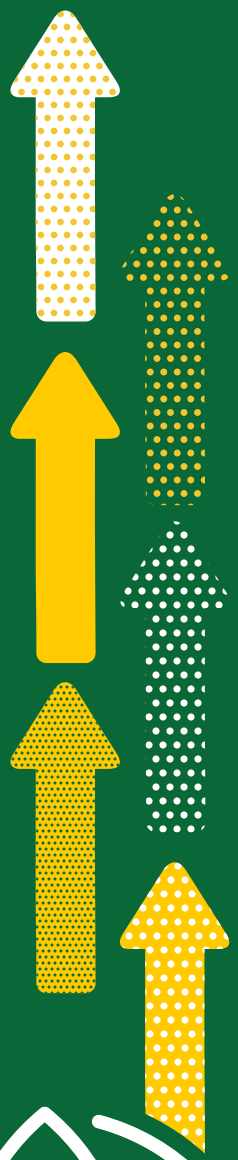
PLANNING FOR CAREER SUCCESS WITH CAREER SERVICES



Top tips and key insights to support your career success at any stage of your USask journey, regardless of your degree, discipline, or year of study.

IN THIS GUIDE:

- ✔ Resume and cover letter templates and tips
- ✔ Using job postings effectively
- ✔ Interview tips
- ✔ Career Services resources

usask.ca/careerservices

careerlink.usask.ca

RESUME TEMPLATE

How to build a resume

1. **Tailor you resume to each job posting.** Highlight the skills, experiences, and qualifications that best match the position and demonstrate your value.
2. **List your experiences** in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent and relevant experiences.
3. **Use both qualitative and quantitative language** to make your statements specific, relevant, and unique. Include specific examples and measurable results whenever possible.

   Example:

   ☒ I worked on a group project about sustainable agriculture.

   ☑ Collaborated with a team of five (quantitative) students over a three-month period (quantitative) to research sustainable agriculture practices in rural Saskatchewan (qualitative) and present findings to faculty members (qualitative).

   Quantitative: Numbers that demonstrate impact, such as team size, frequency, percentages, budgets, quantities, or timelines.
   Qualitative: Details that provide context, such as the type of project, stakeholder, organization, industry, community, or subject matter involved.

Name

Email | Phone Number | City, Province | LinkedIn Link

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS or SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- In three to five tailored bullet points, highlight the skills, experiences, and accomplishments that most closely match the job posting; use sub-categories if relevant

EDUCATION

Degree or program name (Thesis, if relevant) Completion Date (Semester or Month/Year)
University Name, Location

WORK EXPERIENCE

Position Title / Program / Course Name Start Date – End Date (Month/Year)
Organization/Company Name, Location

- Three to five bullet points for each experience - summarizing duties, responsibilities, and skills
- Statements could follow **Action Verb + Task (Skill) + Result**

  Example: **Recommended a social media marketing relaunch that led to a significant increase in brand awareness and a 21% increase in follower engagement**

Other types of experience headings:
Relevant, Supplementary, Additional, Volunteer, Leadership, Project, Course Work

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING (optional)

Conference/Certification/Presentation/Membership Date (Month/Year)

- Brief description

Other types of experience headings:
Achievements and Awards, Professional Development, Memberships and Associations, Hobbies and Interests

REFERENCES

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Name
Email
Phone Number
City, Province
LinkedIn Link

Date

Name of Hiring Manager
Position Title
Company Name
City, Province

RE: Title of Position (#Job Number)

Dear Hiring Manager's Name or Hiring Committee,

FIRST PARAGRAPH

Introduce yourself and connect yourself with the position and company you are applying to. This paragraph should explain **why you are applying and why you are a strong fit**.

- What inspired you to apply for this position and work for this organization?
- How do you plan to contribute to this specific organization's goals?
- What makes you passionate about this industry?

BODY PARAGRAPHS (one to two paragraphs)

These paragraphs are meant to connect your unique experiences to the job posting requirements. Provide specific **stories, evidence, or examples of two or three relevant skills or experiences**:

- What skills, personality traits, or experiences align with the position and organization?
- How have you demonstrated these skills through academic projects, paid employment, extracurricular involvement, research, or volunteer experience?
- What personal achievements or accomplishments make you a strong and unique candidate?

LAST PARAGRAPH

In two or three sentences:

- Reiterate why you are the best fit for this position and why you are excited about the opportunity to work for this company.
- Thank them for reviewing your application and welcome further conversations and opportunities.

Sincerely,

Your Signature
(digital or handwritten)
Your Name (typed)

Enclosed: List all other documents included in your application.

Your cover letter tells your story and highlights how your experiences connect to the role and organization. Be specific and authentic. Focus on examples and insights that are uniquely yours. If anyone could use the same statements, they're likely too generic.

AI CAREER READINESS TIPS

- ✔ **DRAFT:** Use AI as an interactive guide for feedback and presentation of your job search documents. Provide thoughtful and specific prompts to help you understand how your skills match the job.
- ✔ **REVIEW AND EDIT:** Generated AI text is a starting point, not a final product. Review all content for accuracy and ensure the language is authentic and reflects your voice and experiences.
- ✔ **RESEARCH:** Use AI to summarize key skills in a job posting, highlight an organization's goals, values and projects, and/or generate related job titles and career paths. Always verify information using reliable sources.
- ✔ **MOCK INTERVIEWS:** Use AI interviewing platforms for additional interviewing practice. This does not replace practicing with a person but can greatly complement it.
- ✔ **TRUST YOUR JUDGMENT:** AI is not applying for the job– you are! Be authentic and make your documents on your own so you can confidently speak to them in an interview.

