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Awish Aslam:

Welcome, and thank you for joining us for the second of three digital panels we have scheduled for this spring. Today's topic is *Navigating the Non-Academic Job Market*.

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Awish Aslam:

Before we begin, I'd like to let everyone know that audience members are muted to limit background noise. If you do have questions that come up during the webinar, you can submit those using the Q&A function, which you can find at the bottom of your screen. Your questions will be visible to all attendees and panelists, and audience members may also upvote questions to prioritize them. The panelists will address those questions during the open Q&A period following today's discussion.

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Awish Aslam:

My name is Awish Aslam and I'm the Chair and Central Rep. for the CSA Student Concerns Subcommittee. Our subcommittee also includes our Eastern Rep. Emma Kay and our Western Rep. Nicole Malette. We'd like to thank the Canadian Sociological Association for sponsoring this initiative and Sherry Fox, the Executive Director for the CSA, for working with us to plan and organize this series. We'd also like to thank everyone who submitted feedback when registering for this panel. Your comments and questions will be used to guide today's discussion.

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Awish Aslam:

Finally, we'd like to thank the Applied Sociology Research Cluster of the Canadian Sociological Association for collaborating with us to put this webinar together. I'm now going to turn things over to our host, Kristyn Frank. She is the co-founder and Vice Chair of the Applied Sociology Research Cluster.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Thanks, Awish and hi everyone. Thanks especially to our panelists today and our audience members. It looks like we're over 30 people, so that's great. To give you an idea of who I am, I have a PhD in sociology from the University of Waterloo. Following that, I went to the University of Guelph for a postdoc, and then I worked as a Research Analyst at the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in Toronto. I'm in Ottawa now, and I work as a Senior Researcher at Statistics Canada.

As Awish mentioned, I was a co-founder of the Applied Sociology Research Cluster, and one of the objectives that we had in establishing that was to organize panel sessions that introduce students to alternative career paths that are often not discussed in graduate school. Over the last few years, we've been doing that and we found a lot of very enthusiastic and really interesting sociologists to take part in these sessions, and today is no exception. We have four panelists today joining us and each is working in a different industry, so we'll get to hear a range of experiences from them.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I'll start with Andrea Dean. She is an Organizational Development Consultant, as well as a doctoral student at Western. Her work as a consultant in Bermuda and Canada focuses on organizational behavior and change management in private and public organizations.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Next is Dr. Shane Dixon, who is a senior research associate with the Center for Research on Security Practices at Wilfrid Laurier University. His position involves collaborating with CRSP members to write research grant applications as well as facilitating other research activities at the university.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Next is Dr. Loanna Heindinger, who is a Research Analyst at Statistics Canada, where she uses her skills in research design methodology and data analysis to meet the policy and information needs of various government departments and other stakeholders.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

And we also have Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi, who is a Community Outreach Advisor with the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, working with the Cultural Brokerage program, and she is also the Senior Strategist and facilitator at Animwaa Consultancy. Thank you all for joining us.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

We are going to start today with a poll. We would like our attendees to answer this poll about where you are in your job search. Maybe you are just starting to think about career possibilities, maybe you're preparing to enter the job market, maybe you're currently on the job market, and maybe you already have a job but you're just interested in other options and hearing about what other people are doing. We'll leave the poll up for you for a few seconds to answer.

Where are you in your job search?

- I have only started to think about career opportunities
- I am preparing to enter the market soon
- I am currently on the market
- I already have a job, but am interested in learning about other options

All right, so it looks like most of you, almost half have only started thinking about career possibilities. That's great. You're in the right place. And a lot of you are also preparing to enter the market soon. So, thank you for that. We'll keep that in mind when we're answering your questions.

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Dr. Kristyn Frank:

The way this is going to work today is that we're going to get into a discussion of kind of five general questions with a bunch of sub questions to help us get a sense of what to expect for careers outside of academia. As was mentioned earlier, these questions were determined by the feedback we received from our audience, you, when registering. So hopefully you'll see your questions reflected in this discussion and if not, we have Q&A where you can ask questions throughout that we'll answer at the end.

We'll start at the beginning, of course. And often the first question people ask is where do I even start looking for a job? I'll ask our panelists. **Where did you look for job postings or opportunities? And in your industry, do you have any ideas of where people can look, what kind of job titles that maybe they should be looking for, as a master's or PhD graduate.** Anybody have any ideas about that?

Andrea Dean:

I remember when I was starting to look for a job, I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I didn't know, as a sociologist, it wasn't clear, there's not an obvious path for what a sociologist does. I decided to look at just large or well-known organizations, because my strategy was to find a place where there's lots of opportunity within an organization, to move, to meet people who do different things, and maybe that would help me figure out what I wanted to do. That was really my strategy because I wasn't sure.

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

With me, what I did was I started looking at *Reach Hire*. And the reason why I said I look at Reach Hire was because I was interested in not-for-profit organizations and most not-for-profits, especially in Calgary, post their job postings on Reach Hire. And so that was the first place that I looked at. But then I know other people that have looked at LinkedIn. There are job opportunities that are being posted on LinkedIn every single day. When you go to the job search on *LinkedIn*, you can look through and see if you qualify. I know people look at government websites. Most of the jobs that I have done were at the University because I came to Canada as an international student, so I could only work on campus (before I became a permanent resident). And so, for me, while I was still a student, most of the jobs that I looked at were on the University website. And you can look specifically for non-academic areas or job opportunities on the University website. You can use LinkedIn for sure, Reach Hire for nonprofit jobs, and university websites.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I can add my two cents from the government side. If you're interested in federal government jobs, you would go to "<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/opportunities/government.html>." It's a little overwhelming. There's a lot of jobs posted there. Most jobs that I think sociologists would be interested in, and most jobs that they work in, in government and federal government, are called 'analyst' of some kind; policy analyst, research analyst, etc. That's what you would be looking for.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

I agree with what Animwaa and Andrea have said. I also think it's worth taking a lot of time even before you get into the job hunt, to take a step back and see just what is out there. As Andrea mentioned, a lot of times there's no clear path. I think the default path, for a lot of grad students, is that they will become

academics. A big part of that is teaching, and so we get a great grounding in that. I think we have to go an extra step, probe a little bit more, to figure out, what are the other possibilities? I think, as the panelists already mentioned, LinkedIn is a great one and there are other ones, but pushing your department to find out where previous grads have gone and what their experiences are. And then, if possible, reach out and tap them on the shoulder and say, "What is this? What's it like?" I know from my own experiences that I had no idea what research facilitation was before I ended up at Wilfrid Laurier in 2014. I didn't know it (research administration) existed. It's something that goes on behind the curtains, kind of 'shadow work' to pull in an Anselm Strauss term. It was a bit of a shock and awakening, a great one, to learn that people are using their skills in meaningful ways for research. I think asking a lot of questions, pushing your faculty--not to add to the faculty's already heavy workloads--but asking those important questions.

