

## **Discussion Transcript for Webinar #4: Converting your CV into a Resume**

### **Slides 1/2/3:**

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#### **Emma Kay:**

Good afternoon and thank you for taking the time to join us today for our winter 2020 webinar series. We understand that these are unprecedented times and we hope that you are all safe and well. My name is Emma Kay and I am the Eastern Representative for the Canadian Sociological Association's Student Concerns Subcommittee. Our subcommittee also includes our Western Representative, Nicole Malette...

#### **Nicole Malette:**

Hello!

#### **Emma Kay:**

... and our Central Representative, Awish Aslam.

#### **Awish Aslam:**

Hi, everyone.

#### **Emmay Kay:**

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. Today's webinar is titled "Converting your CV to a Resume" and our guest speaker is Brittany Etmanski.

#### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Hi, everyone.

#### **Emma Kay:**

Brittany is a Ph.D. candidate in the Sociology and Legal Studies Department at the University of Waterloo. Her current research focuses on the career pathways of Canadian social science PhDs, and the opportunities that shape their careers within and beyond academia. She has prioritized the career development of graduate students throughout her studies, acting as an executive member of the Applied Sociology CSA Research Cluster, a departmental professional development workshop facilitator, and a departmental graduate student representative.

### **Slide 4**

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#### **Emma Kay:**

Before we begin, I would like to invite audience members to submit any questions that you might have for Brittany during this presentation or during the formal Q&A section of the webinar. You can post questions by using the Q&A function which you can find at the bottom of your screen. Your questions will be visible to all attendees and panellists and you may also 'like' questions to prioritize them. Now, I will turn the webinar over to Brittany. Thank you.

## Slide 5

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Thanks for that introduction, Emma and again, thank you to everyone who is here today. First off, I just wanted to start with the webinar agenda so that we have an idea of what we'll be going over today. We'll start out with an opening question or reflection which I will explain in more detail in the next slide. We'll then move into skills that employers have identified as important, or in some cases, crucial to them when hiring employees; the differences between a CV and your resume; and summary statements (which are kind of like your elevator pitch that you include in your resume - explaining yourself within a really brief period). We'll then talk about (now that we know the differences between CVs and resumes) how we go about converting our CV into a resume, with examples of both CVs and resumes, and also how to be applying to job ads with a specific resume and a specific job ad in mind. We will end with some final notes just to wrap things up and talk about general do's and don'ts.

## Slide 5

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

First, I wanted to start with a question to each of you. You may respond by writing your answers in the chat function. The other thing to make note of is that only panellists can see your answers (other respondents will not be able to see your answers). So, my question to those of you who are attending today is, if I were to ask you, or if a potential employer, or a connection that you met at conference or otherwise were to ask you to tell them about yourself, what would you say? And, what sorts of things about yourself would you highlight? I'll give everybody just a few minutes now to write in some of their answers of what they would say about themselves.

In some of the answers (without going into too much detail of any one person's answers) I see many of you talking about things like being a PhD candidate, talking about where you went to school, what your areas of research are, and that sort of thing. Which is oftentimes what most people tend to think of when answering this question. However, I also see (which is great) some of you noticing that you should be talking about things like your work experience, the skills that that has taught you, and in particular, someone mentioned how what they've learned has been contributing to the goals or what it is that they are wanting to do moving forward. So, that's great. You guys are smart cookies and you're already ahead of the game.

## Slide 6

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

I have included an example here. *My name is Brittany Etmanski, I'm a PhD candidate here and my research talks about X.* When you're trying to apply to jobs, particularly outside of academia, sometimes we have the habit of going into specific jargon from our discipline that doesn't necessarily mean anything to anyone outside of that discipline. Oftentimes what interviewers are more interested in, is the types of skills that you've been fostering. Your substantive area of research may still be of interest, but why are you a fit for their team? Why should they be invested in the skills you've been fostering and things of that nature.

When I was interviewing for my position as a research coordinator, this isn't verbatim, but to give you an idea of what that looks like, I said something to the extent of *"My research has focused on education policy, so I'm drawn to the areas of school-to-work transitions and experiential learning. I'm skilled with mixed methods analysis and public speaking, as evidenced by my research presentations to campus administrators and international audiences. Moving forward I'm interested in furthering my contributions to the field by examining the effectiveness of graduate-level experiential learning, which is why I believe I'd be a great fit for your team."*

As you can see from this example, I highlight some of the skills I think would be of interest. Such as being competent with mixed method analysis and public speaking. I've talked about the results that I've delivered. I've given research presentations to campus administrators and international audiences. And, I also talk about my goals moving forward and why that would fit with their team - examining the effectiveness of graduate level experiential learning.

## Slide 7

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Moving on to some of the skills that are desired by employers. The examples taken here come from the CCCE report, but other sites like Forbes and anything else that you may find online tend to articulate similar skills, so this gives us at least a good kind of baseline for what it is that employers are looking for. These examples emphasize things like people skills, communication, problem solving, analytical skills, leadership, industry-specific knowledge (so those are your hard skills), functional knowledge, technological literacy, project management and creative thinking. The thing that I want everybody to be thinking about or reflecting on here is the fact that we develop a fair number of these skills during grad school. For example, for those of us working on a thesis or a dissertation, that often teaches us things like problem-solving, analytical skills and project management. We just don't necessarily market writing a dissertation in that way. Again, just kind of giving you the idea that we need to really start thinking about shifting our mindset and framing from the perspective of the employer, when we are writing our resume.

