

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS:

RESUMES & COVER LETTERS

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Please
select
“Resumes
and Cover
Letters”



As You Create These Documents, Think About ...

- ✓ The relevancy of your program and studies to the job postings and the mission of advancing sustainability.
 - ✓ The relevancy of specific skills obtained from your training and development to the job postings and organizations/employers.
 - ✓ How you can do the job, and why you want to do the job.
-



Relaying Key Messages

Be concise.

- ✓ Incorporate the language you see in the job posting.
- ✓ Avoid passive voice to reduce additional words.
- ✓ Listing items is not necessarily being concise. Your reader needs to understand your key messages.

Tailor.

- ✓ Employers want to know how you are relevant to them in terms of what they are hiring for.
- ✓ The more you know about the employer, the better suited you are to tailor.

Quantify

- ✓ May include years of experience, percentages of increase, dollar values, number of stakeholders.





RESUMES:

FORMATTING AND CONTENT



Relevant Information for Your Header

JANE HOMEOSTASIS

1234 Cell Envelope Road
Vancouver, BC B1O 1C1

Tel: 604.555.2396
jane.homeostasis@ubc.ca

MINNIE WHEAT

123 MACMILLAN ROAD, VANCOUVER, BC
604-987-4321 | MWHEAT@UBC.CA

Christopher Robin

615 100 Acre Woods | Vancouver, BC | V4L 2F6 | 604-788-2985 | christopherrobin@gmail.com

- ✓ Put this information into a header in your resume
- ✓ It should appear at the top of each resume and cover letter page
- ✓ Be mindful of how much space is used
- ✓ Address does not have to be included
- ✓ No photographs
- ✓ LinkedIn URL can be included – use the shortened form

Including “Profile”, “Highlights of Qualifications”, or “Technical Skills”

- ✓ Opportunity to concisely convey the major reasons you are a good fit for a position.
 - ✓ Tailoring is key here – what key messages do they need to know?
 - ✓ Qualifications = quality or accomplishment that makes someone suitable; qualifying or being eligible for something.
 - ✓ Being concise does not mean just listing technical or transferable skills – concisely convey in what capacity these have been achieved or utilized.
- ✓ Focus on concrete evidence and examples.
 - ✓ There is space in the experience section to elaborate, but quantifying and providing a brief overview is important.
- ✓ This can be a short paragraph (if a profile), or bulleted statements
 - ✓ 3-4 sentences or bullet points.



Technical Skills:

- Highlights specific, actionable abilities, tools, and proficiencies.
- Emphasizes "hard skills" that can be directly applied to tasks or technologies.
- Examples: project management tools, data analysis, stakeholder communication, and technical systems like POS or electronic tabulators.

Qualifications:

- Provides a broader overview of the candidate's capabilities, achievements, and attributes.
- Combines technical expertise with soft skills (e.g., leadership, adaptability) and experience relevant to the role.
- Examples: academic credentials, leadership roles, stakeholder engagement experience.



“Highlights of Qualifications” Example

Academic Expertise: Graduate studies in urban planning with a focus on sustainability, climate resilience, and environmental policy.

Project Coordination: Demonstrated success managing large-scale initiatives, including coordinating hundreds of team members and ensuring accessibility in project deliverables.

Stakeholder Engagement: Skilled in communication and facilitation, fostering collaboration among diverse groups and stakeholders in complex decision-making processes.

Leadership and Teamwork: Led a team in a high-performance environment for two years, showcasing strengths in leadership, collaboration, and team motivation toward shared objectives.

Event Planning and Facilitation: Proficient in designing and delivering programs and training materials, with an emphasis on creativity, inclusivity, and adaptability.



“Technical Skills” Example

- **Project Management:** Event coordination, scheduling, resource allocation, and team training for large-scale initiatives.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Clear and effective correspondence with diverse groups, including training, manual development, and dispute resolution.
- **Research and Analysis:** Skilled in qualitative and quantitative data analysis, information synthesis, and policy evaluation.
- **Administrative Tools:** Proficient in managing online applications, invoice processing, and payment systems (e.g., POS machines).
- **Technical Systems:** Experience with electronic tabulator machines, including testing, troubleshooting, and user training.
- **Engagement Tools:** Facilitation of workshops, activity planning, and behavioral management for youth programs.
- **Accessibility Planning:** Experience incorporating equity and accessibility principles in project design and execution.