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

I think a lot of people already touched upon some of the great resources. Kristyn, you talked about government jobs.gc.ca is really good if you're looking for government jobs. I looked for jobs, as well, on *Indeed*, which I found was really helpful. There's so many different job titles out there and a lot of job titles that you yourself could actually do and might not know you could do. For myself, I was a Stata user and I did a lot of data analysis. I used to look up Stata and would look up jobs that would require someone to have Stata experience. And from there, I could pinpoint a lot of different jobs that I wouldn't have thought of otherwise. But it really did give me a good opportunity to branch out, see what else is out there, and not pigeonhole myself to just research or analyst positions. There might be other opportunities that you might not even know exist because you might not know that that title exists.

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

When I tell people that I'm doing a PhD in Sociology, or when I was in school and saw people, they'd say: "Oh, then you're going to become a professor," or "Then you're going to become a lecturer." That was what was expected of me. When I started looking for jobs, that was really hard. What do I look for? What is the title that I have to look for? And then I started looking for research, associate research, things associated with research. But one thing that I realized is I'm doing something totally different from research, and that is community advisor. I stopped looking at research because I'm a qualitative researcher and really, it's quite hard to find qualitative research jobs. Most of the jobs are tailored for quantitative, those who are using Stata, SPSS, and all those other things. And so, what I found that was really important was I stopped looking at job titles, and I started looking at the job position and reading the requirements. I was looking at the requirements and seeing if my skills are things that they want. I did presentations when I was a TA back in school, so I can stand in front of people and talk and present. That is something that you can do. Even though the position didn't actually say anything with regard to research, it's important that we are opening up each job posting and looking at the requirements. We need to ask ourselves if we can apply some of the things that we learned in sociology because there are things that we did that can translate.

It's really, really important that we are not looking for specific job titles because that can limit us. I've had people asking me why I did sociology and saying that sociology is not a professional degree, not an applied degree, and that when I finish, I have to teach because there is nothing else I can do with that degree. At that point, I got really stressed out, especially when the PhD became more stressful, having children, and doing everything I was doing, I worried that I should take a professional course, which was very

disheartening. Don't look for job titles only, or else you'll be very limited. Open up all the job postings, look at what they require, see if you can apply some of the skills that you have from grad school, and then apply for the job.

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

Building on what Animwaa said, it's definitely important to start looking early as well. Because what I did was look at what possible jobs I could do early on and then I would look at the requirements. I looked at jobs that I thought I might want to do, or jobs that I thought would fit my potential career path. I would look at what the qualifications were or what employers were looking for and then I would try to get those experiences during my time in school. You have the ability to look jobs up, and you're able to really get a good picture of what people are looking for beforehand, and you can try to build the desired experiences while you're in school. School is a really good time to build your experience. If you know what people are looking for, you're able to get that going before you go into the job market.

Dr. Shane Dixon

To build on what Loanna and Animwaa said, I like to think about what we've been talking about as reverse engineering. You have this strong sense, hopefully, passion. I know that sounds trite, but I think that it's so important, to find something that you find interesting and meaningful that's going to motivate you to hop out of bed and get after it every day so that you can be successful and enjoy what you're doing whatever that happens to be. Whether you're a statistician, or an advocate, or something else. So, figure that out early. I think it was what Loanna said, you know, start really early. I would suggest start well before the job hunt even begins and find out what it is that drives you. Is it advocacy? Is it quantitative methods? Or is it just the pure love of research design and building something from the ground up so that you produce some new knowledge that hopefully will have an impact? Zero in on that and then reverse engineer it. Figure out, for that occupation, whatever it is you need along the way so that you can gather it up, almost like a bit of a scavenger hunt along the way, so that when it comes to the end, when it comes to race day, and you've finished your PhD, you're not just left going, "Oh, I should have grabbed that. And I should have had that. And I should have this." So, yeah a lot of alignment with what the previous panelists have said.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I'll just add that employers don't always know that sociologists have some of those skills they're looking for. You kind of have to inform them, as well, sometimes. A friend of mine applied for a job where the title was 'Statistician,' but he looked at the actual job description and he said, "I can do all of that." They brought him in, they interviewed him, they talked to his supervisor and asked his supervisor, "Well, can he do this, and this, and this?" And he said, "Yeah, absolutely." And he got that job even though it was called statistician, which, you know, he doesn't have a degree in statistics, the kinds of things they wanted someone to be doing in that job, were really things that a sociologist could do. Sometimes we have to kind of tell the employer what we have and what we can do for them too. Be aware of that and definitely look through job descriptions.

How about we move on to the next question. **How long did it take you to find a job in your field or to find your particular position? Or to start up what you've been doing, if you're doing consultancy or something like that?**

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

I know we've moved on, but I just wanted to explain a bit more for international students. I'm originally from Ghana, and back home, what we call Administrative Assistant here in Canada is called Secretary back home. Some of the job titles can be misleading, and so it's definitely important to read job requirements, open it up. Because if I was a secretary back home and I moved here, and I'm looking for a secretary job, trust me, I will be unemployed for a very long time because it is referred to as an administrative assistant.

Okay, so moving on. In the not-for-profit sector it takes a very short time - this was my story. I applied. I was supposed to send my resume to the supervisor in charge of the program, and then he didn't respond. I think it took two weeks and it was fast because, as is typical for a not-for-profit, they get their funding from government and they have to use the funding over a period of a year. They're just looking for someone to fill the position, and it's not going to take them months, and the job won't be posted for months. They need to fill it as soon as possible because they need to be able to justify how they're using the money. If they haven't hired anyone for months, questions will be raised around the money for that person. Where's the money? Who's using the money? Who is spending the money? And so as soon as possible, so this is what happened.