The other thing that is kind of a "don't" to be mindful of here, is that sometimes we tend to focus on selling our hard skills. The industry specific knowledge, which of course there is a time and a place for, but you need to show that you are able to do more than that. If you're a qualitative researcher, it may still be of interest to say that you know how to use NVIVO or if you're a quantitative research, that you know how to use SPSS, STATA or anything like that. However, it is important to show that you know more than simply those hard skills. That isn't the only thing that is a selling feature when applying to these jobs.

## Slide 8

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Let us now look at some of the differences between a CV and a resume. I've listed the table here to compare and contrast. A CV tends to be very academic oriented, so we focus on things like publications, funding, conference presentations and so forth. Very research focused. Whereas a resume is very industry oriented. Again, we're not necessarily using the same jargon that we would in academia, we're talking more about our work experience rather than simply listing

things, which pulls us into the next point about CVs being very list oriented. Oftentimes, we will list the teaching assistantships or TAs that we've held. We'll talk about the research assistantships or RAs that we've held, but we won't necessarily list out the roles or responsibilities of each. What the results of those TAs were, versus on a resume that is highly encouraged to be doing. They want to see things like what was the outcome and what did you achieve which with each of the things that you've done as mentioned. The CV focuses heavily on research whereas the resume focuses heavily on work experience and skills. A CV also tends to be long. If any of you are like me, you often hear "as long as possible", to show that you have done as much as possible. It is fairly common to see CVs of six pages or longer versus a resume that is meant to be as concise as possible. It should only be one to two pages, because an employer typically skims (at least initially) your resume for no more than 10 seconds. Therefore, they need to be able to find what is most pertinent to them as soon as possible.

And then finally with a CV, oftentimes it follows somewhat of a template. You may for example have a teaching oriented versus a research-oriented CV, but generally you include the same things on both. You may just switch the order of each. Versus, with a resume, only highlighting one to two pages, you need to make sure that anything that is of highest interest to that specific employer is on it. So, it will often be customized to each position that you apply to.

## **Slide 9**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Here, I've given an example of what a CV would look like. Just in case some of you haven't formulated your CV yet, which is totally okay, depending on where you are in your program. So, the thing to note here (I just copied the first page again of probably about six) this CV starts out with listing the participant's education, it then moves into talking about their research and teaching experience, followed by funding publications, presentations, and then ends with things like academic service potentially, references and so forth. So, again very list oriented. As we can see from some of the things that are down at the bottom, they'll talk about the roles that are held, but they won't necessarily explain what those responsibilities of each role were. As mentioned, it's very focused on academic research, on publications, presentations and that sort of thing. In summary, CVs tend to follow a general template, a lot of the research coming first, teaching, and other service-related experience coming subsequently after research.

## **Slide 10**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

In comparison, when we look at a resume, we can see that it starts and ends in a very different way (again, I've just taken the first page of this resume). This example starts out with a summary, then goes into key skills, then work experience, followed by education. The thing to note here is that the summary statement and key skills are new. That's not something that we typically see in someone's CV. The other thing to note is that education is typically listed last on a resume, unlike being listed first on a CV.

I know that the font is probably a little small here, but what we can see from the resume is that it usually avoids that jargon that we talked about, that we might use within academia. Instead, it

focuses on explaining work experience and skills. So, if we look under career summary, we can see that the person has outlined each of their positions. But then, they've also listed some key responsibilities and key achievements of both, which are typically not something that is listed on a CV. This gives the employer a better understanding of what it is that that the person was doing in each of those roles. Again it's as concise as possible, typically about two pages and it's customized to each job that you're applying to. Arguably, you can be customizing the subheadings that you include in your resume, as well. So, not just the jobs that you choose to include or the jobs that you've held; in some cases you may include the core skills or the key skills. For some cases you may choose not to do so that sort of thing.

## **Slide 11**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Moving into what is a summary statement - just because I don't want to assume that everybody has experience writing one or knows what it is. A summary statement is typically about two to three sentences (so fairly short). It should be brief and should highlight the sections that you'll expand on later in the resume. It should just give employers a general idea of the context of the rest of your resume. The way that you can think of this is as an elevator pitch of yourself to employers. Again, if you just had two to three sentences to explain who you are what you do, what's important to you, and why you'd be a good fit for their team, how would you do that?

The example that I've included here comes from Yale. I thought that this would be a good example to use, particularly because we're not transitioning so far outside of our typical academic circle. This person had still held a post doctorate and they were progressing into another field after doing so. They stated they're a current post-doctoral researcher that can leverage experience grant writing, budgeting, coordinating complex project, (they have ten years of scientific experience with deep knowledge of medical research and global public health) and that they're adept at scientific communication and collaborative development of projects.

## **Slide 12**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Moving into your work experience. After drafting up your summary statement the important thing to remember here again is to avoid being list oriented. Whenever possible, you want to focus on your results and what it is that you achieved in each of your roles. Secondly, you want to try to quantify those results whenever possible in terms of a number or a percentage, anything of that sort. Finally, you want to use strong verbs when you are starting to write out what your roles or responsibilities were. For example, using verbs like 'executed' or 'initiated' instead of using more passive verbs like 'lead' or 'handled'.

