

# Student Career Development Guide



**Career Services**  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & LIFE SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## Get in touch with CALS Career Services

For walk-in peer advising, resume reviews, one-on-one career advising, and mock interviews, visit career services or find us on social media.

### Our Office:

116 Agricultural Hall  
1450 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706  
(608) 262-3003  
career@cals.wisc.edu  
www.cals.wisc.edu/careers



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@UWMadisonCALS



UW-Madison  
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

# Application Materials:

A strong application uses active verbs and follows a clean and organized format. Below are active verbs to incorporate into your application materials. On the pages following, you will find an example resume and cover letter to guide you.

## Management and Leadership Skills:

administered	consolidated	established	instituted	planned
analyzed	contracted	executed	led	produced
appointed	converted	generated	managed	recommended
assigned	coordinated	handled	merged	restored
attained	decided	headed	motivated	reviewed
authorized	delegated	improved	originated	scheduled
chaired	developed	incorporated	overhauled	streamlined
considered	emphasized	increased	oversaw	supervised

## Communication and People Skills:

addressed	conferred	discussed	interviewed	publicized
authored	consulted	edited	involved	recruited
arbitrated	contacted	elicited	lectured	reinforced
articulated	conveyed	expressed	marketed	resolved
authored	convinced	formulated	mediated	spoke
collaborated	debated	furnished	negotiated	summarized
communicated	described	influenced	persuaded	translated
composed	directed	interpreted	presented	wrote

## Research and Technical Skills:

adapted	critiqued	extracted	measured	searched
analyzed	determined	fabricated	maintained	solved
assembled	debugged	formulated	operated	searched
calculated	designed	identified	programmed	standardized
collected	diagnosed	inspected	rectified	studied
conducted	engineered	installed	regulated	summarized
conserved	evaluated	invented	remodeled	systematized
constructed	experimented	investigated	researched	utilized

## Organization and Detail Skills:

approved	completed	inspected	processed	responded
arranged	corresponded	logged	provided	reviewed
achieved	distributed	maintained	purchased	routed
cataloged	exceeded	monitored	recorded	screened
categorized	executed	ordered	reduced	set up
charted	filed	organized	registered	submitted
classified	generated	pioneered	reserved	supplied
compiled	implemented	prepared	resolved	validated

# Buckingham U. Badger

1234 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53715  
badger@wisc.edu, 608-555-1212

## **EDUCATION**

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Bachelor of Science, Major in Biochemistry

Expected Graduation: May 20XX  
GPA: 3.65/4.0, Deans List: 4 Semesters

## **LAB SKILLS/EQUIPMENT**

Polyacrylamide Gel Electrophoresis  
Fluorescence Microscopy  
Column Chromatography

Centrifugation  
Bacterial transformation  
Plasmid DNA isolation

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

University of Wisconsin-Food Science Department  
Undergraduate Student Worker

Madison, WI  
January 20XX-Present

- Designed and performed experiments to analyze associations between milk proteins
- Developed technical writing skills by writing, editing and formatting three papers

Cameron Currie, Department of Bacteriology  
Laboratory Technician

Madison, WI  
May 20XX-Present

- Gained teamwork abilities by collaborating with five lab mates in ecological research
- Analyzed DNA quality and quantify results for a doctoral candidate's thesis on microbial symbiosis
- Documented accurate observations of tasks for records and reference for problem-solving.

## **INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE**

The Masterson Company Incorporated  
Quality Assurance Intern

Whitewater, WI  
May 20XX-August 20XX

- Aided staff in the completion of finished product testing Brix readings, Bostwick viscosities, pH, drain weights, L.a.b. color test, acidity
- Weighed up and prepared new product formulations
- Gained ability to be detail-oriented by maintaining plot plant stock from bulk storage

## **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Association of Women in Agriculture  
Vice President

20XX-Present  
20XX-Present

- Breakfast on the Farm General Chair - Gained event coordination skills by planning an agricultural education event for the community that served over 1,000 people

Communication Coordinator

20XX-20XX

- Developed social media skills through the creation of an electronic newsletter to enhance communication between active and alumni members

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Ambassador

20XX-Present

- Enhanced public speaking skills in discussion panels for prospective students
- Motivated potential students to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison through campus tours

# Buckingham U. Badger

1234 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53715  
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April 23, 20XX

Ms. Sarah Sullivan  
Human Resources Manager  
533 New York Avenue  
Madison, WI 53718

Dear Ms. Sullivan,

I am writing to apply for the Research Assistant Position at University Research Park. I recently saw the opening posted on the Research Park Job Board and Handshake. I would like to take this opportunity to show my background in writing and research, as well as my extensive laboratory experience, which make me highly qualified for the position.