I also think I need to say this: my LinkedIn page was just dead and there was really nothing there. When I sent my resume, and I hadn't heard anything, I looked at the supervisor's name, and I realized that he was very active on LinkedIn. I needed to update my LinkedIn. Every job that I had on my resume, I put on my LinkedIn. The next day I got an email that I should come in for an interview. I feel like when you put job titles that you have had on your LinkedIn page, then it's generally true. If I've said I've done this with the University of Calgary, I can't lie about that because the University of Calgary can come out and say, "I'm sorry, we don't know you." And so, I updated my LinkedIn page, and got a call to come in for an interview. I went in for the interview. The next day after the interview, I got my offer letter. So that was how quick it was. It was less than two weeks. That is for a not-for-profit, though, so I can't speak for other sectors.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

For me, it was about four years from the time the PhD finished to the time I obtained a full-time job with benefits and a good salary position at Wilfrid Laurier with the Office of Research Services. I came out of my PhD, quickly searched around, had a research assistantship for four months, and then I started a postdoc at Ryerson. I was there for about three and a half or four years, and some of it was part-time postdoc work and other times was full-time postdoc work. It was on soft money, so there was always this search for myself and my supervisor to look for grant funding for research projects that would help support me along the way, which was unintentionally wonderful because that gave me a huge amount of practice in writing grant applications which partly got me the job at Wilfrid Laurier. All told, that was about four years. And during that time, I was doing some contract teaching, and doing a lot of soul searching. I became a parent just before my PhD ended, had another child on the way, so there was a lot of pressure building up. So, I began to really look at different types of opportunities during that time as well.

Andrea Dean:

I think that for me, people ask, "How long did it take you to find a job?" But the job itself didn't take very long to find, maybe a couple of months. But for me, I still didn't know what I wanted to do and that's been

the theme. I don't know what I want to do. I don't know what I want to be when I grow up. I'm still there. I think the important thing was, I was looking for an opportunity, not a job. I was not looking for the right job, or the job I was going to do forever, I was looking for a place where I could figure that out. So that made it easier in some ways because I was really open to opportunities and like the panelists have said, I looked at the requirements of a job and whether or not I thought I would like it and really try to follow, not what I could do, but what I might want to do. Again, I just looked for an opportunity in a bigger place. Once I found that, I had one job, and then in that same organization, I ended up having four different jobs over time. That's really how I learned so much of what I learned in order to become a consultant. It was really just looking for a space where I can grow, and I can figure out what I want to do, and I'm going to get exposed as opposed to looking for a job.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Great, I'm going to move on here. We already touched on using LinkedIn and that sort of thing, but **can anybody speak to networking? Generally, how important was that for you? Have you done any informational interviews with people? If you did, how did you set those up? Can anybody talk about their experience with networking?** Does anybody other than Animwaa have extensive LinkedIn experience and networking?

Andrea Dean:

I'm actually the opposite. I have no experience with LinkedIn because I've never used it. I've never used social media or any of the other platforms. I found the networking that worked best for me was talking to people, and I feel like more opportunities have come by having random conversations with people just talking about what I'm passionate about or what I care about. A lot of times, even today, I'll be talking about something and someone will say "I didn't know you did that," and then all of a sudden, we make a connection and there's some opportunity. I think it may also depend on the industry that you're in because, as an Animwaa said, if you're looking for certain things, there may be certain jobs where people use LinkedIn a lot. I think you have to try to understand the space you're looking in to decide whether or not that's useful.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I'll say, from my experience, I've been contacted by students when they see my name in a conference program or something and say, "Oh, that person is going to be at this conference." I've met a few people that way, who just messaged me on LinkedIn and asked if we could meet for a coffee or something like that. Don't hesitate to do that. If you see someone's name and think that maybe they're working at a job that is of interest, don't hesitate to contact them.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

One of the things - - and I think it builds a little bit on what Andrea said - - is the importance of being present, of being there, of putting yourself in a position where you can network. Apart from when you're amidst a crisis like this pandemic, get out there and talk to people. Not necessarily the formal networking which some people find absolutely painful to do, especially if you're a bit of an introvert. I'm talking about going to these gatherings that you might have in your department, or invitations from people to go to different talks, and just talking to people about what it is you're doing. And sometimes it's hard, but I

strongly encourage you to let people know what it is you're up to and what kind of research you're doing. Because as Andrea said, people forget. We're all busy, and it's hard to pay attention to everybody. To pull up an old reference from Granovetter and his strength of weak ties, it's some of those relationships that may be weak or they're on the outer rim of the people that you know. You never know how they may come back to you. What I've discovered over the past four or five years is that it has been wonderful at times when something comes out of seemingly nowhere, but you've had connections with the person going back a year or two, and they've spoken to somebody else that is interested in something that you're doing, or they need some sort of skill that you have or that somebody else has. And then, you know, these linkages are made, and then somebody finds an opportunity. So, plug in and be present. It sounds simple, but a lot of people don't do it and they wonder, "Oh, no one's no one's talking to me," or "No one knows who I am." You have to put yourself out there.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Okay, we're going to slide into question three. It's kind of one of my favorite questions, actually, because it's sort of touches on my research a little bit. The question is: **how do I leverage or translate my academic skills in the non-academic job market? Can you talk about some of the key skills that people in your industry and employers are looking for? Any tips on how to apply the skills outside of academia?**

Andrea Dean:

I think the first thing to do is to think about the skills you've learned versus the activities you've done. For example, we all know from being graduate students that you know how to write a paper, but what that translates into is, "I know how to plan something." "I know how to research it," not only the actual methodologies, but actually know how to look into something and to get a sense of the scope of something. You absolutely have the skills to synthesize, which are unusual skills. You would be surprised how many people cannot do that in the work environment. You have unique communication skills because you've had to develop that. Whether you think you're a good writer or not, the fact is, you're probably a better communicator, in a lot of ways, than a lot of people who don't practice that in their training. I think the first part is to really sit down and think, "What did I do?" "What did I get out of it?" And, "What skills do I have?" Because that's how you're going to start to figure out how grad student skills connect to the skills employers want. That's probably a good place to start.

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

Okay, so I agree with Andrea on what she said. I think, for those of you that are not on the market and are going to start looking, you need to see what you want to do and start working on it. If you've got a list of skills and activities, for example, working as a TA, think about what you did as a TA. If you run a lab, you're standing in front of as many as 70 students and you're talking to them. If you did your master's defense, you defended your master's, that is presentation experience. Being a TA is also presentation experience.

