose an appropriate sign-off such as “Sincerely,” “Best Regards,” or “Respectfully.”

Your First and Last Name

APARNA CHAUDHARY

aparnachaudhary@fakeemail.com · 519-555-2315

April 3, 2025

Jenny Stewart
Director of Recreation
Visual Arts Windsor

Dear Jenny Stewart:

I am excited to apply for the position of Summer Programs Assistant at Visual Arts Windsor (VAW). I am applying to this position for three reasons: a passion for art, experience working with children, and a desire to give back to the Windsor community.

I have experience working in a gallery and am familiar with the gallery context as well as community arts programming. As a student docent with the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, I led tours of the public gallery allowing me to deepen my understanding of the collection and strengthen my ability to communicate art-related knowledge. I also planned and delivered workshops for groups of elementary and middle school students, gaining experience in creating engaging, age-appropriate programming and adapting to diverse needs. Guests and my supervisor provided positive feedback on both my tours and workshops.

As an Art History student, my education has influenced how I see the world and it has strengthened my belief in the value of arts education and creativity in everyday life. Beyond academics, I seek opportunities to incorporate art into my life whether it is through my own creative interests or my volunteer activities as a set designer for Queen's Players theatre productions. These experiences reflect my commitment to making art accessible and engaging.

VAW's commitment to equity and accessibility strongly resonates with my own values and lived experiences. As a woman and visible minority, I've been deeply engaged in equity and inclusion initiatives during my time at Queen's. In my role as co-chair for the inaugural Queen's Accessibility and Inclusion Conference, I collaborated with a team of students to create a space for open dialogue and community-driven ideas. That experience reinforced my belief in the importance of accessible, inclusive public spaces, like VAW, that foster meaningful engagement with the arts and ensure that arts education is available to all.

I can assure you of my full commitment to the work of VAW. I look forward to sharing more of my passion for art education with you.

Best Wishes,

Aparna Chaudhary



Aparna is targeting a summer position in the arts by:

- Connecting previous experience to the skills needed for the role
- Emphasizing a passion for art, creativity, and community-based arts education
- Demonstrating a strong alignment with the organization's values of equity and diversity
- Expressing a clear desire to contribute meaningfully to the Windsor arts community

Cristian Teliz

cris.teliz.r@fakeemail.com · 520 555 9856 · www.linkedincristiantelizramirez.com

May 30, 2025

Re: International Aid and Development Project Officer, Job ID 3942

Dear Hiring Committee:

I am writing to express my interest in the International Aid and Development Project Officer position. I have experience in administration and research, and as a recent graduate of Global Development Studies at Queen’s University, I have a knowledge of global issues and a passion for serving the global community particularly in the areas of water justice and environmental sustainability.

Throughout my program, I developed strong research and collaboration skills. In my course *Development in Practice*, I completed a capstone project as part of a small team. We investigated the barriers to implementing community-led water management strategies in rural Guatemala. As part of the study, we interviewed stakeholders including NGO staff, local community members, and academic researchers working in this area. Our team collaborated effectively to analyze qualitative data and synthesize our findings into a report. The project was well received by our professor and NGO partners.

In my role as Marketing Design and Project Assistant at Career Services (Queen’s) last summer, I developed strong organization and administration skills. In this position, I was responsible for updating degree maps, a widely used tool for helping students decide their degree pathways, which involved coordinating and communicating with over one hundred departments across the university. I had to maintain a high degree of accuracy while managing databases and editing student-facing content. I successfully completed updates to over 150 degree maps, ensuring they met the expectations of campus partners. In addition, I supported the department with front desk and administrative responsibilities such as answering the phone professionally, welcoming student-clients, and sending quality-assessment surveys. I consistently met deadlines while managing several ongoing tasks and adapting to shifting priorities.

Teamwork and dependability have been central to my work and volunteer experiences. As a volunteer with the Kingston Climate Change Symposium, I demonstrated reliability and teamwork by taking on a variety of tasks, such as assisting with technology for presenters to welcoming guests, wherever there was a need. My ability to be flexible and dependable throughout the event was recognized by both organizers and participants.

I would love to start my career in this position, which aligns with my deep interest in sustainable environmental policy and equitable access to water. I am passionate about supporting organizations that are community-driven and focused on sustainable solutions to global challenges, and I would be thrilled to bring my energy, dedication, and growing expertise to your team.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Cristian Teliz

Learn more about the UN Sustainable Development Goals and your career by exploring *Work With Impact: Queen’s Career Guide to UN SDGs: careers.queensu.ca/sdg-guide*

Cristian is targeting an entry-level position in international aid and development by:

- Speaking directly to the key skills mentioned in the posting
- Demonstrating skills through relevant academic, volunteer, and project-based experiences
- Expressing a deep passion for water justice and global equity, aligning closely with the mission of the organization

Emily Dupont

em.dupont@fakeemail.com · 416-555-6856 · emdupont.github.com

January 27, 2025

Re: Intern, Experimental Engineering - Test Engineer

Dear Hiring Manager:

As a third-year Mechanical Engineering student at Queen's University with a strong interest in aerospace and experimental testing, I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to Bombardier's innovative work. Aerospace has been a long-standing passion of mine, and I am eager to apply my knowledge while gaining hands-on experience in a dynamic, real-world setting.

