

## FAQ'S - DEVELOPING SKILLS

### 1. How can I gain skills and experience in my concentration area if I am not registered in a co-op program? Where do I begin?

Gaining relevant experience in your concentration area will give you an advantage over students without this experience and although you have to take a more proactive approach to searching for these opportunities, they are available.

1. Research potential volunteer opportunities on campus. This could take the form of volunteering with one of the **Faculty of Business Student Clubs** in an area relevant to your concentration. Consider positions that are relevant to your career area even if the opportunity is with a club that may not match your specialty (i.e. volunteering for a finance position within the Human Resource Management Association).
2. Get involved in the local community. Consider possibilities within your local area (while here in Niagara or back in your home town). Many non-profit organizations would be eager to work with business/accounting students in their offices. Search for opportunities linked to your concentration/interest area, however, don't stop there. If there is a particular skill that you would like to apply in a workplace, contact the organization and ask if they could use someone with your skill set. In other words, create your own volunteer opportunity in collaboration with the non-profit organization. One place to search for opportunities within Niagara is **Information Niagara**. You can also find additional resources on the **BCDO** website that will provide information on volunteer opportunities.
3. Explore **service learning opportunities** within the Faculty of Business. These experiences are invaluable and the BCDO can assist you in displaying this information on your resume.
4. Seek out summer/part-time positions in your concentration/interest area as much as possible. If you cannot find something exactly within your field and find yourself in a position within the service, retail or manual labour industries, mention to your supervisor that you are eager to apply your business knowledge in any capacity, should the opportunity be available. Be specific about what you would like to do. Ask to see the operations side of the business if possible when your daily job tasks have been completed. Review a financial report or inquire about the possibility of creating a marketing strategy for the company. Be resourceful and leverage the positions that you are in, even if not directly relevant to your career goal.

### 2. How can I make the transition from retail jobs to a "real" job that will help me in the future as relevant experience?

1. Leverage the opportunities within your retail position and find ways to apply your business knowledge. Ensure that any business relevant experience is highlighted on your resume - even if it was not in your "official" job duties.
2. Maximize your volunteer/extra-curricular experiences if you have been involved in this capacity. For example, if you have relevant volunteer experience, consider displaying on the first page of your resume under the heading, "Relevant Experience". To ensure transparency to the employer, be sure that your bullet points and/or job title clearly indicate that the position was a volunteer role.

## FAQ'S - DEVELOPING SKILLS

3. Be creative with the headings displayed on your resume. Reconsider listing all of your retail experience under the usual "Work Experience" heading. If you want to transition into a marketing or sales role, create a heading entitled, "Sales/Marketing Experience" and ensure that the most relevant bullet points are listed first. Focus on the transferable skills from your retail experience within your bullet points and create accomplishment statements that demonstrate these abilities.
  4. Finally, if you have not yet done so, **get involved** in volunteer/extra-curricular activities.
- 3. I am not certain on what concentration I will be pursuing next year. What kind of clubs, activities or volunteer placements could I get involved in to get a better feel and understanding of what a career within a certain area of concentration would be like?**
1. Consider **specific clubs** and the different roles for which they recruit. Try to get into a position that will expose you to different aspects of business and attend club events that will introduce you to speakers/individuals and topics that will introduce you to various options and improve your knowledge of different areas.
  2. Conduct **informational interviews** (talking to people who work within a job, company, or industry that you want to learn more about). You can work with the BCDO to get connected with people who would gladly donate some of their time to tell you more about what they do and the company they work for. This can be a very valuable research step to gather information, learn, and build your network.
  3. Attend **BCDO events** including the "How To Get A Job In..." series. Students hear from a panel of speakers (representing alumni and employers from the various industries in each of the topic areas). This is an opportunity for you to learn from the experience of those in the profession/industry, while developing your professional network.
- 4. English is not my first language. Are there any resources available that help with my English pronunciation?**

A Brock linguistics researcher has developed a website and mobile app to help non-native English speakers fine-tune their English pronunciation. [Ron Thomson](#), Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, recently launched [English Accent Coach](#), an interactive online game that improves your English pronunciation.