SWEP Applications
for Biology Students

Julia Blackstock
Career Services

Please:
1. Sign in and grab handouts/evals by the door.
2. Grab a seat near the front, ask questions, and share ideas!
3. Fill in the evaluation form before you leave.
Agenda

• Welcome
• Review SWEP website
• How to identify your skills
• Analyzing SWEP postings
• Writing your resume and cover letter
• What to do to make yourself more competitive next year
SWEP information on CS website

http://careers.queensu.ca/students/services-students/employment-programs/swep
Major Map for BIO

2016 - 2017
Biology MAJOR MAP

1ST YEAR
- In first year take EBI 102, 103, QHCN 122 and ENRM 120 or 121. Interested in the Biology and Psychology Specialization? Take WART 110 or 111.
- Each Science Plan will have required first year courses. Contact an academic advisor to plan your Pathway in Science Academic Calendar.

2ND YEAR
- In second year consult the Biology Honours Plan or one of the four specialized plans (Biology and Psychology, Biology and Mathematics or Biotechnology). Core courses such as Biochemistry, Genetics, and Histology form the foundation for 3rd and 4th year. Please use the Academic Calendar to ensure you are taking the correct courses.
- Want to enhance your degree? Consider a certificate in Academic Writing or explore other certificate options available.

3RD YEAR
- In third year take some courses in Biology (BIO 302 or BIO 303). Physiology (PHL 211 or PHL 212), and Cell Biology (BIO 304, 305).
- You can focus your study into thematic areas, once approved by the honours coordinator. Check out the available areas online and the honours seminar courses (BIO 311, 313) and 4th year labs (BIO 401-405).

4TH OR FINAL YEAR
- Thinking about graduate programs? Check out our Honours Thesis courses (BIO 317 or BIO 318) and Research Mentorship courses (BIO 339, 340, 341). If you’re looking for a unique study experience, check out our Honours seminar courses (BIO 311, 313) and 4th year labs (BIO 401-405).
- By fourth year, you should be working on your remaining option or elective courses. Take time to map your major and co-op experiences as well. Apply to graduate in SOCES.

Where could you go after graduation?
- Academic and applied research
  - Agricultural Sciences
  - Biotechnology
  - Biostatistics
  - Biotechnology
  - Biophysics
- Professional careers
  - Biotechnology
  - Biostatistics
  - Biophysics
- Self-employment
  - Biotechnology
  - Biostatistics
  - Biophysics
- Further education
  - Biotechnology
  - Biostatistics
  - Biophysics

WHERE TO GO NEXT:

- Program requirements and options (BIO 107, 108)
- Co-op placement opportunities (BIO 211, 212)
- Career development workshops (BIO 313, 314, 315)
- Internship opportunities (BIO 401-405)
- Research opportunities (BIO 339, 340, 341)
- Honours seminar courses (BIO 311, 313)
- 4th year labs (BIO 401-405)

www.careers.queensu.ca/majormaps

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Skills developed in Biology (Major Map)

- Experience with lab equipment and instruments
- Extensive knowledge of biological functions
- Hands-On experience studying biology in the field
- Knowledge of quality control and safety regulations
- An understanding of how to collect and preserve organisms
- Ability to design effective and comprehensive, experimental studies
- Critically write, review and summarize reports and scientific writing
- Critically analyze and evaluate information
- Skills in statistical analysis of biological data
- Ability to solve quantitative problems in an innovative manner
- Ability to present literature and research findings effectively through various mediums
- Written and verbal communication skills
Using Library resources for Biology

Biology

Welcome. This gateway introduces some of the library resources (databases, journals, maps, data, books) and services that support the Biological Sciences.

Guides
Databases
Journals
News & Events

Ask Us
For help locating resources, using the library, or to request a research consultation, try our Ask Us service.

Subject Specialists
Our librarians provide information expertise for research and teaching in your field. You can use our email form to contact a specialist in this area.