As a third-year Mechanical Engineering student, I have developed a solid foundation in the core areas of thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, and heat transfer, all of which are essential to understanding aircraft performance and systems. Through my coursework, I have gained hands-on experience in data acquisition, system modeling, and the use of lab instrumentation. I have also developed the ability to interpret mechanical drawings and contribute to iterative design processes. I would like to further develop these skills through practical application at Bombardier.

In addition to technical coursework, I have had the opportunity to apply engineering principles in a team-based design project through the Mechanical Engineering Design course. My team and I designed, modeled, and prototyped a compact thermal management system, where I was responsible for conducting heat transfer simulations and validating our design through experimental testing. This experience enhanced my problem-solving skills and taught me how to troubleshoot design challenges, document technical work clearly, and collaborate effectively within a multidisciplinary team.

Beyond academics, I am an active member of the Queen's Aero Design Team, where I collaborate with peers to design and build remotely piloted aircraft for annual competitions. My role has included analyzing airframe components, contributing to weight optimization strategies, and supporting the integration of propulsion systems. Working under tight deadlines has strengthened my time management and communication skills, while deepening my interest in aerospace innovation. This hands-on involvement has given me a practical understanding of aircraft systems which adds to my academic knowledge.

This internship is a valuable chance to apply my skills in a real-world aerospace setting and learn from leaders in experimental engineering. I would be excited to have the opportunity to work with your team and begin to grow my career in the field.

Sincerely,

Emily Dupont



Emily is a QUIP registrant applying for an internship with Bombardier. In her cover letter she emphasizes:

- Technical knowledge gained through her education
- Practical skills developed through her projects and clubs
- The opportunity for learning and growth through hands-on industry experience

Bailey Craig

bcraig2012@fakeemail.com | 705-555-5464 | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/baileycraig>

June 10, 2025

Re: Community Engagement and Patient Experience Assistant – Job ID 100643

Dear Hiring Committee:

I am writing to express my interest in the French Language Services Coordinator position at Kingston Health Sciences Centre. As a fully bilingual (English/French) recent PhD graduate in History, from Queen's University, I have experience in creating educational materials and bring a deep understanding of healthcare from a historical, community, and systems-based perspective.

Throughout my academic journey, I developed my administrative and coordination skills. As both a teaching assistant and later as a Teaching Fellow, I independently managed lecture planning, communications, and the organization of course materials across multiple platforms. In this role, I demonstrated my strong attention to detail, ability to prioritize, knowledge translation, and excellent interpersonal skills. My work also included supporting students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In addition to teaching, I developed experience in public-facing communication and collaborative engagement. While working as an Editorial and Marketing Assistant for Queen's Quarterly, I contributed to both content development and promotional outreach. I connected and corresponded with authors, organized timelines, and promoted inclusive storytelling. My comfort navigating between institutional stakeholders, creative collaborators, and members of the public has taught me how to foster respectful, accessible communication for a variety of audiences.

The focus of my PhD (Mental Health Care in Kingston, 1848-1900) has provided me with an understanding of the health care system in Canada. While my academic path has given me deep research and teaching experience, I am actively seeking to shift into a role where I can make a more direct and tangible impact in people's lives. Supporting patient and community engagement within a healthcare setting is not only meaningful to me but reflects the kind of work I want to do long-term.

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how I can support the important work of the Patient and Family-Centred Care team at KHSC.

Sincerely,

Bailey Craig

Bailey has recently completed their PhD, but wants to transition out of academia. In their cover letter they:

- Demonstrate how their PhD research connects meaningfully to the healthcare sector
- Explain their career pivot clearly and positively
- Highlight transferable skills developed through teaching, research, and editorial work

Outreach Example

Subject: Inquiry About Opportunities to Support Analytics for Change

Dear Analytics for Change Team,

I recently completed a Bachelor of Science in Statistics at Queen’s University and am reaching out to express my interest in contributing to the Analytics for Change mission. Last week, I met with one of your board members, Daniel Richardson, who spoke very highly of your growing company. I am particularly drawn to your work using rigorous data analysis to support community and social initiatives. While there is not a current opening posted, I am looking for opportunities and would be excited to explore how I could bring value to your team.