## **Slide 13**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

The first step is to start thinking about how to write up our resume and how to highlight our work experiences, our roles and responsibilities, the skills we've gotten out of it and that sort of thing. The way that I've always done this is to utilize a table or some sort of mind mapping to see what

is already included on my CV. It's not too far of a stretch and then I can adapt that to a new setting. The thing to note here, before we get into this, is that often times when you're applying for a job outside of academia you can't assume that your employer has a PhD. You need to ensure that you're able to translate your experiences. Using this table as a starting point with the first column talking about 'activities'. These are work experiences that many of us would have gathered in our masters or our PhDs; a teaching assistant, research assistant, or a sessional instructor. Next is the tasks column or the 'responsibilities.' The thing that's important to note here - if any of you are like myself and imposter syndrome is a thing that you struggle with - is to remember that nothing is too small. The thing that I find most often with myself, colleagues, and otherwise is that for example, under a teaching assistantship, we may say things like "grading papers was our most important job" versus answering a few emails. The latter just didn't seem important enough to really list it down. Or I didn't spend enough time doing it to justify "X Y or Z" thing, but again the important thing to notice here is that nothing is too small. Because it still contributes to your skill set.

Looking at the tasks for example, as a teaching assistant you've probably had experience creating papers, conducting office hours, and answering emails and proctoring exams. As a research assistant you may have collected existing research, primary data collection and analysis, and you may have presented those findings whether it's at conferences or otherwise. And, then finally as a sessional instructor you created slides in seminars for your class, presented the material usually on a weekly basis, held office hours, and answered emails from your students. This is what is kind of a stretch beyond what we typically list in a CV but helps us start to think about translating this to a resume highlighting the skills acquired from each of these positions. In this example, teaching assistants teach the skills that are requested by employers; communication, people skills, and leadership. Research assistantships teach you problem-solving, analytical skills, project management, and communication. And being a sessional instructor teaches you leadership, creative thinking, and communication.

The next step moving beyond this table, would be to tailor the skills acquired to a specific job ad which we'll do later in these slides. You now you can see an example of what that looks like and provides a general baseline or starting point for transitioning your CV to a resume.

## **Slide 14**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

One of the ways that has worked best for me (and I found has worked best for others) when transitioning your CV to a resume, and specifically when trying to write out, what your roles and responsibilities where, is to follow the PAR method. The 'P' of the PAR method stands for the 'problem' where you should be identifying, an issue or responsibility of that work experience. The 'A' stands for 'action', where you discuss how you address that issue or responsibility. And then finally the 'R' for 'results' where you explain the outcome. As an example, Draft One here might be something that someone would include, when they're just talking about their initial draft, of what they've done as a sessional instructor. You might write one of your roles or responsibilities as a bullet point being something like "Developed course curriculum". The problem with that is that it really doesn't sell how you fostered your skills during that job. So, eventually the goal is to be able to move to something like Draft Two, that says you've

“promoted student comprehension of the subject through weekly lectures, achieving an instructor score of 4.8 out of 5” - again quantifying whatever you can. How does this relate to the PAR method? The ‘promoted student comprehension’ identifies the problem. So, student comprehension being the problem or the issue, the action being ‘through the weekly lectures with students’, and then finally the results being quantified that, you ‘achieved an instructor score of 4.8 out of 5’. The statement now very clearly outlines what you did, how you achieved it, and what the result was.

## **Slide 15**

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Here is the example of a job that I would argue most of us could apply for. It might not necessarily be the best suited job for all of us as we all have different experiences, but it wouldn't be too far of a stretch to do so. I have also noticed among my peers applying to jobs is the attitude “Unless I meet one hundred percent of the criteria I'm not going to apply”. However, it's very unlikely that in many of these jobs anybody is meeting one hundred percent of the criteria that that job asks for. So, I would encourage you, if you meet the vast majority of criteria, to be doing so.

Let's refer to the example again. Maybe you don't have the five plus years of experience in a student experience or student affairs role as identified, see the second bullet point under the qualifications, but maybe you meet every other qualification requested. I would still encourage you to apply for that role. If that were the case, so with this job, as manager of student experience, as per the bullet points on the right, they ask that you are able to provide leadership and strategic direction. On the student experience they ask that you develop and maintain strong cross campus relationships, that you develop and implement strategies for integrated programming, and that you have a strong understanding of best practices around the student experience.

My argument is that for most of us, it would be pretty easy to sell our education. A university degree is required or a Master's or equivalent in a related field most of us already have, that some of us exceed that requirement, if we are in the process of obtaining our PhD or already have a PhD. Even in some cases, the work experience we have may be even able to easily sell ourselves on as well, because again, that's something that we're used to doing within academia. However, the tricky part comes from this last portion, the skills, that's something that we aren't necessarily used to articulating or demonstrating when we're applying for jobs. Here I've underlined three examples of the required skills that they're looking for; the program and project management, the ability to work collaboratively, and the ability to use and interpret data. I'll come back to this in more detail in a few slides, but I wanted to make mention of it now because it never hurts to hit you guys over the head with this. It's important when applying for a job, particularly applying for a job online, to try and use whatever industry specific language that they are using. So, for example if you have experience with project management (again as many of us do from writing a thesis or a dissertation) don't try and reinvent the wheel in how you explain what that is. List it as experience with program or project management exactly as they've written in their ad, because oftentimes when you're applying to a job online they will be using some sort of tool that screens you to see whether you make it through to the next step or not. And if they're not picking up on

keywords that they have asked that screening tool to identify on your resume (even if you're saying it in different words) you might not necessarily make it through to the next phase or the step of the hiring process.