- Morag Coyne

Quick Links
- Queen’s University Biology Department
- Queen’s University Biological Station
- Fowler Herbarium
- ESRI Virtual Campus Courses
Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM)

FDA's Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) presents the agency's preferred laboratory procedures for microbiological analyses of foods and cosmetics. AOAC International published previous editions of this manual in a loose-leaf notebook format, and, more recently, on CD-ROM. This online BAM is now available to the public. Some changes have been made to methods since the previous version. A listing of chapters updated since the last hard-copy version (Edition 8, Revision A, 1998) can be found in About the Bacteriological Analytical Manual. The members of the BAM Council are listed below. In addition recent changes for most Chapters are documented in a brief Revision History at the beginning of the Method. There is also e-mail contact information for each Chapter. Chapter numbers have been retained from the previous version. However, for this Table of Contents, chapters have been grouped by category. Please send comments to Karen Jinneman.

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<th>Chapter No.</th>
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<td>Microscopic Examination of Foods, and Care and Use of the Microscope</td>
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<td>Aerobic Plate Count</td>
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<td>Enumeration of Escherichia coli and the Coliform Bacteria</td>
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Excerpt from FDA Laboratory Method's [http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodScienceResearch/LaboratoryMethods/ucm2006949.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodScienceResearch/LaboratoryMethods/ucm2006949.htm)

Reflect to understand your skills using resources
Types of Skills

• Work-specific:
  critical to doing a specific job

• Transferable:
  abilities you use effectively in many aspects of paid, unpaid, learning and leisure

• Personal management:
  how you conduct yourself every day on the job
Top Ten Skills That Employers look for

A job description usually says what specific skills are required for a position, but according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, there is a set of basic skills that all new employees are expected to have... and you should be prepared to address these must-have skills in your resume and in an interview.

1. Communication Skills
2. Strong Work Ethic
3. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
4. Initiative
5. Analytical/Research skills
6. Computer skills
7. Flexibility/Adaptability
8. Interpersonal skills
9. Problem-Solving skills
10. Technical skills
How have you developed verbal communication skills?

- Contributed to class discussions
- Intramural soccer team captain
- Presented reports or papers
- Given instructions to new members of your volunteer organization
- Contributed to lab discussions
- Listened to someone else’s perspective in small group discussion
- Given first-years instructions as part of an orientation activity
- Had a formal discussion with your Prof, Supervisor or TA
- Defended your research/answered questions about your volunteer role
Remember, it is not enough to say you have a skill, you have to give concrete evidence!

For example, if you have “orally presented reports or papers”, on your resume you can say:

Presented numerous power-point presentations in biology courses

Improved class discussion of methodology errors in DNA filtration through PowerPoint presentation in 2nd-year Genetics course
written communication skills:

How have you developed written communication skills?

- Informal or formal emails to Prof, Supervisor, TA
- Written lab reports or essays
- Written a list of instructions for orientation committee members
- Wrote out activities for counsellors when you were a camp counsellor coordinator
- Prepared a power point presentation or formal presentation
Remember, it is not enough to say you have a skill, you have to give concrete evidence!

For example, if you have “written a lab report or an essay” on your resume you can say:

“Excellent technical writing skills gained through the preparation of technical reports, research papers, and thesis.”

Or if you “wrote out activities for counsellors when you were a camp counsellor coordinator” on your resume you can say:

“Proficient in organizing and writing detailed daily task lists for twenty-five camp counsellors while summer camp coordinator.”
But how do you take your skill and articulate it?

Key steps to articulate each skill:

- The situation/challenge
- The tactics you considered
- The action you took to overcome the challenge
- The result you achieved (and what you learned)
Reading a job Posting: Work Specific Skills

Position Title: Conservation Biologist

Job Description:
Responsibilities include regularly surveying wildlife mortality on the pre-set routes, identifying native plants and animals, general gardening and landscaping, using basic scientific method such as systematic data collection, meticulous note-taking, data manipulation, analysis and report writing.

Qualifications:
• Degree or diploma, preferably in Biology or environmental Studies
• Have completed BIO 201 and BIO 202: Diversity of Life Parts 1 & 2
• Have completed BIO 243: Statistics
• Comfortable with standard data management programs
• Ability to work independently
• Previous landscaping or wildlife survey experience is an asset
• Exceptional communication and presentation skills
• Must be able to take initiative and set goals and priorities
• Ability to develop outreach activities with special interest groups
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Personal Management Skills in this Job Posting

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So how do you fit?
A useful tool you can use in future

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<th>W / T/ P Skills in the posting</th>
<th>How have your demonstrated the skill</th>
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• Resume vs CV
Now you can write your resume and cover letter!