Through my academic and extracurricular experiences, I have developed skills and knowledge that would be useful for your team, including:

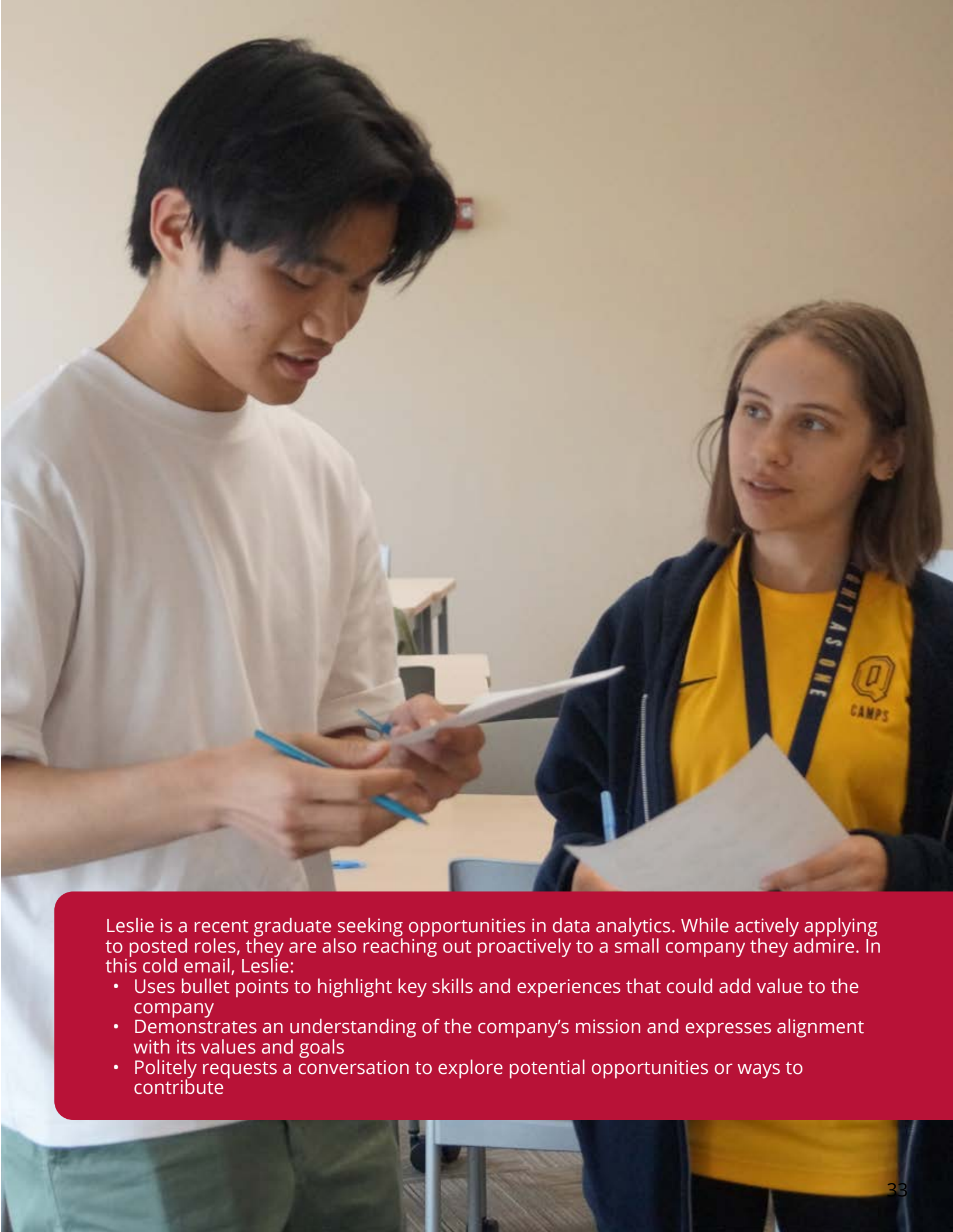
- **Data Analysis & Communication:** My technical skills include fluency in R, Python, and Excel for data cleaning, visualization, and regression analysis. I have created dashboards and reports for course projects that emphasized clarity and accessibility for diverse audiences.
- **Equity-Informed Thinking:** Co-led a student club focused on equity in STEM, where we organized panels and workshops addressing representation and access. This sharpened my ability to consider the ethical and social dimensions of data.
- **Community Engagement & Collaboration:** I worked with student groups and local nonprofits to support initiatives using survey data and impact metrics which taught me how to translate raw numbers into actionable insights.
- **Initiative and Adaptability:** Whether taking on leadership roles in student government or designing a capstone project focused on housing data in Ontario, I am comfortable navigating ambiguous challenges and building relationships to get work done.

I am deeply motivated by Analytics for Change’s commitment to using data as a tool for justice. I would welcome a conversation to learn more about your team’s work and discuss any opportunities, formal or informal, where I could contribute.

