Identifying Your Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Skills Workshop

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As we gather here today, we acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

The Undergraduate Research Initiative is committed to reconciliation in our research, scholarly, and artistic work. This means always learning and relearning, supporting work that is led by Indigenous peoples and communities, and committing to work that is beneficial and accessible to Indigenous communities.
In the chat:

1. What is your area of study?
2. What do you want to learn today? (for example, job applications, NSERC USRA etc.).
Session Outline / Our Process

Defining Skills & Competencies

Reflecting on Our Experiences and Identifying Our Skills & Competencies

Identifying the Skills & Competencies for an Award or Job

Connecting Our Skills to a Specific Award or Job

Review & Resources
Defining Skills & Competencies
Defining Research

Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings.

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/researchers/preparing_a_grant_application/dest_definition_of_research
The Research / Scholarly Process

- Having Curiosity
- Question
- Investigate
- Create
- Share
- Reflect
Research Skills Development (RSD) Framework
USask graduates are the LEADERS OF TOMORROW

The knowledge, skills, and perspectives you gain while attending the University of Saskatchewan prepare you to become tomorrow’s leaders—contributing to societies and addressing the greatest challenges and opportunities the world faces.

You will achieve this success by becoming proficient in these six competencies and the courses you take at USask will help get you there.
**Engaging in our intercultural society**
Students who thrive as members of a diverse society handle diversity in perspective, position, and approach adeptly. They communicate and collaborate effectively within diverse groups and an increasingly global society.

**Nurturing successful relationships**
Students who nurture successful relationships can describe their values and beliefs while embracing diversity in others. They are accountable for their actions, manage conflict, successfully prioritize, and negotiate for successful results.

**Leveraging technology**
Students who can leverage technology are able to use digital/technological tools and systems ethically, appropriately, and effectively to complete tasks and accomplish goals.
Adaptive Design and Problem Solving
Students who effectively solve problems and create work that is adaptable are strong and creative thinkers. They exercise innovation, critical thinking, and risk taking in the design, implementation, and evaluation of an approach to achieve a desired goal.

Communicating meaningfully
Students engage in meaningful communication when they exchange ideas, facts, and perspectives with others. They use different strategies to communicate depending on the context and audience.

Cultivating well-being
Students effectively engage in cultivating well-being when they reflect on what they are doing and on their personal and academic needs, and then make appropriate adjustments to be successful. They engage in thoughtful decision-making and are self-aware and reflective, so they can purposefully navigate adversity. Students respect personal limits and boundaries of themselves and others, and persist in the face of change.
Our Process: THE 4 R'S OF PREPARATION!

Research the position / company or award - look at their website, social media, etc.

Reflect and take inventory of your skills and abilities - use a t-chart to compare your skills and experience to the requirements of the position.

Read and re-read your resume / cover letter / application and make sure that it meets the requirements for the application.

Review - ask your potential supervisor (for an NSERC USRA) or a friend / mentor to review your application.
Identifying Our Skills & Competencies
Why Reflection?

Reflecting on a situation, experience, or specific context can help us to better understand what happened, why it happened, what went well, and perhaps what we would do differently.
Spend some time reflecting on your what you have done (experience) and the related skills and abilities; think in terms of school, work, extra-curricular activities etc.

Transferable skills - you have them! Keep and update a record!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do I do (School)</th>
<th>Specific Tasks</th>
<th>Related Research Skills</th>
<th>Related Competencies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write Research Papers</td>
<td>- Pick a topic &lt;br&gt;- Review literature &lt;br&gt;- Develop a research question &lt;br&gt;- Find additional sources in the library (primary and secondary) &lt;br&gt;- Summarize sources/take notes &lt;br&gt;- Ask Professor for feedback &lt;br&gt;- Create an outline &lt;br&gt;- Develop an argument &lt;br&gt;- Draft Paper &lt;br&gt;- Create bibliography &lt;br&gt;- Cite Sources</td>
<td>- Curiosity &lt;br&gt;- Generate questions based on the literature &lt;br&gt;- Identify and collect sources to answer research question &lt;br&gt;- Summarize academic articles &lt;br&gt;- What else?</td>
<td>- Adaptive Design and Problem Solving &lt;br&gt;- Communicating Meaningfully</td>
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<td>Group projects</td>
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<td>Lab work</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do I do (Work)</td>
<td>Specific Tasks</td>
<td>Related Research Skills</td>
<td>Related Competencies</td>
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| Organize a workshop | - Identify goals / outcomes  
- Develop a budget  
- Book a venue  
- Create posters  
- Organize a meeting with co-worker  
- Create a facilitation plan  
- Create social media posts  
- Create newsletter post  
- Create registration site  
- Order food  
... | | |
Practice

1. Make a chart that includes:
   - What I do
   - Specific Tasks
   - Related Research Skills
   - Related Competencies

2. Pick an area: school, work, extra-curricular activities and begin to fill out the chart. Don’t worry about wording.
Identifying the Skills or Competencies in a Job or Award Posting
PREPARATION- REVIEW THE JOB POSTING

Carefully read through the job posting and note the **KEYWORDS** that describe the ideal candidate and the work that they will be doing (abilities, skills and values you should possess).