## Slide 16

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Again, coming back to this table that we had started with in the few slides ago, the thing to note here before I get into this updated version, is that as you become more familiar with the process of translating your CV to a resume. You may be able to skip this table and move right to the PAR method that we had discussed earlier, but I wanted to provide an example of the table again just for those of you who may find it useful to start here as a baseline. So, as we can see the activities remain the same and the tasks remain the same. That's the thing that's kind of nice is once you do this activity, all you have to do is update those sections as you continue to gain work experience. The work experience you already have and the tasks that you've already done don't change. So, what's changed here is the section that's folded under skills acquired. Instead of using those top skills that employers have asked for, that I used in the last example, I've adapted this to the skills identified in the *manager of student experience* ad. A teaching assistant now reflects “flexibility and an understanding of priority populations”. A research assistant now reflects “project management collaboration and the ability to use and interpret data” And, finally experience as a sessional instructor shows “our ability to take initiative and our understanding of priority populations”.

## Slide 17

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### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Then once again moving this to the Par method, to be able to start writing these out as our roles and responsibilities of our job, using bullet points on our resume I've listed two examples here and specifically I've bolded the words that highlight the key skills that they've requested. This illustrates how you're tailoring your resume to that specific job ad. The first point is, “accelerated the adjustment of new graduate students by initiating a graduate peer mentorship program improving first-year student program satisfaction”. The problem being the ‘adjustment of new grad students’, the action being ‘initiating the graduate peer mentorship program’ and the result being ‘an improvement to student satisfaction’.

Looking at that second example, “improved the understanding of student experiences through collaboration with faculty on X-many research projects resulting in two peer-reviewed journal articles and three national research presentations”. Again, you won't always be able to quantify every bullet point, but arguably this example is a little bit stronger because we are able to. So, first the problem is ‘understanding student experiences’, the action is ‘collaborating with faculty on X-many research projects’, and the result is the ‘peer reviewed journal articles and research presentations’, which is strengthened by the ability to quantify the number of each of those that happened.

### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Then just in terms of final notes and some reminders again please make sure that you're customizing your resume to each job ad. Just like when you're writing a cover letter to academic jobs, employers can tell when you've given them a cookie cutter resume such as any job as an analyst. The other thing to keep in mind is to keep it under two pages unless, it's explicitly stated that they're looking for something more than that. Because, again remember that the employer will probably only look at your resume at least initially for 10 seconds or less. So, relating to the third point, be mindful of format because of how short of a time the employer is looking at it for, it's best to make your resume easy to skim. Include that summary statement at the beginning, those key skills or core competencies at the beginning, to set the stage if they don't have time to read through your entire work experience. And it's also important to include some white space. Don't try and fill up your resume as much as you can. Changing your margins and that sort of thing it just makes it a little bit more fatiguing on the eye if everything is jam-packed into two pages.

Beyond that, make sure that you're proofreading and avoiding jargon. I know that a lot of us will use Microsoft Word and check our spelling and grammar, but my suggestion is to print off a copy of your resume before you submit leave it for a few days and come back with fresh eyes. Because, even if it's not a spelling mistake, sometimes you will come back and read a sentence that does not make sense. You might read one of the bullet points under your work experience and realize that it's not saying what you want it to say or it's not flowing in the way that you had hoped. That's something that you can address before submitting that to the job.

Another important point for you all moving forward; it's very important, especially during your degree if possible, to be building your industry networks. This will build your references that you can be pulling on when you graduate and when you're looking for a job. Doing things like cold calling or cold emailing people out in the workforce to see if you can do an informal interview with them, then you'll get an idea of what their company is looking for and again, and you can be tailoring your resume to those specific things that other job candidates who are just applying blind online may not know. References may also be able to tell you of a job opening before it gets posted online so you may have more time to be preparing for that job.

The final recommendation is to make use of institutional resources whenever possible. Especially because these have increased so substantially in the last five to ten years. A lot of schools have career departments that offer workshops like turning your CV into a resume. They talk about the job search process both within academia and outside. So, even though these things may not necessarily be offered in your department, chances are there is something available like that either at your institution or beyond your institution as well. For example, look at resources like *The Professor Is In*, *Beyond the Press*, *Laureate* and so forth.

The last thing that I wanted to make note of before going into Q&A is that I received a few questions that weren't necessarily touched on in these slides, but in case those people are listening today I wanted to make sure that they knew that I had your questions and I still will address them.

The questions that I receive that I didn't speak to in the presentation were about the weight of academic references for non-academic jobs and a question specific to what is sought after by an academic hiring committee. The reason that I didn't include these is that I think these two questions are examples of where it's best to ask the specific person or the specific expert in that field. So, for argument's sake if you want to know what's being sought by an academic hiring committee, it will often differ institution to institution. At least for a starting point I would suggest asking your supervisor or another faculty member. Many of us know things like publish or perish, so we understand that publications are important. But, specific journals to be publishing in, how important a sole author publication, is and some of those nuances are best to come from people who have sat on hiring committees and can give that advice.

In terms of academic references for a non-academic job, I would say that this largely differs depending on your employer and again the job you're applying to. So, for example for my job which is a job as an alternative academic, or an Alt-Ac career, my job is still on campus and so because my references were so related to the position they carried a lot of weight behind them. But, if you're applying somewhere where people may not know who your references are, it may not be like a hot person in that field, they may not hold the same weight and it may be better for you instead to be conducting those informational interviews during your degree so that you can use one of those references as you get to know them better, and as you progress through your program, when you're applying for these jobs.

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### **Slide 19**

#### **Brittany Etmanski:**

Just quickly, as to what I'm noticing in the chat, someone said if they could have some slides of the presentation sent to their email so I will let the other panellists talk about how they are going to do that. But, this will be posted and transcripts will be posted, so I'm sure there will be places you can find it. I'll just leave it to them to share how it is that you guys go about getting that. So, if any of you have any questions outside of the Q&A, I've listed my information here. Now, I'm happy to answer any questions and thank you all for listening.