Attached is my resume outlining my experience and skills. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie (Lian) Zhang
38llz12@email.com | 343-555-6456 | www.linkedin.com/in/lian-zhang



Leslie is a recent graduate seeking opportunities in data analytics. While actively applying to posted roles, they are also reaching out proactively to a small company they admire. In this cold email, Leslie:

- Uses bullet points to highlight key skills and experiences that could add value to the company
- Demonstrates an understanding of the company’s mission and expresses alignment with its values and goals
- Politely requests a conversation to explore potential opportunities or ways to contribute



AI-generated image created using ChatGPT and DALL·E by OpenAI (July 2025).

To learn more about artificial intelligence and its applications at Queen's University, explore the *Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools* online module: sass.queensu.ca/resources/online

USING AI IN YOUR APPLICATION

AI can be a helpful tool in the job application process. It can assist you in interpreting job postings, improving resume language, structuring cover letters, and generating possible interview questions.

However, AI has its limits. Without enough detail, it can:

- Overgeneralize your skills
- Exaggerate or invent experience
- Miss key points

The language it generates can sound generic, which makes your application blend in with everyone else's instead of standing out.

Employers reviewing applications will have their own opinions on the use of AI and may filter out candidates appearing to use AI generated content.

Ultimately, you need to understand your own skills, how they connect to the job, and how to clearly articulate them. **Only you can tell your story.**

Taking the time to reflect on your experience through revising your resume, writing your cover letter, and preparing for interviews not only strengthens your application, but builds confidence and sets you up for long-term career success.

COMPARE

Cover Letter Paragraph: Example 1

Academically, I've gained experience in research and stakeholder engagement through coursework focused on sustainability and global governance. These experiences have strengthened my ability to synthesize complex ideas and communicate them clearly—skills that I look forward to applying in a development-focused role.

Cover Letter Paragraph: Example 2

Throughout my program, I developed strong research and collaboration skills. In my course Development in Practice, I completed a capstone project as part of a small team. We investigated the barriers to implementing community-led water management strategies in rural Guatemala. As part of the study, we interviewed stakeholders including NGO staff, local community members, and academic researchers working in this area. Our team collaborated effectively to analyze qualitative data and synthesize our findings into a report. The project was well received by our professor and NGO partners.

The first paragraph reflects a generalized, AI-generated style. While the language is polished, it lacks specific examples and concrete details without any clear connection to real-world experiences.

The second paragraph demonstrates a more authentic approach with specific, verifiable examples from the candidate's experience to show how they have applied their research and collaboration skills to a real project.

THE PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWS

An interview is a professional conversation between you and an employer to explore whether there is a good fit between your skills, education, interests, and values and the opportunity being offered.

For employers, interviews are a chance to:

- Assess your qualifications, experience, and potential fit for the role and organization
- Learn more about what you have shared in your application
- Understand how you think and communicate in real time

For you, the interview is an opportunity to:

- Highlight your relevant experience, skills, and motivation for the role
- Decide if the role aligns with your goals and values
- Learn more about the team, workplace culture, and expectations
- Ask questions that help you make an informed decision

An interview can take place in person, over the phone, or online. Sometimes there are multiple rounds of interviews, and it is common for more than one person to interview you.



GREAT INTERVIEWS: KEY IDEAS

- 1 Confirm the details:** Verify the date, time, length, and location of the interview (including technology requirements for virtual interviews). When you receive an invitation for an interview, you can ask about the type of interview or if there is anything you need to prepare for (e.g. test or presentation).
- 2 Research the Position and Organization:** Take time to understand the mission, values, and priorities of the company. Review the job description to understand the scope of the position and how it contributes to the organization.
- 3 Prepare Answers:** Drafting answers to common interview questions will help you reflect on your skills and recall experiences that demonstrate your skills so that you can clearly communicate your background and fit during the interview. Review the job posting or job description to identify key qualifications and skills, then think about how your past experiences, whether from work, school, or other parts of your life, align with them.
- 4 Practice:** Practice your answers out loud by yourself, with friends, or family, or with a Career Coach to receive feedback on the effectiveness of your responses and anything else like distracting movements or filler words.
- 5 Plan Your Wardrobe:** Investigate what people typically wear at the organization and plan an outfit that is a bit more formal.
- 6 Recognize Interview Nerves:** It is normal to be nervous before an interview. Remind yourself that you were selected because your application stood out. Focus on what you can control: practice, preparation, and being yourself.
- 7 Send a Thank-You Note:** After your interview, send a thank-you note by email to everyone who participated in the interview.
- 8 Request Accommodations if Needed:** If you need an accommodation for any portion of the interview, make your request in advance to HR or the hiring manager.



careers.queensu.ca

To learn more about how to interview,
sign up for the Career Prep Module!

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

1 ARRIVAL & INTRODUCTIONS:

For **in-person interviews**, arrive 15 minutes early to show you are organized and respect the interviewers' time. This also allows you a moment to gather your thoughts. Be courteous to everyone you meet from the front desk to the interview room. Make a strong first impression by standing to greet your interviewers, offering a polite smile, and making eye contact.