I know that when I saw the community advisor position, one of the qualifications was they wanted someone who could develop presentations about racism. My research was on racism, check. I could make presentations, check. I was a sessional instructor, so I developed my own curriculum and lecture notes, so I can do that. They also wanted someone that had engaged with a community, and I was a community

advisor on campus. I was in charge of students living in school residential facilities, and I organized activities for them. This experience was handy because I needed to connect with the community, and because I have done that, I am able to transfer those networking skills to a job. List all the things that you have done and the skills developed from these activities.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I often tell people you need to take that step back and look at what you're really doing because we tend to get really focused on our specific subject areas or dissertation topic. Like Andrea said, we are synthesizing information which is a huge thing that a lot of people can't do. We're managing a project, and we're really good at time management, hopefully, by the end of it. You need to step back and think about your skills a little bit differently because you do have skills and these 'academic skills' are absolutely transferable to other jobs outside of academia.

The other question was, "Does anybody have any advice or tips for writing a resume or cover letter(s) for your particular industry?"

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

What has really helped me with cover letters is to think of them as a pre-interview and an opportunity to sell yourself. Your resume has what you did you, not what came out of it. So usually when I write my cover letters, I see it as a way to show myself and tell them what I did and what I was able to achieve. One example that comes to mind from when I was a community advisor, I was able to start a mother's support group and handled the budget for the group. This shows that I'm someone who's creative and can think on my feet. These are skills that I didn't learn from being a sociologist because they don't teach about budgeting. Try to see it as a pre-interview. Sell yourself, tell them what you have done, and what came out of it, what contributions you made to a team, and what your successes were. People like to be very modest when it comes to the things that they've done and what they have achieved. Don't be like that. If you write, "I'm a team player," then explain how you are a team player. That is how you will get invited in for a personal interview or maybe even get an offer letter.

Andrea Dean:

I think one of the things that I did when I was at university is work in Western's Career Development Centre, and we would help people with resumes. As Animwaa said, people like to be modest or they're really uncomfortable with resume writing. It can be a very uncomfortable thing to do because you're trying to say some stuff about yourself and most people aren't good at that. One of the tips would be to use a service like that or get some feedback and don't sit necessarily in your idle space and try and figure out what is right. The most important thing that I ever did in that role was just ask people, "What did you get out of this job you have listed?" "What did you learn?" And a lot of times people forget to make that translation. Just talking about it with someone can be helpful.

With respect to resumes, my preference has always been to do functional resumes instead of chronological because that allows you to write down the narrative about what you learned, what you got out of it, and what skills you have. If someone looked at my resume, they might think, "That doesn't even make sense." Because it doesn't look like a nice linear progression. I always present the skills that I have and some of the

places where I got them. What that does is it encourages a conversation because people can't fill in the blanks without you actually having the opportunity to tell a story of where you got that skill. Get some input from other people, and really do the work to tell somebody what you might bring to the table, but not just through a list of your history.

Dr. Shane Dixon

I have just two points because I think a lot of what I had to say has already been talked about. One, as we already discussed a little bit, figure out where you want to go with your career, and start picking up the pieces so that when you sit down to write that resume or CV, you already have this wonderful collection, this repertoire of skills and experiences, that you can lay out for a prospective employer.

The second thing is, keep that prospective employer in mind as you craft your CV, resume, or cover letter. Speak to their interests. Maybe they won't want to know that much about your wonderful theoretical background. I'm not picking on theory folks here because that's the world we operate in, but set it (CV/resume/cover letter) up so that you're framing it to speak to what they're interested in. To Andrea's point, perhaps, don't just put it down as a nice list or an enumeration of what you've done. Speak to the people that you're hoping to get a position with and do your homework, dig in, visit their website once, or twice, or many times. Look deeply at what the job ad is asking you for. Use their terminology and align it with what you are doing, and speak to their organization in the tasks that you might have by incorporating them into your cover letter. It can be as simple as, "I see on your website that you've done this." Or, "I see in the job ad that the person will be required to do X, Y, and Z. Well, I've done A, B, and C so this is why I'm a great fit." And then you support that with all the marvelous things that you've accomplished over time.

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

Shane basically said what I was going to say. Definitely cater your cover letter. In my experience, I don't usually change my resume, and I have kind of like a standard resume. I know some people do cater theirs, but mine and the jobs that I've applied for are usually about the same. Certainly, cater your cover letters to the jobs that you're applying to, and especially look at the job ad. What are they looking for? What's the experience they're looking for? Pick out those points, because that's what they want in an applicant.

The second thing is that there is a difference when you apply for private sector jobs and for government jobs. In the private sector, you have your resume and a cover letter. In government, I've noticed that a cover letter is asked for less frequently, and instead you get asked what's called screening questions, which I would say act almost as a cover letter and directly ask about your experience. So definitely think about that when you're applying for jobs. For the government screening questions, they really do want detailed information when they're asking for your experience. It's important to make sure that you include more information than what's on your resume because they want to make sure that you're meeting those requirements as you're screening in to be a potential candidate, to be interviewed, or to be given exams or what have you.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

And I'll just add to that, government applications are really a whole different thing, we would probably need another webinar on that alone. Just so you're aware of the way the process works, the first time they

sort through the applications, people from HR are going to be looking at it. You're not going to have sociologists reading your first application. It's really important to be very specific in the screening questions. You might feel like you're repeating yourself a lot but you have to be very clear. It might help to envision someone going down a checklist. It's not what you're used to in the academic realm, but that's the way it works. That's the tip on getting through the first round with government jobs.

I'll move along. Actually, I'll ask Loanna specifically, because she brought this question up. What can students do while they're graduate students to help them prepare for a job outside of academia?

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

I think, for myself, in particular, what really helped me is experience, experience, experience. I cannot stress enough the importance of experience. In particular, getting experience outside of the academic setting. If you are going to be looking for non-academic jobs, jobs outside of academia should be where you're trying to get experience. For myself, personally, I used to work in family medicine as a research assistant, which seems kind of out there. But again, it was a research position, which I knew was what I wanted to do. Family Medicine was hiring, so I said, "Hey." The other thing that I do is I actually volunteer, as well, which is a great way of getting experience in research in the field that you'd like to be working in. And it's a great way of making connections, and it might not be for a job, but you never know what opportunities can come from the connections that you make. I think that's also important.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

In the interest of time, I'm going to go to the next question about consultancy work. Maybe Andrea and/or Animwaa could talk a little bit about the skills you need for consultancy, and maybe discuss how you finds clients.