“Profile” Summary and Example

- Serves as an introduction or elevator pitch.
- Provides a concise, high-level overview of the candidate's background, expertise, and career focus.
- Aimed at capturing the reader's attention and setting the tone for the rest of the resume.

Motivated and detail-oriented Master’s student in Community and Regional Planning with a strong academic foundation in sustainability, disaster resilience, and climate change policy. Experienced in project coordination, stakeholder engagement, and team leadership, with a proven ability to manage large-scale initiatives and foster collaboration among diverse groups. Skilled in designing inclusive programs and activities, facilitating training, and integrating equity and accessibility into planning processes. A dedicated team player with a passion for sustainability and a commitment to driving impactful, community-focused solutions.



Education

- ✓ Include past degrees, diplomas, certification programs, if conferred to you by a post-secondary institution.
 - ✓ You may also have a Certifications section for additional credentials you've gained through industry certification programs or courses.
- ✓ Include title of degree/diploma, or certification, university or college, location, and date.
 - ✓ Date = year completed and conferred.
 - ✓ Date = year started to present if in process of completing.
 - ✓ Date – year started to year of expected completion.
- ✓ For international credentials that may not be familiar to an employer:
 - ✓ You are welcome to put an asterisk (*) below the degree/diploma, or certification, and share a few details about the credential.
 - ✓ Specialization, area of focus, relevant educational learning.



Education

- ✓ Can be placed either immediately after profile/qualifications or after experience sections.
- ✓ Bullet points following a degree might include a major award, a thesis title (if relevant to the position), key coursework, summary of major output (presentations/publications).
- ✓ If you wish to expand on these topics, it is recommended to instead create sections that highlight them, such as “Publications”, “Research Experience”, “Project Experience”, “Presentations”.
- ✓ There are examples of hybrid resume/CV for candidates who want to showcase their academic accomplishments for an industry audience.
 - ✓ Resource: [The Scientist's Conundrum: CV, Resume or Something In-Between?](#)



“Education” Example

Master in Community and Regional Planning

2024 – present

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

- Relevant coursework: Urban Design and Sustainable Development, Land Use Planning and Policy, Transportation Planning and Policy, Housing Policy and Community Development, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Disaster and Resilience Planning, Indigenous Community Planning, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Bachelor of Arts, International Relations

2020-2024

Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC

- Dean's Honour List (2021-2024)
- Recognized for achieving distinction as Captain of SFU Volleyball Team (2023)
- Undergraduate Research Post Presentation at SFU International Relations Undergraduate Research Symposium (2023)
- Relevant Coursework: Land Use Planning, Environmental Planning, Indigenous Community Planning, Urban Design, Transportation Planning.



Experience

- ✓ Consider how you wish to organize these sections based on what is most relevant to the job posting.
 - ✓ Relevant Experience
 - ✓ Relevant “X” Experience
 - ✓ Industry Experience
 - ✓ Research Experience
 - ✓ Relevant Technical Experience
 - ✓ Relevant Project Experience
 - ✓ Additional Experience
 - ✓ Volunteer Experience
 - ✓ Leadership Experience
- ✓ Organize your experiences within sections you include in your resume, and use the same formatting. throughout each section
 - ✓ Include title of role, company/organization, location, and date.
- ✓ Provide bulleted statements that showcase actions taken to complete responsibilities and positive outcomes.



Why Accomplishment Statements?

[VERB + TASK + **RESULT**]

RESULTS illustrate the value provided to the employer and can be quantitative or qualitative:

- Outcomes
- Goals
- Numbers
- Metrics
- Feedback
- Skills learned



Example

Verb + Task

Coordinated stakeholder engagement processes by designing training manuals and facilitating workshops for over 400 participants

Verb + Task + Result

Coordinated stakeholder engagement processes by designing training manuals and facilitating workshops for over 400 participants, resulting in improved understanding and alignment with sustainability-focused initiatives.



“Experience” Section with Accomplishment Statements: Example

Municipal Elections Clerk

Mar. 2022 – Apr. 2023

City of London

- Determined, inspected and contracted dozens of polling locations while accounting for accessibility, proximity to voters and feedback from stakeholders
- Designed and managed three online election worker applications and coordinated the interviews of over 1500+ election workers
- Crafted three training manuals and effectively trained over 400 workers
- Processed invoices and payments for workers and candidates as well as operated a POS machine
- Managed the electronic tabulator machines including testing accuracy, training and troubleshooting
- Clearly and impartially communicated the Municipal Elections Act, relevant bylaws and the election process to candidates, third parties and electors in person and via phone and email correspondence