2 QUESTIONS:

Most interviews start with general questions such as "tell me about yourself" or "what makes you ideal for this job" to get to know you and to ease into the conversation. These are usually followed by questions that assess your specific skills and fit for the role.

3 CONCLUSION:

At the end of the interview, you will often be asked if you have anything to add or any questions. If time allows, this is a good opportunity to briefly highlight any relevant skills you did not mention previously.

Asking questions about the role and organization is expected and shows genuine interest. It is also appropriate to ask about next steps in the hiring process. Questions about salary or benefits are generally left until you receive an offer or the employer brings them up.

Thank the interviewers, expressing your interest, and offering a handshake if appropriate.



GENERAL QUESTIONS

General questions allow the interviewer(s) to learn about your interest in the position and your motivation for joining their organization. These questions are also a way for them to assess your values and attitude and how they align with their organizational culture.

SCENARIO: Priya is applying for a civil engineering internship at a multi-disciplinary firm, Peterson and Associates.

Interviewer: Why do you want to work here?

Priya: I'm excited about the opportunity to work at a firm like Peterson because of your strong reputation for delivering community-focused infrastructure projects. As a student early in my career, I would love to learn from experienced engineers. In my 'Municipal Engineering Systems' course, I learned a lot about how cities manage water, waste, and roads. I'm particularly interested in municipal infrastructure, so the chance to support projects that improve everyday life in communities aligns with my interests and goals. I've also heard about your integrated, team-based approach, and I'm really drawn to the idea of learning in a collaborative environment where I can build both my technical and professional skills.

ANALYSIS: Priya clearly connects her academic experience to the focus of the internship to demonstrate her relevant knowledge. She also aligns her personal interests with the organization's community-focused work. By mentioning her enthusiasm for learning from professionals and the company's team-based approach, she shows awareness of the workplace culture.

SCENARIO: Jamie recently completed a bachelor's in film studies. They are applying for an entry-level UX Design position.

Interviewer: What qualifications do you believe will make you successful in this position?

Jamie: Although my degree is in Film Studies, the program taught me how to think critically about story, audience experience, and visual communication, which are skills that I think translate well to user experience design. Over the past year, I've been building my UX skill set through self-directed learning including courses on UX fundamentals, prototyping tools like Figma, and accessibility best practices.

ANALYSIS: Although Jamie's academic background does not directly match the job requirements of a degree in design, they effectively highlight how their self-directed learning and hands-on experience have prepared them for the position while demonstrating their initiative and understanding of the role.

Recently, I've been applying these skills by working with a fashion design startup where I helped design and test their e-commerce site. I conducted user interviews, sketched layout ideas, and adapted the site based on feedback. This experience taught me to ground design decisions in real user needs and to be flexible and collaborative throughout the process. I believe that my UX skills as well as my user focused mind-set would really help me be successful in this job.

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

“TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF”

There is no one way to answer this question, but if you are unsure where to begin, you can structure your response by thinking about your past, present, and future.

- **Past:** What experiences first sparked your interest in the field? What have you done previously that helped you build relevant skills for this role?
- **Present:** What are you currently doing (work, education, activities, etc.) that demonstrates your knowledge, skills, abilities, and fit for the position?
- **Future:** What are you hoping to gain in or contribute to this role? How do you see this opportunity helping you grow professionally? If appropriate, mention how the position connects to your long-term career goals.

SCENARIO: Max is finishing his degree in Health Studies and is applying to a position as a health promotion facilitator in public health.

Interviewer: Tell me about yourself.

Max: I have been passionate about health and health promotion since high school when I volunteered with a community wellness initiative as a Youth Mental Health Ambassador and saw firsthand how education and connecting with the public can make a difference in people’s lives. This interest led me to pursue a Health Studies degree at Queen’s University where I have had the chance to explore many fascinating topics in my courses, such as health policy, epidemiology, and health equity.

ANALYSIS:
Max demonstrates a long-standing interest in health promotion. He effectively connects his academic background and relevant coursework to the role, while highlighting additional skills developed through his military training. He also conveys a clear interest in growing within the field of public health.

Currently, I’m in my final year where I’ve really enjoyed my courses Foundations of Humanitarian Health Emergencies and Viral Infection and Immunity which not only deepened my knowledge of how health systems operate but helped me gain an appreciation for the challenges of communicating complex health information to the public in a clear and accessible way.

I’ve also been part of the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves since my second year, where I’ve completed basic training which helped me really strengthen my team-work skills and taught me how to stay focused in high-pressure situations.

I’m excited to bring my education and experience together in a role where I can contribute to building healthier, more resilient communities. I want to keep learning and supporting the community through working with the public in a community healthcare setting, which aligns with my career goals.



BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

Behavioural interview questions help employers evaluate how you have handled real situations to better understand how you might perform in the future. These questions allow you to share specific examples that demonstrate your skills, problem-solving abilities, and professional development. For example:

- Tell us about a time when you faced a challenge in a team situation.
- Can you tell me a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker? How did you handle it?
- Tell us about a time when you had to manage a project. What did you do to ensure it was successful?

While you can structure your answer in different ways, many people use the **STAR format** to frame past experience in a way that provides a complete answer and that is easy to follow.

THE S-T-A-R METHOD

- Situation:** Briefly describe the context of your story.
- Task:** Clearly explain your role and the specific challenge or goal you were responsible for. Include any factors you considered and briefly share your reasoning or approach.
- Action:** Outline the steps you took. Focus on your individual contribution even in a collaborative setting.
- Results:** Explain the tangible outcomes of your actions. Emphasize accomplishment and/or what you learned from the situation.

THE S-T-A-R METHOD: EXAMPLE

SCENARIO: Ojasvini is an upper-year Health Sciences student who has an interview for a part-time pharmacy assistant position.

- Interviewer:** Tell us about a time when your attention to detail prevented a mistake or improved the outcome of a project. What steps did you take to ensure accuracy?

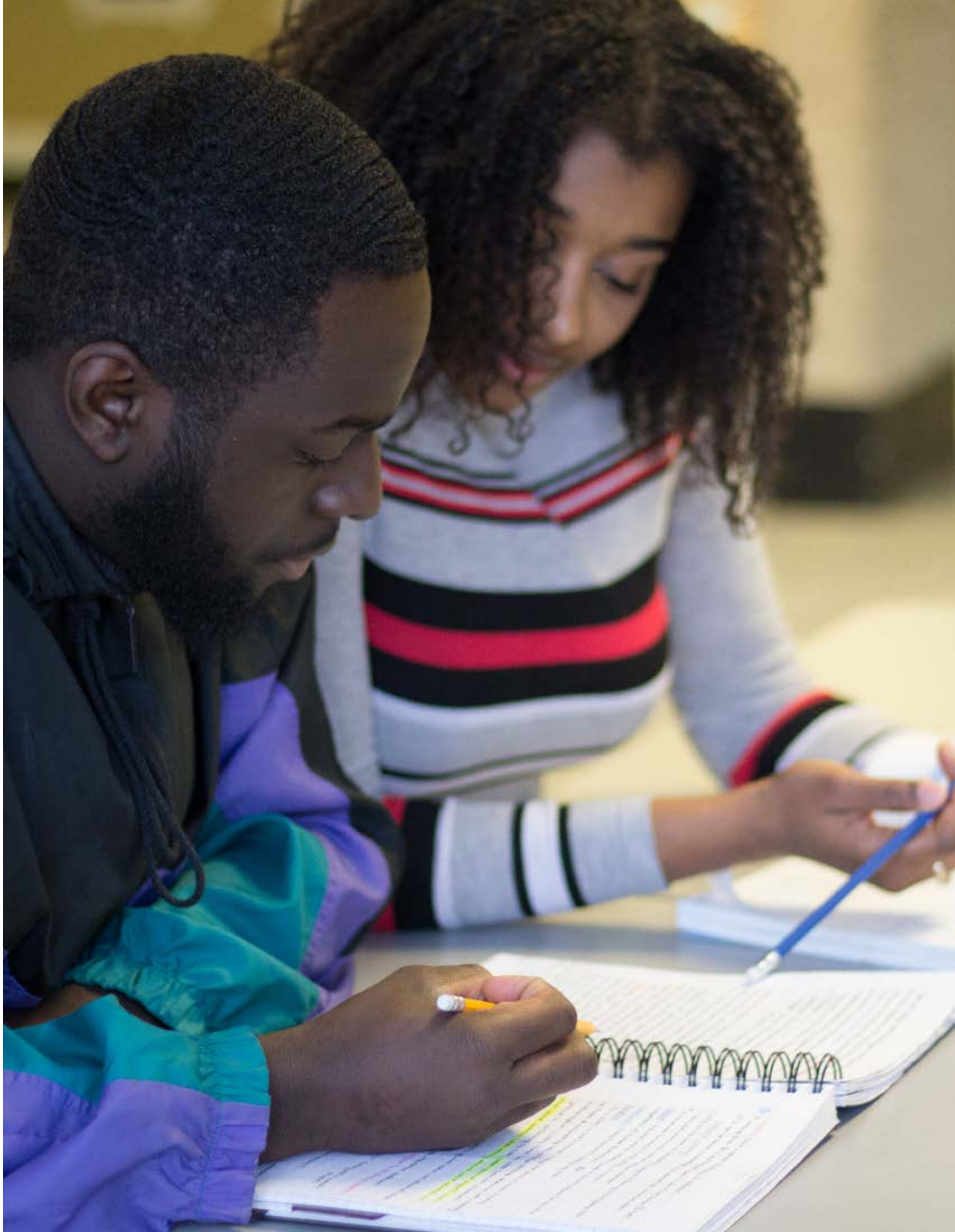
Ojasvini:

Situation: Last summer, I worked as a student research assistant in a health sciences lab that focused on stress and heart health.