Andrea Dean:

As I said before, when I first started looking, I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do and I didn't know that I wanted to consult and I never actually thought of being self-employed. What happened, when I look back, is that my associate degree gave me so many marketable skills that I didn't even really know how to market them. But I would get that feedback when I was at work. I would get feedback on my ability to write or I would get feedback on market research because I understood stats and some of the qualitative and quantitative stuff. I had a bit of an edge that I didn't realize I had until I was in the roles that I was in. All of those skills also then got honed in a corporate environment. Any public or private workspace is its own learning environment, you have to learn how things work in those environments. How do people and how do the dynamics of those spaces work? That's an education in and of itself that you can't get from school. I honed that in a corporate environment and as I was navigating around, I found my passion. I just kept finding the things that I really love to do, and kept driving towards that, and used that space to get training, to get experience, to get exposure, to sign up for projects and things like that.

Once I had really figured out what I wanted to do, it became really easy to take that outside as a consultant. I ended up being really more like an internal consultant because I didn't want to get stuck in a space. What I love the most and what translated from sociology was as a sociologist, we understand something about dynamics, right? We understand things about power and inequality, we understand things about the way

in which groups work. That's what you're doing in an organization. You have departments that are groups, you have power issues, you have politics. If you can navigate that, then you can really navigate your own path. I became more like an internal consultant and then once I figured out, "Hey, I could do this, like every day, I could really do this," a friend of mine and I took it outside and just decided to offer to other companies what we already offered internally.

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

I've always wanted to do something on my own, but I didn't know what it was. I would get really good reviews on my TAs and most of the courses that I teach were on racism because that's what my research is on. When I went to work where I'm currently working, I was supposed to help develop presentations around diversity. Sometimes I would talk about diversity, and I'd bring some of my lived experiences, and I'd talk a little bit about racism, and I would always get people telling me that I was a very good presenter and that I was very knowledgeable about what I spoke about. And so, I thought, "Wait, this is this is something I could really do," but I just let it slide. Then one time, I remember, after a presentation, someone comes up to me and says, "You speak very well. I understood you. You talked passionately about issues with regard to racism, diversity, and all that. If you have your own consultancy company, I'll hire you to do presentations for my organization. If you decide to ever do it, this is my card, get in contact." So that is how it started. Someone gave me the idea when they told me, "If you do this, I would hire you for you to speak to my organization." For me, that is how it started.

You asked another question about how we get clients. Usually there are a lot of people already doing what you're doing, but what is working for me is word of mouth. LinkedIn can be really tough because a lot of people are talking about this already and that is their full-time job. I already have a job, and this is something I'm building up on the side. For me, what has really worked is word of mouth, and most of the clients that I've had have been through word of mouth.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Okay, we're going to move on, I feel like we are running out of time a little bit. I want to get to some of the other questions, but that thanks for that! One of the questions that came up from our participants when registering was about contract jobs or casual work. **Is contract or casual work common in your industry? How long does it take to find something permanent?** We talked a little bit about that, so maybe you can talk about whether contract or casual work is common in your particular industry. If you worked in those kinds of jobs after graduating, do you have any comments about that?

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

With not-for-profits, most of the jobs that are offered are usually contract because they're based on funding. Programs get funded for a limited amount of time and it can be cut short. If you decide to go to a not-for-profit, be prepared that most of the jobs that you would have will be based on funding and so you can have a job today, and then in a few months and they'll tell you, "Our funding has been cut, so you can't have a job." When it comes to contract jobs, what I always tell people is if you're just fresh out of school, and you're looking for jobs, and there's a one-year or two-year contract, take it and use it as a learning experience. Go there and learn more about your skills, make sure that you're keeping a very good relationship with your supervisors because that could be the place that you'd be able to catapult from to go

on to a better, permanent job. If you are offered a contract job that is one or two years, go for it! Sometimes it can be extended, it can become permanent, you never know. There have been jobs where people take maternity leave and don't come back again, and their position becomes a permanent opening.

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

From my experience when I've been on the job market, I do find that a lot of the jobs are contract positions, which isn't to say that there aren't permanent positions, but I do find that there are a lot of contract positions, in research especially. I think it's important when you go into your interviews to ask your employer about the possibility that a position can become a permanent. That way you can get an idea of kind of what you're getting into. I wouldn't say no to a contract position. If you don't have anything else kind of going on, it's a great way to earn experience or to get experience. And it's a great way to use your skills and to apply for different jobs, and from there, who knows. It could go into different possibilities. I think that, you know, sometimes it happens, but it's part of your career trajectory, and, eventually, you'll probably get something that's more permanent.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

Okay, we're going to slide into question 5. This is probably a question that everyone's curious about--the mystery of the non-academic job. **Can you talk a bit about the benefits of a career outside of academia? Are there similarities between academic and non-academic jobs? Do you work with a lot of other PhDs or sociologists? And, is there a stigma around non-academic careers?**

Andrea Dean:

I've worked in government, the private sector, and I'm now self-employed, and I think it depends. When we talk about things like work-life balance, for instance, it depends on how you define that. So, for instance, work-life balance, for me, is being able to decide when I'm going to do the things I'm going to do, but it doesn't mean that I have great work-life balance. I work a lot. I like working, but I think you have to define that for yourself. But the benefits of working, I think, in the private sector, in particular, is to get the experience. They're great learning environments. If you work at an institution like a university or a larger corporate environment, there's money there where people will send you on training, there's opportunities to invest in yourself as you go along with somebody else footing the bill. We all know that in academia, if you're going to go to a conference, you have to find some of the money, there's not a lot of money necessarily in that space. I found that to get training, to learn, to develop my skills, to network informally, and to just get to know people was really good.