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### **Slide 20**

#### **Emma Kay:**

Perfect! Thank you so much for your presentation, Brittany. We really appreciate all the work you put into this and I'd like to move us to the question period. Now we've gotten a few questions trickling in and I have a few here that I received in advance. Before I do that, just in terms of accessing the slides, all of this information will be made available online. I don't know if we've posted the slides in the past, but that's something we can certainly talk about since they are going to be posted in the form of the video.

So, I'll read out the questions the audience has submitted through the Q&A function. Let's get started. The first question is "What is an Alt-Ac career?"

#### **Brittany Etmanski:**

I know that I had mentioned 'alternative academic', but realizing that may not necessarily mean anything to anybody either. I apologize. So, essentially an alternative academic career is a job where you are still working on campus, you are still working for the university, but you are not a

traditional faculty or tenured track or tenured faculty member. You're a staffmember of the institution, but you're not faculty. In my case, to give you an example, I will be starting as a research coordinator. I will be researching experiential learning. I will still be doing things like publishing and presenting at conferences, but I'm not affiliated with a faculty role.

**Emma Kay:**

Thank you. The next question is “Where do you search for jobs? Do you recommend any websites?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I would say this very much depends on the field that you want to go into, because I'm sure that there will be some that I will miss. So, the first obvious one when people say “I want an academic job” is to look at things like *University Affairs*. Because, they tend to post all of the jobs that come into our institutional emails anyway. Outside of that, it may seem a little counterintuitive to some, but honestly I recommend going into whether it's Monster, Indeed and other sites like that. I have colleagues who, for example at Sheridan College, unless something has changed in the last two-ish years, Sheridan College only posts their job recruitment ads on Monster. They don't send them through email and they don't send them through Indeed or other sites. Beyond that, I would take a look again some of those websites like *Beyond the Professor*. The CSA has job postings as does *Cheeky Scientists*. It's all just a matter of kind of finding whatever venue makes most sense for you. Beyond that, once you start to get an idea of the job titles or the employers that you like working for or that you're interested in working for, then I recommend going to their site specifically. So, with my job I had been cruising the University of Waterloo website to see what jobs they had. For example, if you wanted to work in a hospital setting rather than trying to check on *Indeed* it's probably best for you to then look on a specific hospitals website, as they will often have the most up-to-date information.

**Emma Kay:**

Perfect. Thank you. To follow up on that question, this one comes into it a little bit. Can you give us an idea of the kinds of jobs or job titles that MA or PhD graduates from sociology can apply for?

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I would say it will differ person to person. This is where it's really important to think about what skills you are emphasizing during your degree to make it specific to you. But, as an example let's say you are doing some primary research. Whether it's your thesis or your dissertation and you thought “You know what? I really liked the ethics process”. Maybe that's how things work for you and then you take a look into where you could work doing that. You could become an ethics adviser or, again, maybe you really like the research component like myself and you could become something like a research coordinator. Or, if you really like the idea of working for yourself rather than working for an employer you could become something like a consultant. There are various job titles and I'm hesitant to suggest here's “the top two or three to start your search”. Instead, I would try to put in some skills in my search to then see the general job titles that those are recommending. Purely, because, for example, even in the one year that I was conducting my job search the job titles changed so much, like I think when I had first started applying a lot of them were called things like “Policy Analyst”. And again, the job that I ended

up getting was called a “Research Coordinator”, which is a completely different title even though they do very similar things. A little bit of both is definitely helpful to look at what some of those titles are, but I wouldn't hold hard and fast to only looking for those job titles. I'd make sure you're still including your skills.

**Emma Kay:**

Great! Thank you. So, another question from the comments or the Q&A section is “Do you have any tips for guarding against employers deeming candidates with PhDs as overqualified for positions?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

So, this one I will start out by acknowledging that I think this will differ wildly depending on who you ask. If you ask someone different than me, you might get a very different answer. This is just my two cents, so you feel free to follow it or don't. That is your choice. I have heard from a lot of the respondents for my dissertation research that, in some cases, they didn't list their PhD on their resume because they didn't want to be seen as a flight risk or as overqualified. However, I did list mine. Granted, I think all except one of the people in my department has a PhD and the other person in the department still has a graduate degree. So, they have a very different understanding of graduate school than other employers do. But, I would say I would still list the PhD because your education is so far down at the bottom it's not the first thing that you're listing on a resume. And the way that I would kind of guard against that just again goes back to the skills. Making sure that let's say you're not necessarily over selling your education. You're not relying on your PhD as a crutch to sell why they should hire you. You're able to say I have X number of years' experience with this. For example, if your PhD took you six years, you already have six years of project management experience and what are the types of things that you've learned during that time. Really sell your PhD as work experience rather than trying to sell it as education, if that makes sense

**Emma Kay:**

I think that makes perfect sense. Great, alright. And we have another one. “Is it wise to gain experience outside of academia during your MA or PhD? For example, work beyond TAs or RAships on campus?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

My research is on experiential learning or a work integrated learning so I'm extremely biased with answering this question, but I encourage students whenever they feel that it would be of benefit to them to be looking into those things. It doesn't even necessarily have to be an internship or a long-standing part-time job. Even if you're doing volunteer work even if again you're just going out to build your networks for a couple of hours a week, a couple of hours a month. Just to kind of get an idea and build your awareness of what jobs outside of academia look like because the thing to keep in mind here even with supervisors who let's say are very supportive of those of us who want to pursue a job outside of academia. Yeah right, not all of them are forcing us to continue in academia. Most times the only job they have ever had is in academia so they don't necessarily know how to help us or how to guide us to getting those sorts of jobs beyond that institution. If you were out doing some sort of volunteer experience or if you looked into internships or things like that that's what's going to tell you if a career in that industry

is right for you, versus trying to research it without having that applied component won't necessarily be able to tell you that. This is my personal opinion. I would say if you choose to go that route (this didn't happen in my case, I was very lucky, I had very supportive advisors) your advisor may have some pushback about how that will affect your time to degree. So, I just want that to be something that for any of you who are thinking that 'the applied component sounds great, I can use it as a stepping stone to a future job', just make sure that you have that in mind and as a selling point when you talk to your adviser about it. So you're able to say you know I still have this goal of finishing on this time or this timeframe despite doing this thing and also be able to sell to them why that experience is important or will help you post PhD or post MA.