Task: One of my main tasks was helping to collect and organize data, like blood pressure and heart rate, from participants who came in for basic fitness and stress-response tests.

Action: To stay organized and avoid mistakes, I created a simple checklist which helped me be consistent. I also double-checked my numbers before entering them and flagged anything that seemed off so my supervisor could review it.

Result: My attention to detail helped me avoid small errors that could have impacted the study's result. My supervisor appreciated my careful approach and liked my checklist, so she adopted it for all the research assistants to use to ensure we followed a consistent process.



SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

Situational questions are hypothetical and help employers understand how you might respond to situations that come up within the scope of the position. These questions often assess your technical skills, your problem-solving, or how you handle challenges. While these questions can be hard to predict, you can prepare by practicing how you would respond to common scenarios and, during the interview, clearly explaining your thought process and approach.

SCENARIO: Nima is a recent graduate from the Master of Management Analytics program. He has an interview for a data analyst position with the City of Kingston.

Interviewer: Imagine you are asked to analyze service delivery data from multiple city departments to help identify trends and areas for improvement. The data comes in different formats, and some departments provide incomplete information. How would you approach this project, and what tools or methods would you use to ensure your analysis is accurate and useful for decision-makers?

Nima: The first step I would take is to assess the data sources to understand the formats, completeness, and quality. I've worked with inconsistent datasets before, so I know how important it is to clean and standardize the information early on.

For data coming in different formats, I would use tools like Excel, Python, or SQL to consolidate everything into a usable structure. If there are gaps in the data, I would document them clearly and, where possible, follow up with departments to fill those gaps.

Once the data is standardized, I'd use exploratory data analysis techniques to identify trends, patterns, and outliers. I'd also create visualizations, likely using Tableau or Power BI, to make the insights clear and accessible for decision-makers.

Throughout the project, I'd communicate regularly with stakeholders to ensure the analysis focuses on their priorities and provides practical recommendations for improving service delivery.

ANALYSIS:

Nima draws on technical tools and problem-solving strategies gained through his education to demonstrate a clear understanding of how to approach real-world data challenges. He also shows a strong awareness of stakeholder needs and a commitment to delivering actionable results.

SCENARIO: Zamzam is interviewing for a position as a front desk clerk at a local hotel.

Interviewer: A guest arrives at the front desk visibly upset because their room isn't ready even though it is past their check-in time. How would you handle the situation?

Zamzam: If a guest arrived upset that their room wasn't ready, my priority would be to stay calm, professional, and be empathetic. I would listen carefully and acknowledge their frustration. Next, I would ask some questions, such as confirming their reservation details and expected check-in time to make sure I fully understood the situation. Once I knew the specifics, I would see what options were available, such as getting a rush on the room or offering another room if possible or offering alternatives like holding their bags or suggesting a place to relax. I would clearly communicate any next steps to the guest.

After, I would document the situation and inform my supervisor to make sure they were aware. My goal would be to try and turn a frustrating situation into a more positive experience for the guest.

ANALYSIS:

Zamzam's response demonstrates effective problem-solving by professionally managing the guest's reaction, clarifying the issue, considering reasonable options, and appropriately escalating through proper channels.

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Challenging interview questions often ask you to reflect on something considered negative such as why you left your last job or what your weaknesses are. Employers use these questions to assess your self-awareness and growth, and to identify any red flags. While you cannot control the questions, you can manage your response effectively by:

- Providing a truthful, but thoughtful response
- Not oversharing inappropriate or unnecessary details
- Focusing on your actions and reflections rather than blaming others
- Explaining how you managed the challenge or weakness
- Emphasizing growth and learning

SCENARIO: Aylin is interviewing for an entry level office coordinator position.

Interviewer: Tell us about a time when you made a mistake.

Aylin: In a previous role, I made a mistake when I was scanning and emailing documents that contained private information. One document, a signed letter, was meant for specific recipients, but I accidentally sent it to two incorrect people within the organization who shouldn't have had access to that information. Fortunately, it stayed internal, but it was still a confidentiality issue. As soon as I realized the mistake, I immediately tried to recall the email. I was able to successfully recall it from one person but not the other. I informed my supervisor right away, and they stepped in to help manage the situation. From that experience, I learned to slow down and double-check email recipients and attachments. I also started saving scanned documents under clear, individual file names instead of relying on the default scanner names, which helped prevent future mix-ups.

ANALYSIS:

Aylin's example is specific and genuine. It shows accountability, immediate action to address the mistake, a willingness to be open with her supervisor, and a focus on improving her own processes to avoid future errors.