Andrea Dean:

In the beginning, there was also the illusion of stability. Here we're talking about contract versus permanent positions, and the reality is a permanent job is a really nice illusory moment, but they're not permanent. We can all lose a job, things can change--the last six months should tell us that, right? Things can change at the drop of a hat. At the beginning, I thought it was the stability that I wanted, but I found that the benefits of working, when I transferred over to self-employment, were the opportunity to actually earn more income than you do when you work privately because you can have multiple baskets that that comes from. The ability to just work on the things I'm passionate about. So, over time, the ability to choose, to choose clients, to choose projects, to choose areas of passion. For me, when you're passionate

about something, when you're clear about what you want, when you're excited about what you're doing, you draw people to you and you get more clients. The opportunities there were more than I ever imagined. I think in the non-academic jobs, sometimes you have a little bit more discretionary time and effort. You can make decisions, especially in consulting, about how and when you're going to work, which is really positive. I think it just depends on where you are in your life stage. I would say that, for a lot of people, if you can find yourself within an organization that is going to help you learn, train you, and help you get contacts in that space, that's a phenomenal way to start, especially if you do eventually want to do something on your own. It's a great training opportunity.

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

A stigma I've encountered, and I've heard it a lot, is that when people ask me where I work, they say "Really? You didn't become a professor? You didn't go for a postdoc? You don't even work in a university setting?" Even at work, when people know that I was working towards my PhD they say, "Oh, no, here?" There's actually a stigma with having a PhD in general and working in a non-academic setting. So a lot of sometimes I have asked myself if I am supposed to be here, but I like the flexibility because I'm not working to become a professor, currently, where I need to do this and this to become tenured. I can always switch and change. I find that if there is something somewhere that I really like, I can always pack my bags and go. I like the flexibility, and I like the fact that you can work from home. Before now, most people couldn't work from home. If you are a professor, and you have to teach a class, you have to be on campus. You have to teach it, unless your class was an online class. But with what I do, you could always work from home. I work with the community, I work with people, it is very flexible. and so I think that is what matters. I think people always expect you to work in an academic setting when you have a PhD. But where I work is good for me and what is good for me is more important than their expectations.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

I think it's important for students that are just finishing up or who are midway in their program to start asking some important questions. We've touched on these throughout the last hour or so. Some of these questions are about what a professor does. I think we all have this idea about what professors do. We see the front stage, we see them teach, we see them do research, we see them do presentations, and we see them consult with us as students in a supervisory role. Often, we don't ask faculty members, especially emerging scholars that are pre-tenure, what's involved in the job, how much is involved in the job, and how many hours are involved in a job. Because there are many that I've talked to over the last decade or so, early career scholars, and they are working extremely long hours to ensure that they achieve tenure, that they're able to push out another article or two before the year is over, and to get that grant application finished off. Not to mention the work-life balance because these folks have families just like everybody else. There's a lot of juggling and I think there's a tremendous amount of obligation there. I think it's also one of the most wonderful careers one could have because of the freedom and flexibility in terms of latitude around what you want to do and what you want to study. I think for the students that are listening we need to ask questions about what is it that faculty do? Do we really have a good sense of what it's (professorship) is all about? And then ask yourself, is that what you want to do? Do you love to teach? Are you willing to put in long hours to achieve tenure and to keep publishing, and to keep publishing? Because it is publish or perish. The coin of the realm still remains publications and successful grants. So I think there's something to be said for some of the non-faculty positions where you can have 8am to 4pm or

8:30am to 4:30pm or 9am to 5pm. I am not talking about all jobs but there is something to be said about a job where you can say, "Okay, I've done with 35 or 40 hours this week, I'm stepping away, because this is what my contract says." In some occupations that doesn't exist. Bearing that in mind and learning a little bit more as a student about what faculty do and how much time and energy is put in, I think some people will be very surprised by how much faculty are doing and just what it takes to receive tenure, and then to maintain that level of output and work, especially at research intensive universities.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

We will probably talk about this a bit too in the Q & A. But that was our last discussion question. We're at the time period for questions and answers that were submitted throughout our discussion. Awish will be reading those questions out, and we'll have one or two panelists respond to each question. Awish, I will turn it over to you now.

Awish Aslam:

Thanks, Kristyn, and thank you to our panelists for a really wonderful discussion. We've got a lot of questions coming in and those of you in the audience can start upvoting the questions you'd like to see addressed.

The first question is, **how does one navigate the non-academic job search if their supervisor heavily pushes them towards an academic path? Or, are there other sort of resources that you can tap into to get that support?**

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I'll just answer because no one else is answering. I was fortunate I had a supervisor who was really kind of open to different options, but I'm sure probably preferred that I go in the academic path. Honestly, it comes down to you and what you want and if your supervisor isn't supportive of that, you just have to go and do what you want to do. Oftentimes, you get partway through your program and you realize you don't really like teaching or some other aspect of it. It doesn't mean stop the program, but it means maybe you want to look at other options. It takes a lot of courage and a lot of confidence, I know that, but don't let your life be dictated by one person that has a little bit of power over you. It's about you, your life, and your choices. Try to push through, go out on your own, and try to make those connections outside of academia as well.

Andrea Dean:

I was just going to say, very similar to what Kristyn said, you really have to just go in your direction. I think it also relates to something Shane said earlier, which is find out what that really means. I remember when I was leaving, after my master's, and I had a professor come to me and say, "You're absolutely crazy. This is the best job ever, and you're never going to make more money than you could make being a professor." And basically just gave me a doom and gloom perspective where if you leave these walls, bad things are going to happen. I ignored that because I knew that I couldn't find support in that space. So I had to go and figure it out elsewhere. And I think you both made just really good points. One is, go find out what it means to be in academia, because as Shane pointed out, there's lots that we don't ever see and so you need to have a sort of better idea of that. Also, go on your own path. Your supervisor is there to supervise that part of your life and the work that you're doing but not to supervise the decisions you make about the rest of your life.

Awish Aslam

Thank you. We are getting a lot of questions about government, so I've tried to summarize them into one kind of long question. There's a lot of people are interested in working for Statistics Canada, but they have some reasons to be skeptical about it because it seems to be that a lot of people who end up working in in that field may already have contacts and it's difficult to penetrate if you don't have the right sort of access. There's a question that was directly asked to Loanna, someone wants to know more about your pathway. If you could speak about that in detail, especially because you did a postdoc. **How do you apply for jobs at Statistics Canada? Including applying to general pools. How do they screen the resumes? How do you incorporate the competencies that they list in the job ad into your cover letter and resume? How many rounds of interviews do you go through? Are there written tests? Just generally, how do we get in?** And I know that you're not a representative for Statistics Canada, but maybe you could speak to your experience.