But first - advice from people in the know

Here's one way to be rejected: 'I speak English and Spinach'
Job applicants' spelling, grammar errors cited as biggest turnoffs by employers. WALLACE IMMEN - Globe and Mail

“Served as assistant sore manager”:
The smallest mistakes will turn off potential employers, a survey of resume specialists has found.

“I am applying for any position that you might have available”. Create a unique, targeted cover letter and resume for every job you apply for. You don't have to re-write the whole thing, just adapt the details so they're relevant. (from Monster.ca)
Making the most of your Education

➢ Often one of the most important sections for students
➢ Also often a big missed opportunity

Here is an example of a typical Education section, the student is looking for a lab position:

*Bachelor of Science, Biology, Queen's University, Kingston ON (expected Spring 2017)*

• Dean’s List 2014-2015
Much Better!

Bachelor of Science, Honours, Biology, Queen’s University, Kingston ON (expected Spring 2017)

Departmental Honour Roll, 2014-2015

• Completed 5 laboratory-based courses, including …
• Familiar with standard cell biology lab equipment, including …

Field work

• Completed 3 month project at Queen’s University Biological Station performed field sampling and data analysis …

Proposed Senior Thesis Project “Cell Division in …”

• Conducted experimental research project using … lab techniques
• Presented findings as a poster presentation at the Canadian Association of Biologists Conference, June 2015
Accomplishment Statements:

For each job...

- Start each bullet point with an action word.
- Action words give the impression that you take initiative.
- State major accomplishments and results.
- List the most important accomplishments first.
- Exclude information that is not relevant to the job you want.
- Use bold font for job titles and/or company names.
- Use keywords from the job description so that you are speaking the employer's language.
A couple of good examples

**Peer Learning Assistant**  
*Health, Counselling and Disability Services, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON*

- Co-presented results of “Alcohol Use in First Year” project with a variety of people on the Peer Team, integrating work-style preferences into planning and presenting
- Learned to use teachable moments in informal situations without alienating friends and housemates
- Train and mentor new Peer Learning Assistants ensuring consistency from year to year

**Project Coordinator**  
*McQueen Centre for Family Violence Research, London, ON*

- Co-ordinated public fund raising events including 700 participants in a 5k fun run
- Created and implemented a cataloguing system for all print, audio, and video resources
- Designed, created, and updated the Centre’s webpage
- Contributed towards 15% increase in fundraising and donations from previous year
The Sections of a Resume

There is no single right way to do a resume. Readers' expectations vary but some common conventions are listed at the right to help you in making informed decisions. Remember that you always have a choice and it is possible to create a very effective document that does not incorporate all of these particular elements.

- Contact Information
- Profile/ Summary of Strengths
- Education
- Relevant Experience/ Accomplishments
- Additional Experience
- Awards
- Memberships & Affiliations
- Interests
Resume Wrap up

• Know your target work and what employers are looking for
• Show that you are a good fit for the work by using:
  • Well written Profile/Summary of Experience – make a match with what the employer wants
  • Your Education – use it to its maximum potential
  • Accomplishment Statements - review your experience section – does it make an impact?
What about the Cover Letter?
The Goal of a Cover Letter?

• Makes the match with skills and qualifications with proof
• Add a personal touch
• Demonstrates writing skills
• Conveys interest in the position
• Stands out from the pile!
Format of Cover Letter

Your Name (heading matches resume)
Telephone
Email
Date of Writing
Name of recipient
Recipient’s job title
Organization;

Salutation (eg. “Dear Ms. Gupta”)

The INTRODUCTION: Tell the reader why you are writing. Indicate who you are (in context – not your name), what you want, & how you came to know about them. If you know it, include the position title for which you are applying. Note enclosures. Try to catch their attention with a unique and relevant strength or qualification.

THE RESEARCH PIECE: Distinguish your letter from all the rest by telling the employer why you want to work for them. Tell them that you know what they do and why it matters to you. Show that you have investigated the organization and the work.

THE MATCH: In the next paragraph, let them know why they should hire you. Highlight the major skills, personality traits and areas of knowledge and expertise that you have to offer, and indicate how you perceive your attributes match their needs. Include evidence of positive contributions or **tell a brief story of when you have used some of the skills they require.** Express yourself sincerely, and in an way that they can’t wait to turn the page and read your resume.