Include these **keywords** in your application (cover letter / resume / application)

- Skills/Competencies/Abilities
- Characteristics/Personality Traits
- Knowledge/Education
- Experience/Duties/Responsibilities
Preparation – Do your Research!
Know the employer and the industry!

Jobs
✓ Browse through the company website, and social media (Facebook, LinkedIn)
✓ Review the Job Post
✓ Do you know anyone that works at the organization?
✓ Make it easy for the search committee to see how you meet the criteria
✓ Stand out by incorporating words from the company mission statement and values into your resume and cover letter
✓ Look for connections

Awards
✓ Browse through the website and any social media
✓ Review any criteria or rubrics provided
✓ Can you find information about past winners?
✓ Make it is easy for evaluators to see how you meet the criteria
✓ Look for connections
Practice – Identify the Skills

The Research Assistant will work on dedicated tasks. These include conducting several literature reviews such as on food security, or on the impact of various government policies on (sustainable) food consumption. The RA will be required to support the Principal Investigator (PI) in developing the best methodology to investigate issues relating to sustainable food consumption, by, for instance, checking the model equations against literature in the field.

The Research Assistant will provide support with the testing of the model(s), by for instance cleaning up the dataset, as the Principal Investigator writes the code for the main model(s). The position might also involve some data collection and the creation of a data bank regarding, for instance, the carbon/water/land footprint of various food items. The RA might also be asked to conduct coding of policy documents using appropriate software and assist the PI in providing a quantitative analysis of those policy documents.
Practice – Identify the Keywords & Skills

1. Pick a job post or award that you want to apply for. For NSERC USRA applicants use both the project description from your supervisor and the rubric.
2. Highlight or circle keywords
3. Write down any skills that you can think of that would be needed for the position or strengthen an application.
4. Share!
Connecting Our Skills to a Specific Award or Job Posting
WRITING TIPS

✔ You need to **customize** your materials to the specific company and position or award that you are applying to by including keywords and relevant experience.

✔ Ensure the language in your documents matches the description of the ideal candidate in the job posting – this makes it easy for hiring committees or evaluators!

✔ Provide enough detail so they understand what your examples mean. They may not know what taking a specific class means in terms of your skills or your suitability for the role, and some experiences, such as an Honours Thesis can mean different things depending on your department or university.

✔ Avoid generic, cliché statements.

✔ Answer the question: "Why should we hire / pick you”

✔ Bullet points for your resume; short paragraphs for your cover letter. Follow instructions for awards.

✔ Proofread to ensure there are no grammatical or spelling errors

✔ Follow any instructions provided!
Write accomplishment statements to highlight your skills, experience, and achievements. Avoid duty statements, where you simply state your responsibilities or duties for a position. Use the framework below to help you craft a strong accomplishment statement:

**Action Verb** + **Task (skills)** + **How you demonstrated or developed it**

Ex) *Maintained* positive collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders to effectively coordinate a two-day conference on environmental engineering.

Ex) *Organized* staffing schedules and managed production capacity for 50 employees at McDonald’s.

Tip: Quantify (#, %, $) wherever possible.
Practice!

- Make a T-chart on a separate piece of paper: on one side identify the skills needed for one of the job postings or the NSERC USRA (or another award or job you are interested in).
- On the other side of the T-chart add information from your skills table that relates to the skills needed for the job.
- It’s okay if there are places where you need to develop / learn.
Practice

- Pick one of the skills from the T-Chart and write a sentence using the following formula:

  Action Verb + Task (skills) + How you demonstrated or developed it
1. Identify your skills
   - Use tools like the RSD Framework or Competencies for inspiration
   - Map out all of the “things you do” in the various components of your life: school, work, extra-curricular to find skills and examples
   - Look for patterns and examples of research skills or competencies.

2. Identify the skills that are required for the job or award
   - Review the Job Posting and any relevant materials. For NSERC USRAs look at both the rubric and the project description from your supervisor
   - Identify key words in the post and write down any skills or experiences needed.

3. Match your skills and experiences to those required for the job or award!
   - Use a T-Chart to map out the skills needed for the position and the corresponding skills or examples that you have.
   - Draft some sentences using action verbs, the task required for the job, and how you have demonstrated/developed it.

4. Create your materials!
   - Follow the instructions for the award or job application. Career Services provides great instructions for formatting cover letters, resumes, and a CV
   - Tailor your materials – pick the best examples from your experiences.
   - Review your drafts to make sure they meet the criteria / follow the instructions. For NSERC USRAs ask your supervisor to review and provide feedback.
Identifying Your Skills
Research Skill Development Framework

Career Services Resources
Resume / CV Development (Including Verb Lists)
Job Postings
Support Services

NSERC USRA Process for 2024
NSERC USRAs - Office of the Vice President Research - Research | University of Saskatchewan (usask.ca)
Undergraduate Research Initiative

Questions? Send an email!

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See the Undergraduate Research Initiative webpage for more resources
CAREER SERVICES
As a student or alumni, Career Services is here to help with every step in your career journey!

YOUR CAREER PATH STARTS HERE

USASK.CA/CAREERSERVICES

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