Game Host January

April 2022

Summit Sports

- Facilitated an organized and safe environment for a weekly volleyball league, supervised officials and oversaw dispute resolution

“Research Experience” Section Examples

- Conduct in-depth research on urban planning strategies, focusing on sustainability and resilience in disaster-prone communities, as part of graduate coursework at UBC.
- Analyzed and synthesized qualitative and quantitative data related to climate change impacts on urban infrastructure, producing actionable insights for community resilience planning.
- Developing a comparative framework to evaluate municipal sustainability policies, identifying best practices for greenhouse gas reduction and community engagement.
- Prepared comprehensive reports and presentations on environmental justice and reconciliation in planning, incorporating stakeholder perspectives and Indigenous knowledge systems.
- Designed GIS maps and visual data representations to support research on land use planning and climate adaptation strategies.
- Collaborated with faculty and peers to assess the effectiveness of public transportation systems in reducing urban carbon footprints, leveraging statistical tools to identify key trends.
- Engage with stakeholders through surveys and interviews to collect data on public attitudes toward green building initiatives and urban sustainability programs.
- Authored a literature review on global climate change politics, highlighting the intersection of policy, equity, and environmental outcomes.

Other Sections in a Resume

DISTINCTIONS (SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS)

- ✓ Prioritize (“Selected Awards”) and don’t allow this section to dominate page space

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

- ✓ Typically relevant and active ones

CERTIFICATIONS & ADDITIONAL TRAINING

VOLUNTEERING / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- ✓ Not all recruiters care about this section, but those who do, care A LOT
- ✓ Use this section as a conversation starter, personal touch, and sense of who you are as a well-rounded person





COVER LETTERS: FORMATTING AND CONTENT



Resume vs. Cover Letter

Resume

- ✓ Matches you to the job
- ✓ Chronicles a timeline of your experience that is relevant to the role
- ✓ Describes key accomplishments from each role
- ✓ Communicates your value proposition

Cover Letter

- ✓ Matches you to the job
- ✓ Previews what you might share in your interview
- ✓ Describes a story from your past experiences and connects the skills and lessons learned to the requirements of the role
- ✓ Communicates your value proposition
- ✓ Shows more of your personality (passions, dreams, values)

Your Name

Mailing Address • City, Province
Phone number • email@email.com •
LinkedIn URL

Date

Contact's Name
Contact's Title
Organization Name
Address

Salutation i.e. Dear Mr./Ms. (Last Name only):

First Paragraph: (2 -4 sentences)

- Indicate why you are writing
- Tell how you heard about the position/employer and why you are interested in it
- Mention the position to which you are applying
- Insert a brief sentence that gives your degree, major, university, and graduation date
- If you have a contact, mention that person here.
- A brief statement about why you would fit the position

Middle Section: (can be 1 or 2 paragraphs)

- Demonstrate that you have done some research about this organization
- Describe what you have to offer to the employer. Focus on what you can do for them rather than why you want the position
- Connect their needs and your skills and/or experiences. Highlight your most significant accomplishments, abilities, and experiences that are specifically relevant to the employer and job requirements. This is the section that will make the reader want to learn more, leading them to your resume
- Use this section to portray confidence in your ability to succeed in the position.

Final Paragraph

- Thank the employer for considering your application
- If you need to explain anything out of the ordinary on your resume, this is the place to do it.
- Express your desire to meet at an interview in the near future
- Make it clear what happens next- How will you will follow-up?

Complementary Close (i.e. Sincerely)

Your signature (if mailing) - leave 4 blank lines for this

Your name, typed

The art of storytelling draws on:

- Self-awareness – revisiting experiences, self-perceptions, mindsets
- Cultural sensitivity – integrating your story within the listener's culture
- Effective message delivery – aligning your story to industry standards

We most often speak to:

Self-awareness – revisiting experiences, self-perceptions, mindsets.

We need to include:

Cultural sensitivity – integrating your story within the listener's culture.

Effective message delivery – aligning your story to industry standards.

To do this, we must:

Synthesize information – combining ideas from various sources to create a new cohesive understanding.

The goal: Drawing connections between different pieces of knowledge and integrating them into a career narrative

The STAR Method

The STAR Method

S

Explain the situation so that your interviewer understands the context of your example, they do not need to know every detail!

20%

T

Next, talk about the task, problem, or challenge that you took responsibility for completing, or the goal of your efforts.

10%

A

Describe the actions that you personally took to complete the task or reach the end goal. Highlight skills or character traits addressed in the question.