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

I will preface this with I'm not a representative of Statistics Canada at all in terms of hiring. I don't do any of the hiring but I can talk about my experience. I did do a postdoc at Statistics Canada. I applied for it before I graduated and had the job right about the time I was defending and graduating. It really coincided well in that sense. I happen to be a really good match for the pos doc because they were hiring in a field of exactly what I did my research in. I applied to the general postdoc call. I am not sure when that happens, but when I applied it was an April. You might want to keep an eye out in April. I know that Stats Can also does a recruitment program for post-secondary students, which you can also apply for. My understanding is that one takes about a year and that call goes out around September. That's how I've seen it happen before. I got a post doc and did that. My application was my resume. I believe there were screening questions. I believe that there was a research proposal of sorts. They did the interviews, all this other stuff. I don't know, there was a process and I was selected as their candidate. Actually, I was in a pool first, I should mention that, and then I was selected as a candidate. I don't know how much more information I could really give in terms of the process. Really, that's just how it happened for me. Because Kristyn has been there longer than I have, maybe she can speak a little bit more about options that are there.

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I can speak a little bit to that. So first off, go to jobs.gc.ca because there is recruitment going on right now. The job postings that are up right now will say EC-2 and EC-4, which are government job titles. Most sociologists working in government are in EC, which stands for economics and social science services. If you have a PhD, you're usually going to start as a level four. That's all publicly available information in terms of the pay grade and it's on the job ad. That's the main way that people can get in from school after they have graduated. Look at that before you graduate though because it can take a while. Postdocs are usually by division. Loanna's was through the Health Analysis Division, which is kind of a sister division for my division, there's really no time of year that it's necessarily posted. It's usually posted when a division knows they have funding for it and they are looking for a particular person in a certain subject area. Like Loanna said, it's very much related to fit. In terms of other ways of getting in, I got in an unusual way in that there was a very specific job in my specific division that I applied to. I still had to write a test, I

still went through an interview, which was very much like an academic job interview for the first half, and in the second half there were questions that were more like about working for government, situational questions, etc. If you're interested in it, pursue it, apply, get at least the experience of applying for those kinds of jobs. It's not as shut down as you think in terms of opportunities, but you do have to know where to look for it and keep an eye out for it. Some postings will only be up for a week because we get tons and tons of applications, so keep an eye on it. And you can actually create an account on jobs.gc.ca and get email sent to you when job postings come up that might be relevant to you.

Awish Aslam:

Thank you. Our next question is: **do I need a PhD to get a good research job?** I think I'll contextualize that a bit, there are a lot of students who are in a master's and may be weighing the options of whether to just continue to a PhD or to start looking for work. Could any of our panelists speak to this?

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

I don't think so because, for me, the Department of Sociology, where I come from, a lot of the people that are working with the Alberta Health Services as a research associate or research assistant, they do not have a PhD, they have a Master's. Someone was actually doing her PhD and she got a very good offer from Alberta Health Services. She dropped her PhD and went for the research position. I don't think you need a PhD to get a good research position. All the people that I know, personally, or from my department, that are in research positions, do not have a PhD.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

I think I agree with Animwaa here. You don't need a PhD to get a good research job. Several people I know that were coming out with Master's, when I came out of University of Waterloo, went on to great marketing jobs. Then they built on early successes and now they're in coordination management roles within those or other marketing organizations. I will say, though, that we all study in some form, mobility, dynamics, power, status, and so forth, and the PhD does open certain doors, and it gives you access to certain ladders that you may not possibly have had with a Master's, so I would bear that in mind too. I know it's possible, but unlikely, to have a research facilitation job (without a PhD), like I had when I was in the Office of Research Services at Wilfrid Laurier. Every university that does research has a similar type of unit in it. Those are mainly populated by, when it comes to facilitators, those with PhDs. They want that extra level of experience and expertise and they want to know that the person being hired has done original research on his, her, or their own. I think what I would say is beware of what the limitations are for specific industries and job openings. I think in some industries the PhD is not important and it has very little significance, and you can go full tilt with a Master's and do extremely, extremely well and by extremely well I mean with a great salary, great benefits, high degree of mobility, but in others, you may be constrained a little bit more. That's how I would answer that.

Andrea Dean:

I won't add much because I think Shane already said it, but I would agree that you absolutely don't need the PhD and it does depend on what type of research. As sociologists, we often think about research a little differently than the average person. You consume research every day, you consume polls, you sign up for marketing surveys, you are participating in research in a lot of different ways. In the private sector you

don't need to have a PhD, you just need to understand the basic principles of research, which, in a lot of ways, you will have more information than most other people in your organization. So anytime you can participate and help design or conduct research, do it. You can get a lot of experience as Shane said, and you can craft a career out of that, but you definitely don't need a PhD, unless you're in specific spaces.

Awish Aslam:

Great, thank you. Next, we have a question for Andrea. Because you're already working as a consultant, I'm wondering how a PhD might help you. Is it worth it? Or could you be doing similar work with an MA? I'm sure it can help you strengthen your skills but for those of us who don't have the privilege of pursuing a PhD, can I find similar work without that degree? Also, do you have to have the economic cushion to take on a career in consulting, given the possible risk that you're taking on?

Andrea Dean:

Okay, let me try to answer that. First, so I am doing my PhD because I'm a nerd, and I really like being in school. You're absolutely right, I already have a consulting career established, I don't actually need to do the PhD. But it does actually make a difference. I am finding that it's consolidating some of my experience and it is making a difference in terms of what I do but more so probably just for my enjoyment than it is because somebody's going to hire me because I have a PhD. You don't necessarily have to have a cushion, but you do have to be really clear about what you need in order to run your life. When I switched from working for someone else to working for myself, I was actually living in Bermuda at the time. Bermuda is a very expensive place to live and I had a family, so it meant I was going to need to guarantee a certain amount of income. I wasn't sure I could do that. What I did was I moved back to Canada, where I can have my base here, but I could actually earn money somewhere else. I didn't have any economic cushion, but I knew that I could figure it out if I was here, versus somewhere else. I think it just depends. Even the economic cushion, all you need is sort of one or two clients and then as Animwaa said, by word of mouth, you get more. I never advertised, I never had a website, and once I started consulting, I quickly found that it was possible to have more income than I had had ever working for someone else. What it takes is an appetite for a little bit of risk because it's uncomfortable. You worry about if you're going to be able to do it, but everybody who goes out on their own faces that and then you quickly figure it out.

