

SEHAR BAJWA B.I.(CAND)
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TORONTO, ONTARIO
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March 5, 2024

Julia Allworth,
Manager, Innovation Projects
Innovation Hub
230 College St
Toronto ON M6Z 2G8

Dear Ms. Allworth,

I am writing to apply for the advertised Design Research position at the Innovation Hub. I have studied the job description, and, given my combination of formal training and work experience, I believe I am extremely well qualified for this position and eager to contribute to your student-driven research collective.

The role of a Design Researcher is critical to any organization that relies on creative empathetic, persuasive design that delivers exactly what the stakeholders are looking for. This person has the opportunity to improve profitability by providing not only data-backed insights but also recommendations that elevate projects and drive impact. To be effective, design researchers must be innovative problem solvers and excellent data analysts. The Innovation Hub Corporation is successful in adeptly tackling design challenges precisely because it understands the importance of utilising human-centred design principles and being intentional about every step of the process.

As a Bachelor of Information student at the University of Toronto, my expanding design skills are directly applicable to this position. Additionally, my unique background includes two years of industrial engineering courses, equipping me with technical data analysis skills in addition to a pre-existing design-thinking expertise. Most recently, I worked in a team at the iSchool to conceptualise and prototype a cafe-finding app, and the thorough preliminary research I led was applauded by my professor as being instrumental to the success of the project.

I firmly believe that the future belongs to those companies that can tell their story well. Facilitating that capability is what drives me personally because I know that this work creates value and enables success. That is the kind of environment where I thrive, and that is why I am truly excited at the prospect of joining the Innovation Hub.

I would be delighted to discuss my candidacy further with you. I look forward to hearing from you at your convenience, and I thank you in advance for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,



Sehar Bajwa

JOB PARSING ANALYSIS

This job ad appears to be of the 'carefully crafted' variety. Signs that point to this include an attention to detail, and a considered, but not excessive list of duties and qualifications.

It opens with an introduction to the Innovation Hub, providing context and piques the reader's interest in the company. The Anti-Oppression commitment at the beginning, instead of the last paragraph as is the case with most job ads reflects a thoughtful and carefully crafted approach to inclusivity. The technology required is also featured early in the ad with higher priority, reflecting the thought being put into writing this. The How to Apply section asks for a tailored resume and cover letter, and notes that general applications will be disregarded - it's clear that this is neither an adaptation nor a chronic repost, and that someone has sat down to create a mindful and prudent hiring process. This is further proven by the concise and rather fluid job requirements - only one concrete tool is mentioned. It's also possible that the employer is focusing on soft skills and will impart the required technical proficiency to the hire - this is not common practice to my knowledge, but the flexibility could be leveraged in my favour.

1. Why do you want this job?

I am drawn to this position because of the distinct opportunity presented by the Innovation Hub - its identity as a student-driven design collective. As someone who has worked as a UX freelancer for ten years, the field of Design can occasionally feel solitary and lacking in substantial impact. The Hub's commitment to anti-oppression and cultivating an inclusive environment resonates deeply with my values, making this opportunity more than just a job—it's a chance to be part of a community that values creativity, innovation, and genuine impact.

2. What one thing about you makes you better than the other candidates?

As a student at the Faculty of Information, I'm actively honing my user experience skills, but what distinguishes me as a candidate is the unique blend of my current program and prior instruction as an industrial engineer. Bridging my technical engineering background with creative a skillset, my unique approach seamlessly integrates technical acumen with visual design intuition. This dual perspective positions me as a well-rounded candidate, capable of approaching challenges with both methodical problem-solving and innovative thinking.

Link to Job Posting: <https://ischool-utoronto-csm.symplicity.com/students/app/jobs/detail/fb527f37f4f20e08a3ec551673e0354b>

Company: Innovation Hub, UOFT

Job Description

About the Innovation Hub

The Innovation Hub is a student-driven research collective that uses a peer-to-peer approach to understand the needs of U of T students. Campus partners provide us with real design challenges, and we hire teams of interdisciplinary students to work on each project using a consulting model. Student team members are empowered to understand their peers' needs using human-centered design and learning as they go, building confidence through practical work experience. Our projects range in scope from designing campus spaces and services, policy evaluation, listening to the needs of students from equity-deserving groups, ideating for the future, and more.

Working at the Innovation Hub

At the Innovation Hub, student employees are central to our work. We seek to design *with* students rather than *for* students. Working at the Innovation Hub, you will join a collaborative, interdisciplinary team of passionate people. You'll learn valuable skills that can be applied across various career contexts. Most importantly, you will meet great people, have fun, and join a vibrant and innovative community. Everyone is welcome here. The Innovation Hub is also a big commitment. We suggest you read about our work prior to applying on our website at uoft.me/innovationhub and learn more about our roles at uoft.me/iHubWorkStudy.

Anti-Oppression Commitment

The Innovation Hub is committed to being equitable, anti-oppressive and to prioritizing the lived experiences of marginalized students. As such, any forms of discrimination will not be tolerated, including but not limited to racism, sexism, islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and anti-Semitism.

Technology Resources Required

Students are required to have a working laptop or device that can connect to the internet with the ability to access MS Office 365.

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter specific to this role as well as a current resume to be considered for this position. In your cover letter please explain why you are interested in this role and how you feel your experiences (both professional and personal) qualify you as an ideal candidate. Applications that are general and not tailored to the role will not be considered. Please apply to just one role the Innovation Hub – we'll consider you for other roles we think you might be qualified for. We look forward to your application.

Innovation Hub Design Researcher

The Design Researcher works with a team that conducts a design thinking project for the Innovation Hub to improve the student experience in a specific area. Every project looks different but uses design thinking to provide partners with compelling insights that reframe problems innovatively and inspire action.

Job duties include:

- Learn to empathize deeply with users and other stakeholders, and understand the complexities of human-centered research and design
- Translate qualitative research skills into a design thinking approach, which may include some of the following activities: empathy-based interviewing, community-based co-creation, collaborative ideation, visioning, and more
- Transform data analysis and findings into compelling needs-based insights, principles, and/or recommendations that can inspire action
- Transcribe and code data in the Dedoose qualitative research software

- Communicate with persuasive, plain, and accessible language and storytelling techniques that drive impact in diverse audiences

Qualifications

- Qualitative research skills that can be translated into a design thinking approach
- Data analysis, insight formation & knowledge translation skills
- Patience & conversational skills
- Ability to work on a team & integrate diverse perspectives
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills
- Creativity & innovative thinking
- Desire to enhance the student experience at UofT
- Reliability and accountability

Additional Job Details

Position Type

BI Practicum

Compensation

\$16.55 per hour

Location

Toronto, ON, Canada

Salary Level

100 hours paid work study, 100 hours unpaid for practicum