QUESTIONS TO ASK

Often, the last question in an interview is “do you have any questions for us?”

Use this opportunity to ask about relevant topics that you are curious about that may have come up during the conversation or prepare a few thoughtful questions in advance. Asking about the job, the team, or the organization shows your interest in the role, and helps you gather information to decide if it is the right fit for you.

In general, save questions about pay, benefits, or personal matters until you have been offered the position. It is appropriate, however, to ask the interviewer about next steps in the process or their expected timeline for making a decision.

Examples of good questions to ask:

- Who would I be working with and reporting to?
- How would you describe the organization’s culture?
- What are the organization’s priorities this year?
- What type of skills would enable me to be successful in this role?
- What professional development opportunities do you provide for employees?
- Can you describe a typical day in this job?
- What do you enjoy most about working here?



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

The interview is finished but the process continues. After the interview, take time to:

Send a Thank-You: Within 24 hours after the interview, send a short thank-you email to the interviewer(s) to express appreciation for the opportunity and restate your interest in the role.

Reflect: Take time to reflect on how the interview went. Consider what went well and what you might improve next time.

Make Notes: Keep track of the types of questions asked, anything unexpected, and details you learned about the organization. This can help you stay organized through multiple interviews and prepare for future ones.

Update Your Application Materials: Based on the gaps you identify during the interview, update your resume, cover letter and LinkedIn profile for future applications.

Prepare for Next Steps: If the role has multiple rounds of interviews, review what was discussed and prepare for possible follow-up questions or assessments.

Follow Up: If you have not heard back within the timeline provided, it is appropriate to send a polite follow-up email to inquire about next steps. If you are not the successful candidate, say thank you and state your interest in future opportunities.

Sample Thank You

Subject: Thank You for the Interview Opportunity

Dear Andras,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me regarding the International Development and Assistance Research position with CNIB. I appreciated learning more about the organization’s advocacy work and how this role contributes to building accessible and inclusive communities for people with sight loss. Our conversation reinforced my deep interest in supporting CNIB’s national initiatives through research, stakeholder engagement, and public outreach.

I appreciate your consideration and hope to bring my skills and enthusiasm to the CNIB team. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you need any further information.

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity.

Best regards,

Alex Shaw

DISCLOSURE & ACCOMMODATIONS

Disclosure during the application process means sharing personal information - such as aspects of your identity, a disability, religious affiliation - that may affect the hiring process or working relationship. You may need to disclose to request an accommodation for the hiring process, you may choose to disclose after being hired, or you may decide not to share anything at all.

Reasons you might want to disclose:

- To identify as part of an equity-deserving group
- To demonstrate relevant knowledge and experience
- To request an accommodation
- To lead and shape the narrative
- To be your whole self at work

Deciding to disclose and request an accommodation is a personal and often complex decision. For more guidance, visit our website careers.queensu.ca to review our “Disclosures and Accommodations” tipsheet or book an appointment with a Career Coach to discuss your approach.

REQUESTING AN ACCOMMODATION

SCENARIO: Julia has an interview with a mid-sized organization. Interview candidates are invited early to the interview to review questions and prepare. Julia has low vision and requires an accommodation. She emails HR.

Hello!

I am writing about my upcoming interview for the Administrative Assistant position on January 12. I wanted to request an accommodation to support my participation in the process.

I have low vision and would appreciate having the interview materials emailed to me during the allotted time so that I can review them on my laptop or that they be provided in large print.

Please let me know if you need any further information to arrange this. Thank you for your consideration and support.

DISCLOSING PERSONAL INFORMATION

SCENARIO: Mauro is interviewing for a position as a Foodbank Volunteer Coordinator. When asked “tell me about yourself,” he discusses his experience with food insecurity to demonstrate his relevant knowledge, experience, and his commitment to supporting the community.

Mauro:

This role focuses on supporting community access to food services, which is something I care about deeply. I’m personally connected to this work because my family faced financial struggles for most of my life. We often relied on the local food bank, and I also experienced homelessness for about six months. I share this because I know firsthand how critical these services are for people trying to get by...

NEXT STEPS

Career Prep Modules

Enroll in the Career Prep Modules in OnQ to explore career options, learn about effective networking strategies, and gain practical tips for writing cover letters, resumes, and preparing for interviews.

1-1 Appointment

Book an Appointment with a *Resume Coach* through MyCareer to review your resume and cover letter. You can also meet with a *Career Coach* to explore career options, plan for further education and job search, practice interview skills, and etc.

Visit the Website

Access additional resources through our website: careers.queensu.ca

Workshops

Attend a workshop online or in-person to learn more about resume and cover letter fundamentals, job search strategies, interviewing, and networking. Register under “events” in MyCareer.

Drop-In Advising

15-minute drop-in advising (online or in-person) is available without an appointment. Meet with a Career Coach or a QUIP Coordinator for quick questions and to discuss next steps.



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