THE CALL TO ACTION: Emphasize your interest in speaking with them, suggest possibilities for follow-up. Express appreciation.

Sincerely

An actual person’s name is preferable; alternately
Attention: Personnel Manager or Hiring Manager

Tailor cover letter to each job posting; Maximum one page; Same type face as your resume; Double-spaced between paragraphs; Full block format; justified on left with no indentations; 1 inch margins on sides, top and bottom
Avoid

“I don’t have enough experience to apply for a job I am interested in”

“I’ve only had one part-time job so I don’t have much experience to put on my resume”

“I’ve always focused on school and now I have no experience and it’s time to apply for jobs”
What is your cover letter doing?

simply introducing you  versus  making a case for why/how you will succeed in this role

Be one of the people picked for an interview
Name of Student
1 Some Street
Kingston, Ontario

April 21, 2001

Paul MacLatchy
Manager-Environment Div. 216 Ontario St.
Kingston, Ontario

Dear Mr. MacLatchy,

In 1995, I have completed a Biochemistry degree at the University of Ottawa, and have recently graduated from the University of Calgary in Chemical Engineering. Through this, I have gained sharp analytical and research skills, which make me an excellent candidate for an environmental projects intern position in your organisation.

I have worked in a laboratory environment for the Canadian Red Cross. During this time, I have identified viruses promoting arteriosclerosis. It is through this research that I have had the opportunity to use various analytical equipments. I have also in the past year, taken courses on wastewater management and solid waste management. I was required to design a landfill and calculate gas emissions and leachate production.

I have 3 years of experience in problem solving and implementation at the National Defence Headquarters. I have identified a waste in resources and took the initiative to reduce the use of paper saving thousands of dollars. My extensive experience with extracurricular committees such as being Vice President of the Engineering Student Society and being Chairman of the sports committee, the unit fund committee, and the cadet mess committee, has given me strong communication and team skills. Finally, my analytical and computer skills have given me strong abilities in the research area.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss this environmental intern position.

Sincerely,

Student’s Signature
Name of Student
I understand that the primary municipal function is to develop a database inventory of greenhouse gas emissions in response to the climate protection program. I am familiar with the program that encourages municipalities to reduce their gas emissions by 20% of their 1990 levels. I have also read the ministry of environment and energy guidelines and I understand the soil contamination problems associated with the removal of underground storage tanks.
Common Weakness: Sounding Generic

- Not enough research
- Not clear that the applicant understands the role or industry
- Not clear that the applicant has strategies for succeeding that have worked for them in the past in similar conditions
- Applicant wants a job but any job will do
- May not like the work after novelty has worn off (and employer has invested in training)
Which is generic sounding?

Flair Hotels is a flourishing business with a long history and a lot of really nice real estate.

What really stood out for me about your management strategies in the last 5 years was the emphasis on integrating customer service throughout the organization...
Common WEAKNESS: Not MEMORABLE

• Lists – good information but not persuasive
• The correct skills are named but are not specific enough or the evidence is too general
• Sounds good at the time of reading but it is difficult to remember when reading 60-100 cover letters
### Before

I have worked [at] a service for... the past five summers...enabled me to develop my supervision skills, highlight my good personal skills and my ability to work in a team environment. Through participation on group and individual projects, at University and in the workplace, I have gained valuable experience in researching, solution development, and brainstorming.

### After

I possess a passion for organizing things in order to make them operate more efficiently and effectively. Having noticed that Queen’s Hillel was in desperate need for restructuring, I drafted a new constitution to improve the club’s efficiency. Following its approval, I worked with the executive, as President of the club, to increase accountability by creating a structured transition process and event reporting.
Analyse the role

Based on my research, this role needs someone who...

1. Has this kind of **knowledge** about …
2. Can bring this **attitude** …
3. Has the **skill/competencies** to be able to….

Pick the most important…

*Be careful that you don’t use these exact words!*
I know that I can do this job well because*:

– This job needs someone who understands…. I learnt about this when I was volunteering for (tell a story) …. 

– Finding a way to… can be challenging. I already have experience doing this in my role as… (evidence) 

– In talking with people about the role, it sounds as if being able to … will be important. I have experience doing this and, in particular, learnt how to (evidence)…. 

*Be careful that you don’t use these exact words!
Thanks for attending today’s workshop!

Please fill out a workshop evaluation and hand it in.