I was impressed to see the amount of high quality, innovative research that is conducted at University Research Park. The allowance of both depth and breadth in the type of research conducted as well as the collaborative environment that the University promotes, lead me to apply.

Through various internships, laboratory experience, and study abroad experience; I have been able to develop superior laboratory skills that reach beyond techniques and data entry. I have aided in product testing, preparation of new product formulations, as well as the marketing and implementation. Through these experiences, I gained the ability to work both independently and as part of a team. I keep detailed lab notes, have an ability to prioritize tasks, and am very comfortable learning new computer software systems. My technical abilities coupled with my interpersonal skills make me an exceptional candidate for the Research Assistant Position and able to contribute to the team from the beginning.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my application and attached my resume. I look forward to discussing my unique qualifications in an interview. I can be reached at 608-555-1212 and via e-mail at badger@wisc.edu. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Buckingham B. Badger

# Interviewing:

## Interview tips:

The most common type of interview is the behavioral interview. This interview will include you telling stories about yourself to exemplify skills that you have. A common question is “tell me about a time when you had conflict in a team project and how you overcame it?”

When answering behavioral questions, you can use the STAR method to ace the interview:

**S**ituation: Give an example of a situation in which you had a positive outcome.

**T**ask: Describe the tasks involved in the situation.

**A**ction: Talk about the actions you took and the obstacles you had to overcome.

**R**esults: Highlight the outcome, goals you achieved, and lessons you learned.

## Questions to Ask the Interviewer:

- What attracted you to this organization?
- What are the most critical factors for success at your organization?
- What is a typical career path for someone like me entering your organization?
- Can you describe a typical workday in the department?
- What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you? What are the next steps in the process?

# Graduate School:

A graduate education is an important stepping stone in many careers in agricultural and life sciences. Graduate school is a great choice for students who are intellectually curious, eager to explore, and know how an advanced degree fits into their career path.

If you are considering graduate school, be sure to make connections with professors for letters of recommendation and keep your grades high throughout your college career. Some programs may require you to take a standardized exam, you will find this information on each program’s website.

## Graduate School Timeline:

- Summer Before Senior Year
  - » Identify schools and programs of interest–write down all deadlines.
  - » Organize your application materials.
- Fall Semester Senior Year
  - » Investigate how you will pay for school; many schools offer graduate assistantships and teaching assistantships that reduce the cost of attendance.
- Fall Semester Senior Year
  - » Submit applications.
  - » Prepare for admissions interview–schedule an appointment for a mock interview with CALS Career Services.

# Internships:

- Internship experiences are an important part of your professional education because they help you develop technical skills and apply the knowledge of your academic discipline. From an employer's perspective, internship experiences show that you will require less training and can contribute to an organization sooner than those without previous experience. For you, it's a great way to explore career option and make connections in your area of interest.
- Every fall and spring semester, UW hosts a career and internship fair giving students and employees opportunities to network. Career and internship fairs are a great forum to explore job openings and to get your foot in the door at an organization.
- If you are looking to explore a variety of jobs and employers, visit Badger Bridge or Handshake to find careers geared towards your academic interests.



## Badger Bridge

Badger Bridge is a go-to resource to connect with Badger alumni across the globe for career advice (<https://badgerbridge.com/>)



## Find Your Next Internship or Job

Search and find opportunities from over 300K employers, customized to fit your major and interests.



### Log into Handshake

Download the app or sign into your account at [wisc.joinhandshake.com](http://wisc.joinhandshake.com). Add Handshake to your MyUW homepage for quick access!



### Complete Your Profile

Add your work experiences, skills, interests and organizations.



### Connect with Career Services

Find career fairs and events on Handshake.