Building Digital and AI Literacy

COVER LETTER and RESUME TIPS

Before you start creating your job search documents you need to know yourself—take time to reflect on your unique strengths, experiences and qualifications. You also need to know your audience—review the job posting and research the company you're applying to.

Cover letter

AT THE TOP: Include the position title and job ID number (if there is one).

GREETING: Avoid using generalities such as "To whom it may concern" and instead use the hiring manager's name, "Hiring Committee," or "Hiring Manager".

INTRO: Connect yourself to the position / organization by explaining why and how your goals and values align.

MIDDLE: In detail, describe two or three specific examples that illustrate your strengths and qualifications.

SHOW, DON'T TELL: Support your claims with evidence. Rather than stating you have a skill, provide an example of how you used it and the impact you made.

LAST: Summarize and reiterate what makes you a unique asset and why you are a strong fit for this position. Be sure to thank the employer for taking the time to read your application.

REVIEW: Make sure the content is relevant and check for content order, formatting, spelling, and grammatical errors.

STAND OUT: Customize each application to the specific position and organization.

Resume

LANGUAGE: Use keywords and qualifications from the job posting in your resume (and your cover letter).

HIGHLIGHT SECTION: Your "Highlights of Qualifications" section should clearly communicate why you are a strong candidate and encourage the employer to keep reading.

BE SKIMMABLE: Use clear formatting, consistent spacing, and concise bullet points. Employers often spend only a short amount of time reviewing each resume.

HEADINGS: Choose section headings strategically and place the most relevant information first.

REFERENCES: If references are not required, state "Available upon request" and if references are required, ask for permission and include three.

REVIEW: Check for content order, formatting, spelling, and grammatical errors.

DETAILS: Strengthen your statements with quantitative and qualitative details whenever possible. For example, "Coordinated annual mailouts of over **5,000** invitations, formal letters, and information packages for **alumni and community stakeholders**".

SAVE AS PDF: When applying, save and submit your application as a PDF.

Recruiters spend as little as six seconds reviewing an application.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW is to determine whether you are right for the job and whether the job is right for you; think of the interview as a conversation between you and the employer—you are both learning about each other.

BE PREPARED: Re-read the job posting and your application package.

RESEARCH: Research the company's website, social media and LinkedIn and familiarize yourself with its mission, values, products, services, and recent initiatives.

UPDATE: Make sure your LinkedIn is current and professional. Review your personal social media has privacy settings set.

PRACTICE: Reflect on the experiences and skills you want to highlight and practice behavioural/situational interview questions using the STARR or SOARR method.
Situation
Task/Obstacle
Action—explain ***how*** you displayed this behaviour
Result
Reflection WASP: Prepare your 60 second introduction with a high-level overview of your **W**ork experience, **A**cademics, **S**kills, **P**ersonal note (hobby, interest, travel, etc.).

GET ORGANIZED:
VIRTUAL: Have a professional background and a quiet and uninterrupted space. Test your connection, microphone and camera. Log-in 5 to 10 minutes early.
IN-PERSON: Confirm the interview location and travel route at least a day before your interview. Plan your transportation and parking ahead of time. Dress professionally and arrive approximately 10–15 minutes early.

BREATHE: It is normal to be nervous. Take a moment to pause and gather your thoughts before or in the middle of responding to a question. It is acceptable to ask the interviewer to repeat or clarify the question.

WAGE/SALARY: Be prepared to discuss salary expectations by researching industry salary ranges for similar positions.
- If asked, provide a specific salary range that reflects your experience, education, and market research.

"Based on my experience, qualifications, and current labour market rates, I'd be seeking a salary in the range of $61,500 and $65,900." (Avoid 'round' numbers—$60,000 and $65,000)

YOUR TURN: When they ask, "Do you have any questions for us?", have three to five questions prepared about:
- Office culture, training, mentorship, professional development opportunities.
- What a typical day might look like in the position?
- Six months in, how will you know if you are succeeding?
- What is the hiring manager's favourite aspect of working for the company?

AVOID: Until an offer is made, avoid asking about salary, benefits, vacation, etc.

FOLLOW-UP: Within 48 hours, send a thank you email to the hiring committee.

JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

✔ **EXPLORE:** job boards, company websites, major maps

✔ **NETWORK:** LinkedIn, career fairs, employer and campus pop-ups

✔ **PREPARE:** save job postings, tailor job search documents, conduct career information interviews

students.usask.ca/major-maps

USASK STUDENT COMPETENCIES

No matter what career path, these are the skills and attributes that will help you succeed.

- Engaging in our intercultural society
- Adaptive design and problem solving
- Nurturing successful relationships
- Communicating meaningfully
- Leveraging technology
- Cultivating well-being

Career Services

G50, Lower Marquis Hall
(below the bookstore)

306-966-5003
career.services@usask.ca

As a new student, current student, or alumni, the Career Services team is here to help you every step of your career journey!

USASK.CA/CAREERSERVICES
CAREERLINK.USASK.CA

University of Saskatchewan