**Emma Kay:**

Great. Thank you. And, sort of building on that, and the work experience portion of your resume, can you include unpaid positions? You spoke about volunteer work like, where would that go for a student's resume?

**Brittany Etmanski:**

So, again, I've heard people that do either. I have been advised by the Career Center at my institution, for example, that you can include volunteer work because it's still something that you have done. So, they have recommended that. You can do that. I personally just did what works best for me. I usually separate it into a sub section, but I still identify it as work experience. So, I forget exactly how I listed it, but something more like philanthropic work experience or just something that's identifying that it's more of service to the industry or it's more of a volunteer type of role. They are still seeing that I'm doing things that have responsibilities that achieve certain results or certain outcomes. But, then let's say that if they were asking, you know, you get down to salary negotiation and they say how much did you make in this role and your face goes red because that was a free roll, then you can't necessarily. It makes it awkward during the interview to answer that. So, I just make it as easy as I can for the employer.

**Emma Kay:**

Great! Thanks. So, we have we have some more questions. Going back to PhD students being perceived as overqualified, somebody wanted to ask if PhD students are perceived to be overqualified, because they have a reputation for being arrogant? Or do employers worry that they're going to be know-it-all's who are difficult to work with?

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I mean a lot of these have been said, but I think this is a great question too. So, at least from what I heard, long-story-short, with my dissertation I interviewed PhD graduates both within and outside of academia to see what careers they had. What helped them get those careers generally reflected on their job and their education and so forth. And that was kind of one of the themes that they said, is that in some cases it was a very clear distinction of employers that didn't have a PhD seeing people coming with the PhD as coming from the ivory tower and, as you said being difficult to work with, because they come in with the sense of entitlement. That maybe someone who is an undergraduate doesn't know that's not necessarily saying that all of us will be doing that, but there is in some cases the stereotype or the perception that... that does happen. So, I think the key thing or the key way I know this wasn't the question, but to be avoiding that is when you're going in again making sure that you are being confident in yourself and being

confident in your abilities but also understanding that even if you've had roles before this this is kind of your entry into the labour market or the marketplace outside of academia. This is really your first time dipping your toe into that so you don't necessarily know everything yet. There are things you can be learning from your employer and make it known to them that. Say that you're interested in learning about X Y or Z things, and again making that fit clear to them in their company and I think that that kind of washes over the feeling of “Oh, this person's coming out and expects to earn \$100,000 a year and already knows X Y and Z, then we can't teach them anything.”

**Emma Kay:**

Alright. Thank you. Another question from the audience is “How long does the job search take? How long before finishing school should Masters students and PhD students begin applying for jobs?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

The statistics on this will always continue to change. When I started looking for jobs, the average time from graduation until finding a job I think was about one year. So, the important thing with that to note is that if it takes you a few months don't think of yourself as a failure, because you have become so specialized in a specific area that sometimes it's difficult to find the exact role that works for you or even a role that works for you in terms of how long should you wait to apply for jobs after finishing school. My argument here is that you should be applying before you finish your program. I am currently in the process of waiting to defend my dissertation and I applied for academic jobs over a year ago and I applied for the current job that I will be undertaking about six months before I wanted it. Timing won't always work out, so the thing to keep in mind is when you're applying to industry jobs, unlike academia, you aren't necessarily applying a year out. The exception being government opportunities like Statistics Canada. They'll want you to be applying a year in advance, but most others will ideally want you maybe about one to three months out. I would say still begin searching before that just to get an idea for what the types of jobs and the job titles are that you want. And, then building those connections. However, if you've done all of that I would seriously start doing so a little bit prior to when you've set up your defense.

**Emma Kay:**

Great! And, I don't know if you know this, but do most PhD graduates and sociology end up working outside of academia?

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I do know this. The research that I had published a while ago, I think it said at least sixty something percent end up in jobs outside of academia. But that number increases to (don't quote me) I think 80 something percent when we look at those who obtain jobs other than permanent jobs as a tenured professor. For reports on this, refer to Conference Board of Canada. If you look through Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario HECO and again some of those other resources like The Professor is in or Beyond the Professoriate, lots of them all speak to this and more than half of graduates obtain jobs outside of academia.

**Emma Kay:**

And, so, the next question is more about the academic CV. “Do you have an idea of what should be included in the funding section on an academic CV?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I would say, I mean, I guess maybe if this person doesn't mind writing a follow-up question just to make sure that I've answered your question, but it doesn't necessarily have to just be Tri-Council Funding. So, CIHR sure. It can also include other institutional scholarships, federal scholarships, provincial scholarships or awards and grants. Usually for me I separate them out by type; whether it's a scholarship or grant. I also separate out bursaries because, they are oftentimes be needs-based and so I found that that's been helpful for me to show what has been funded based on my circumstances versus what has been funded based on more of like a merit-based type of situation.