60%

R

Explain the positive outcomes or results of your actions or efforts. Here, it is important to highlight quantifiable results.

10%

Consider these questions when crafting your STAR statements for your cover letter:

What challenges will the person in this job face?

Why is the organization hiring someone at all?

Can you imagine yourself doing this job? Why?

What skills does the job ad emphasize?

What experiences do you have that you would use to illustrate your skills?

Example of a job posting

Position: Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative Student Internship

Organization: Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative (FERC).

Project Title: Advancing Flood Resilience for the Lower Mainland: Best Practices Research & Workshop Series.

Focus: Protecting the Fraser River estuary through research, workshops, and developing governance, policy, and technical solutions in collaboration with NGOs and Indigenous partners.

In-Person Requirement: Attend workshops and events in the Lower Mainland.



Role Responsibilities:

1. Research:

1. Conduct literature reviews and analyze case studies.
2. Seek additional research via interviews, desktop research, or surveys to fill knowledge gaps.

2. Workshop Support:

1. Assist in workshop planning.
2. Attend workshops as a note-taker or table facilitator.

3. Report Development:

1. Synthesize workshop outcomes and research into an engaging best practices report.
2. Optionally create multimedia content for knowledge sharing.

Preferred Qualifications:

1. Strong research and writing skills, especially for qualitative data.
2. Interest in flood resilience, salmon conservation, and ecosystem protection.
3. Ability to facilitate discussions and synthesize information for diverse audiences.
4. Experience with workshop coordination or stakeholder engagement is an asset.

An Example - Introduction

As a Master of Community and Regional Planning student at UBC, I have become a committed researcher of sustainability, with a focus on stakeholder engagement and research-driven solutions. I am very interested in applying for the student position with the Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative to support the "Advancing Flood Resilience for the Lower Mainland: Best Practices Research & Workshop Series" project. In particular, I am eager to contribute to the vital initiative of addressing climate resilience and ecosystem health in the Lower Fraser watershed.

Tip:

- ✓ Bring your own unique portfolio to the reader's attention, and relate it to the scope of the opportunity you are most qualified for and most interested in.



An Example – Body Paragraph

I have cultivated expertise in areas central to your project, including planning for disaster-resilient communities, sustainability in urban systems, and engagement facilitation. My academic experiences have honed my skills in conducting qualitative research, synthesizing complex data, and producing actionable reports. For example, in my coursework on climate adaptation, I developed a framework to evaluate municipal resilience strategies, balancing ecological preservation with community needs.

Tip:

- ✓ Speak to skills that are central to the scope of the work required.
- ✓ Speak to where you developed these skills and give an example.



An Example – Body Paragraph

Beyond academia, my professional experience brings skills directly transferable to supporting workshop development and facilitating discussions. As a Municipal Elections Clerk for the City of London, I designed and managed application systems, trained over 400 staff members, and ensured seamless communication with diverse stakeholders. These tasks required meticulous attention to detail, clear communication, and an ability to facilitate collaborative processes—skills I look forward to utilizing to capture meaningful results for this initiative.

Tip:

- ✓ Apply your past experiences through transferability of skills and actions taken.
- ✓ Be clear about what actions you took and why they matter in relation to the opportunity.



An Example – Body Paragraph

I am particularly passionate about integrating Indigenous perspectives into sustainability efforts and addressing the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities—priorities that align with FERC's mission. I am also drawn to this project not only because of its interdisciplinary approach to flood resilience but also because of its commitment to actionable solutions through collaboration with cross-sector networks.

Tip:

- ✓ Explain why you want this opportunity.
- ✓ Be specific and tailor not only to the role but the mission of the organization/company.



An Example – Concluding Paragraph

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my experiences and skills align with the goals of this project. I am confident that my dedication to sustainability and my ability to translate research into meaningful action will make a valuable contribution to your team.

Tip:

- ✓ What is summarized in your conclusion should be addressed in the body paragraphs – the evidence, or proof of your abilities.



Resources

[Cover letter, CV and Resume Templates from the UBC Career Centre](#)

[Resume and Cover Letter Toolkit by University of Toronto](#)

[Graduate Career Compass with template documents by Toronto Metropolitan University](#)

[UBC Career Centre 1:1 career advising](#)

- ✓ 1:1 booked advising appointments
- ✓ 15 minute drop-in advising (virtual on Mon & Fri, in-person Tues, Wed, Thurs)



QUESTIONS?



Tell us how we did

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