Awish Aslam:

Thank you. **Do sociologists have opportunities in the field of consultancy, counseling, and policy data analysis/prediction in the post-COVID labour market as far as non-academic jobs are concerned? How is COVID affecting the field?**

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

Yes, we do. I think that is one of the things that we have talked about. As sociologists, we are often boxed into the academic field, but there's a lot of things, there's a lot of skills, and there's a lot of experience that we have. We can stand on our own. I remember meeting a young man, and he was working for himself for a very long time. We got talking, and what he does is he does research for people. He has his own consulting firm, and companies reach out to him for him to evaluate the company and do research for them. So, post COVID--yes, it will be there, just look at the experience that you have and sell it to people.

Awish Aslam:

Thank you. Okay, we have nine questions and nine minutes left. I'm going to try to get through as many of these as we can. The next question is about networking. When reaching out to others and asking about their jobs and how they got their experiences outside of academia, what types of questions should you be asking? It can be awkward and intimidating.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

Just ask them a general question. Ask for the story, you know, "what happened?" "How did you get from PhD or Master's to where you are now?" "Please tell me the story with all the bumps and hindrances and windy roads included." Then you'll get a good sense of the fact that seldom is it a linear transition, there are stops, starts, fits, reversals and things like that. At least that's what my story was. I think just ask a broad question, "tell me how you got here."

Awish Aslam:

We've heard a bit from the panelists about how it's important for you to have experience. I think Loanna mentioned that it's important to have experience outside of university, outside of academia. **Beyond TAs or RAships, how can students manage that with the workload of their PhD? Do you have any suggestions around that?**

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I've been asked this before. One of my suggestions is, if you want to get involved on the research side of things, maybe look for professors who might not be your supervisor who are doing things related to policy or working with community groups in some way and kind of extend your networks that way. If there are professors offering research assistantships, for example, or they need interviewers or something like that, don't be afraid to approach professors who are not necessarily in your little circle.

Dr. Shane Dixon:

Stop taking on teaching assistant positions. That's a real simple one. It's not that simple, I know. The default for most PhD students going into programs is that you'll get X number of TA positions which are fantastic. You're going to learn great teaching experiences, how to create rubrics and how to mark and maybe do a little bit of teaching yourself. But ask yourself after you've done 6, 7, 8, is it wise to keep doing TAs, if you can find other options like the ones that Kristyn said, or the ones that Loanna said, or that others have said on the panel? Be fearless at some point and say, "Okay, if I want experience in other realms, how do I get it?" And, "Is it wise to keep doing TA ships?" I think they're great. But again, if you're going to be an academic TAs are extremely important. If you're not going into academia, then maybe think twice about doing yet another TA.

Awish Aslam:

Great, thank you. **Can the panelists speak a little more about looking for research positions with a background in qualitative research?**

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

NVivo, a qualitative program, is great to know how to use. It's a similar type of a program that you use for analysis. Different corporations and different industries might be looking for someone that has those specific skills. Bringing those skills sometimes is actually more important than the research area that you might be bringing to the table. For example, in quantitative research, if you know how to code, that is really important. You can learn a little bit more of the research, obviously, you know how to do research, you can learn the topic bit more easily than you can learn to code and to code well. I would think that translates as well into qualitative work, you know how to use the program, it's really important, it can translate into many different industries.

Andrea Dean:

Yeah, I was going to say that sometimes you can get some really good experienced by tagging onto a qualitative project where, in the short term, they need interviewers or even coordinators. That gives you the opportunity to translate what you learned in school into a real-life situation and that is bonafide experience. If you like qualitative research, you also get access to people who will use you again for something or will recommend you in different spaces, because not everybody likes qualitative research and not everybody is comfortable doing what you have to do in qualitative research, especially if you're talking and interviewing people. I think that's one of the ways to do it. Find the little opportunities and then you can translate those into bigger ones, but you also become part of a qualitative research community and people will call you when they know you're good at that.

Awish Aslam:

Thank you. We have another question about government. **How open are Canadian government jobs for international students? Is there a website or somewhere that people might be able to find this information that we can share with attendees later?**

Dr. Kristyn Frank:

I'll just say, I'm not sure entirely of the response to this, but FSWEF, the Federal Student Work Experience Program, might have some information. If you're an international student, you might be able to find some information there.

Awish Aslam:

Thank you. Okay. And then this question is for Loanna. For most jobs in Statistics Canada, they expect you to know Stata, R, or Python. Do you need to have experience with this software?

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

So that's a pretty good question. I would say you definitely need to be a strong coder if you're doing analysis work. Different divisions use different programs, from my understanding. If you're a strong coder in one program, it might be easier for you to transition into a different program if you need to. I would definitely say, make sure you have strong coding skills. For myself, I use Sass right now, but it varies by division. I would say have the skills of coding, more so than focusing on learning one particular language.

Awish Aslam:

Great, thank you. We have a question from someone who's finishing up their master's and is interested in entering into the law profession after their masters. What advice can you give them and procedures that might help them with that profession? I'm not sure if anyone on this panel is comfortable addressing this. No? That's okay, I'll get to our next question.

How can we structure our resume to tell a story of our skills when many jobs are using keywords and signifiers? How do we incorporate those key skills that might appear in a job ad into our cover letter or resume and how might that work in the screening process?

Dr. Animwaa Obeng-Akrofi:

Keep the keywords but still tell your story using the keywords. If you are looking for someone that is a critical thinker, still keep the key word that you're a critical thinker, but show how you're a critical thinker. Identify what program or what projects you did that proves that you are. So, still keep the keywords there and then use your story to explain how you got those skills or whatever it is that they're looking for.

Dr. Loanna Heidinger:

Just to build on what Animwaa said, definitely don't just list off the qualifications but expand on them. Put it in writing how what you do meets that qualification. Don't just say 'critical thinker' and then call it a day because that won't help you in any way. You want to show that you have a skill and how you have that skill.

Awish Aslam:

Thank you, we're out of time, so we're going to have to wrap up here. Thank you to all of our panelists for a very lively discussion as well as Kristyn Frank for chairing the panel. Thank you to all of our audience members for attending and for sharing your questions. A recording of the webinar will be posted online, on the Students@CSA page. Audience members will also be receiving a feedback survey from us, so we'd appreciate if you could please fill that out. Thank you all for joining us today. We will see you next time.