**Emma Kay:**

Great. Thank you. And the next question is “What is a reasonable salary range to expect for your first job after graduating with an MA or PhD?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

Eventually you just kind of feel like “I'd be happy to get any job” so, I may not be the best person to ask because I was just so excited to graduate into a job and I felt so grateful for that. But I would say the one thing before answering this to note is that a PhD won't necessarily pay off in terms of more money than an MA. So, again, unless research has changed chances are if you're trying to make more money, the MA is where that cost-benefit analysis this is kind of plateaued. The PhD, if anything, will usually just open doors to different jobs not necessarily more money.

I would say to me, money isn't everything. The happiness of my job is something that's also very important to me. So, weighing that in of course, but I would say generally try to look for a starting salary about \$50,000 or more. Again, it all depends on what your skills are. Oftentimes those who have, for example, skills with quantitative methods might generate an increase in their salary just because those are, like, that's a hot topic right now. People at Stats Can want that. People at government think tanks want that. So, you may be able to let's say, make 60-70 thousand dollars. Or, again maybe you make more money in your first year if you're hired by a start-up, but then that doesn't necessarily mean that that company will be afloat to pay you that eighty thousand dollars a year however many years down the line. So, salary is important. I would say look for probably about or expect around \$50,000 a year or more. But, the other thing, again I know this wasn't part of the question, but just kind of sharing my knowledge, also be looking into things beyond salary. So, what are your vacation days, if you have any? What about sick days? What about benefits are you given or professional development fund? All of those sorts of things, because when you start to factor in those that can, at times outweigh something where the salary may be a little bit more in one job, but doesn't offer any of those perks.

**Emma Kay:**

Perfect. Thank you. Another question from the audience, “Are most jobs contract? How long does it take to secure something permanent?”

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I would say this depends on industry. In my experience, most of the jobs that I knew that I wanted to apply for were all tacked (the alternative academic jobs) just because I felt that that was most well-suited to what I do and most of those jobs are contingent on funding. And so much like when we try to figure out whether we're getting Tri-Council funding each year, those jobs, even if they use a different funding source, and government think tanks, are included.

They'll often evaluate those things on a year-to-year basis. A lot of the jobs (at least on campus) will be the staff jobs, will be contract. It will be more in other industry fields. So, for example, if you wanted to work with an insurance company, at some cases if you wanted to work for a hospital, or otherwise you might be able to secure something permanent right away. But, I would say depending on industry, just knowing that we're moving to the gig economy, where more people are working multiple part-time jobs instead of a full-time job. Knowing that people are moving into consulting and things like that, I would expect to start out contract. And, in terms of how long until you get a permanent job, again I would say that this depends really on you. So, are you each year of your contract, for example, looking to work somewhere else that's offering a permanent job? Because you may obtain one sooner versus if you're expecting to stay in the same career and the same job and then secure a permanent role depending on the sector. That may not happen for a while.

**Emma Kay:**

Thank you. We have a couple questions about the non-academic field. "Is there stigma around finding a non-academic career?"

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I would say this will depend very much on the faculty member that you ask. So, for example both of my advisors didn't really know tons about where I could be applying to, but they were both extremely supportive. And, I was very lucky with that. However, I have friends and colleagues where their advisor was very heavily encouraging them to pursue an academic job, because that often reflects better on faculty members as well. They're able to then write into their own CVs "look my previous student got a job at this university as a tenure track professor". So, I would say again very much depends on faculty very much depends on department.

I think there will always be a push to pursue an academic job because the PhD, in my mind, is a professional program. It's geared to prepare you for an academic job, but what I would encourage you to do again is, just going back to building your network. So, you're able to talk to alumni of your institution or PhDs who work in whatever region you're in near you because those are the people that are doing exactly what it is that you want to be doing and those are the people that you can talk to. That say, "I still publish, I still present at conferences or I still teach or whatever". Those are the people that don't stigmatize that role, because the other key thing to note is that a lot of times you will make more money, not necessarily right away, but down the line in a job outside of academia. But, that's the thing that we don't really advertise within academia. For example, I have friends who have graduated, for argument's sake, about five to seven years ago and they all laugh now because they have more holidays than they did when they were in academia. They work a nine-to-five and they call it end of the day at 5:00 p.m. They don't work past that and their salary is higher, so again, keeping in mind that no matter what is

happening, even if your department is stigmatizing those resources to pursue non-academic employment, you can always go to those sessions or those webinars without your professor knowing or without faculty knowing. If that's the case, I would still encourage you to go about making use of those resources. It's just a matter of whether or not you feel comfortable sharing that with others and that's totally your personal choice.

**Emma Kay:**

Perfect. Thank you. And would you say there are certain topical areas, like criminology, that may position you better in the non-academic job market?

**Brittany Etmanski:**

Yes, so the big thing over the last little while has been marketing quantitative skill sets. Also, kind of dipping your toe into even just beyond what we do in sociology, but different coding type things. Such as Sequel which is written out of SQL, Python or knowing those sorts of coding languages. Criminology, for I know it was just an example, but I find that's kind of a hot topic within academia right now. A lot of the job postings are wanting criminologists, whereas I haven't necessarily seen that so much outside of academia. The one thing though, that I will caution is the job market at least in the last let's say five to ten years, for argument's sake, that I've been watching it change so rapidly that if you try and prepare for the current market, chances are it will have changed by the time you get into it. Some things, like those hard skills, will be marketable, but just always make sure that you're keeping an eye on again going to company websites when you figure out what companies you want to work for. What is it that they're looking for in their job ads, what are those skills? Plus, how are those changing year-to-year and then trying to align with that, while still keeping mind of what's of interest to you. However, don't just do something, because it will help get you a job, if you're going to end up hating that job every day.

