

Background:

I hold a Ph.D. in biomedical science from the University of Central Florida, and am a professional writer (registered with the Professional Writers Association of Canada), editor, and consultant for academics and small businesses. Prior to starting my own business, I was an academic life sciences researcher for over 10 years where I performed research on the mechanisms of antibiotic resistance and new antibiotic discovery. As a professional writer, I routinely collaborate with academic and industry partners to prepare grant applications (academic and business development), manuscripts, white papers, and other communications.

I began my undergraduate degree at the University of Guelph and completed my final two years at Laurentian University. During my third and fourth years, I worked in a forensic anthropology lab and completed an Ancient DNA training internship at Lakehead University, which paved the way for my MSc work at Lakehead University's Paleo-DNA Lab. Following my MSc, I completed a PhD in biomedical science. It was during that time that I developed a passion for science writing and experienced my first successes obtaining grants and scholarships.

During my PhD, I published multiple manuscripts and received a scholarship from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. I also assisted with multiple National Institutes of Health Grant applications and one grant from the National Institutes of Justice (all awarded).

For my post-doctoral training, I returned to Canada to work in Dr. Lori Burrows' laboratory. There, I published several manuscripts and received fellowships from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Cystic Fibrosis Canada (top ranked applicant in Canada), and McMaster University (MG DeGroot Postdoctoral Fellowship). During my time in Dr. Burrows' lab, my passion for writing grew and with Dr. Burrows' mentorship (who is an excellent writer herself!), developed the skills necessary to pursue my writing career. I enrolled in continuing education business courses to gain the knowledge necessary for writing business grant proposals and established multiple side jobs editing grants, manuscripts, and white papers for non-English speaking academics.

After leaving McMaster University, I worked for 10 months at a boutique consulting firm where I refined my science and grant writing skills, and developed the interpersonal skills required to network effectively with decision makers and executives from different industries. I left that position in July 2017 to start my own business and now have multiple clients from academia and private industry. The types of writing vary drastically between the two sectors, which is great since it gives me the opportunity to maintain diversity in my career (it's never a dull moment!).

Extracurriculars:

During my undergrad, I was active in multiple clubs, including serving as the VP for the Laurentian Association of Forensic Scientists. During my PhD, I sat on the Student Conduct Review Board at the University of Central Florida, which gave me the opportunity to engage students who were experiencing difficulties in school and were receiving disciplinary actions. That experience helped me develop compassion for other students with complex academic and

personal situations, and gave me the opportunity to assist them during very difficult times in their lives. During my Postdoctoral training, I destressed by running and completed the Hamilton Marathon and the Around the Bay Race (twice). I don't run as much now, but I still find time to relax by chasing my children and curling.

Advice:

It is very difficult to know where your careers will take you, and with that in mind, my advice to students is to become involved in as many “things” (clubs, jobs, extracurriculars, etc.) that interest you, and absorb as many different experiences as possible. Be selective in what you do so as not to overstretch yourself, but don't assume that the path you're on today is the one you'll be on next year. With enough perspective and experience, you will drill down onto what makes you happy and find out what career you will enjoy in the years to come.

The key skills I would highlight are: dependability, written and verbal communication, adaptability, and the ability to stay calm/focused under mounting pressure.

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