**Emma Kay:**

Excellent. Thank you. And, so this next question from the audience is personal. "How did you make the decision to pursue the non-academic route? Do you think academics are compensated fairly for the amount of work they do or would you be better off in industry working that many hours? You also mentioned that happiness is important to you. Do you think the stress around an academic career is worth it?"

**Brittany Etmanski:**

This is a funny question as I sit here about to defend my dissertation like, "Oh, how should I answer this?" But, I would say for myself, I'm a first generation student and, so, to be honest, getting to the PhD was a huge achievement for me, and I knew that I wanted to be a professor.

At the beginning of my degree that kind of what was the end-all be-all for me. It wasn't until I started noticing in my first year that what I did my research on, looking at how we transitioned to non-academic careers, was such an underutilized area of research. That's kind of where I started to take note of these things. In my Masters I was realizing and I had done research to see that most of us aren't getting academic jobs so what are we doing instead. For me it was all about contingency planning. No matter how smart I am, we're all smart. No matter how many publications I have, or how much fun things I have there's lots of other people who have the

same thing. The market is so saturated right now that I needed to make sure I was preparing myself for other things. Just realizing and recognizing that my job would probably end up being non-academic is what spurred me to start looking into those things. And, then from there just seeing what careers existed and what's of interest to me.

In terms of the next part, of whether I think academics are compensated fairly, I would say it very much depends on your own department and it depends on things like the general field of study. Engineers, for example, their salary as a professor, get paid significantly more than most of us in social sciences, humanities and liberal arts. It depends on the institution. Again, I haven't checked this in a bit, but I think a while ago the average salary of a professor was about \$75,000 to start, which again is pretty good. Compared to, let's say, starting at \$50,000, within the industry, if that is what you are finding work. But, again that first five years that you're trying to obtain tenure, you're on the clock always. So, in my mind at least, I thought about that. It is valuable of course to make more money, but what if, for example, I took a non-academic job I worked 9:00 to 5:00 and then for argument's sake maybe I'm a sessional two times a year. And that's already brought my salary up to that of an academic and the hours are still pretty on par. So, for me I think again salary is part of it, but salary isn't everything. I looked at it like what can I live comfortably with and then I will base my decisions from there. For myself, the stress of an academic career, I would say this, is just very personal to each person. The further and further I got into my career the more that I realized that everything I was doing to try and stand out still didn't really differentiate me from anybody else. I think it really just depends on kind of waking up each day, each week, each month, each year... whatever, and deciding is this something that I want to continue doing. Yes or no. As I got toward the end of my project, I noticed my dissertation story, I noticed that I was starting to get really burnt out. Because during my third year I think I was working 70-hour weeks. That's not something that my advisor has ever imposed on me, it's just something that I felt guilty not doing, because I feel like in grad school often there's a lot of competition, and so it's always what are you doing to make yourself look better than everybody else. And not to say that there won't be that in other fields, not to say that you won't work over time, but I just think there's a better idea of that work-life balance. And for me, moving forward that was something that was important to me. You might also want to consider things like: "Do I want to live near my family?" Because, if you take an academic job it's very likely you'll have to move cross-country or move to a different country. Are you willing to do that? Are you willing to do that for how long? All of those sorts of things, if they aren't things that you just really need, to think about when making the decision of is applying for an academic job worthwhile to me. And if so, or if not, when did that perspective change?

**Emma Kay:**

Great! Thank you. So we're almost out of time. So, this is a quick question following up on that one. "Do you think life balance is more easily achievable outside of academia?"

**Brittany Etmanski:**

Maybe check back with me in six months, I'll let you know! I would say from friends and colleagues who have gotten jobs outside of academia, will often speak to self-imposing additional workloads on themselves. So, because they've been so used to working as long and as hard as they have during their PhD they, just kind of continue doing that in their first job, even though that isn't expected by their boss. It's just not really clear to us that we don't have to do

that. Whereas other jobs, let's say that pay you more, they may be very fast-paced and may expect that. So, I would say again it depends on the job.

I'd clarify that from the outset, but with a lot of jobs where, let's say, your office is only open from hours X to Y, or if, for example, in certain parts of Statistics Canada, if you're working in a secure location like a Research Data Center, that data center is only open from let's say 9:00am to 5:00pm. So, you can't really be taking much home with you. So, not always, but often times, or at least in some cases, I would say the work and the effort and the initiative is still on you to recognize that you don't need to be working. But, I would say so far I'm getting the feeling that yes, there is a better work-life balance at least initially. Compared to a tenure track professor, outside of academia, but again like anything else, there will be absent flows where sometimes you're extremely busy, especially let's say if you're working for a company that has quarter ends or things like that. It's all just deciding what you want to be doing moving forward and what's important to you. Do you want to, let's say, stretch for that role as a manager, a director, right away? Or, do you want to do something that's more entry-level and your typical nine-to-five?

**Emma Kay:**

So, great. Thank you so much. I'm going to wrap everything up. I'd like to thank everyone for attending and I'd also like to thank you again, Brittany, for your presentation and for addressing your questions.

**Brittany Etmanski:**

I appreciate you guys having me. It was great to chat with you all.

**Emma Kay:**

Yes. Thank you for joining us. A recording of this webinar will be posted online at Students @CSA at a web page, along with responses to any questions that we did not have time to address here. Audience members will be receiving feedback surveys from us and we'd really appreciate it if you could please fill that out. We will see you all next time and thank you so much for your participation. Bye, everyone and stay safe!