

MA/MAEP Career Placement Meeting 1

McMaster Department of Economics

Chris Muris (materials adapted from Arthur Sweetman & Pau Pujolas)

September, 2025

Introduction

Who am I / what is this

- Who I am
 - I coordinate career placement for MA/MAEP this year and pass along opportunities.
 - I'm here to organize, motivate, nudge, and help you aim at roles that fit your skills.

...

- What placement means:
 - Everything that gets you to a good next step: jobs, co-ops, PhD, pre-doc, ...
 - We'll focus on planning, writing, where to look, and what good applications look like.
- What placement does not mean:
 - We are not centrally assigning students to jobs.
 - We can only support you in searching and applying ...
 - ... but we cannot arrange jobs for you.

Why now? . .

- Why so early in the year?
 - Early deadlines. Several top federal processes move now. More in a minute.
 - Missing fall windows can push starts ~14 months out.
 - Getting materials into good shape early pays off.

...

- During this session
 - Ask questions at any point. Interrupt for clarifications; others likely have the same question.

Placement activities

- Now: Meeting 1 — orientation, timelines, where to look, how to prepare.

- This deck will go on Avenue to Learn (with links/resources for later).
- In 2–3 weeks: Meeting 2 – writing workshop (CVs & cover letters).
 - Bring a 2-page CV and 1-page template cover letters tailored by sector.
 - Try one unsolicited application (e.g., Big Five, insurer, pharma, Rogers, Amnesty).
- January: WIL/co-op session – mechanics, paperwork, strategy, timelines.
- Ongoing:
 - Possible campus visits during the year (gov/industry).
 - Emails from me when opportunities arrive (to the list). Time-sensitive.
 - Meet anytime: email me to set up a chat.

Main takeaways

- Start now. Some top federal processes move Sept/Oct/Nov; missing fall can push starts ~14 months.
- Work hard + plan + track. Deadlines and paperwork stack up fast (multiple portals, forms, references).
- Write well. Clear, tight writing is a screening margin.
- Be strategic. What does the other side want?

Before we start, 1: Immigration status

- In general, and specifically for jobs with the federal government, migration status matters
- For core public admin, [Public Service Employment Act](#) applies
 - Read [this report](#) to learn more
 - Veterans > Citizens > PR > Work permit
- Implications depend on specific agency
 - Core public administration:
 - Global Affairs Canada, Statistics Canada, Health Canada, Department of Finance
 - Follows the PSEA
 - Crown corporation (e.g. Bank of Canada):
 - Governed by [Canada Labour Code](#), no PSEA
 - Not subject to PSEA
 - Federal agency (e.g. Canada Revenue Agency):
 - Governed by Canada Revenue Agency Act
 - “must be legally entitled to work in Canada”
- Some positions (e.g. high-level security clearance) only open to citizens.

Before we start, 2: Language

- Not being bilingual at high level may limit what you can apply to
- All must abide by the [Official Languages Act, non-technical version](#)
- Language requirement depends on job, is stated in ad:
 - Bilingual imperative
 - Must meet the *language profile* at the time of being hired
 - “Bilingual CBB”, etc.,

- Bilingual non-imperative
 - You sign a contract saying you will meet it within pre-specified time
- English/French essential
 - CRA office in Toronto v Montreal
- For economist and analyst roles at CRA/StatCan in Ottawa: expect Bilingual Imperative at the BBB/BBB or CBC/CBC level

Agenda

1. Job market, planning & writing
2. Career paths
 - Overview
 - Federal
 - Other government (provincial, ...)
 - International organizations
 - Private sector
 - Co-ops/WIL
 - Further study
3. Conclusion & next steps

Job market, planning & writing

The market

- It's a market.
 - Your tastes are one side.
 - The offers you can actually get are the other.
 - In equilibrium, both determine what you'll be doing next year.
 - If you only get one offer, your tastes matter less.
- ...
- Think (& act) strategically.
 - What does the other side want?
 - How will HR → hiring manager → senior manager read your file at each stage?
 - Align signals to their incentives.
- ...
- Uncertainty & fallbacks.
 - Uncertainty is high; the economy is shifting.
 - Your tastes can change between Sept and May.
 - Work hard to keep more than one path alive (e.g., jobs and PhD).

This takes work

- Writing & rewriting: many rounds are normal; clarity beats jargon.

- Job search & applications (very time-consuming):
 - Federal: one main portal but many process pages, streams, exams.
 - Non-federal/public, private, third sector: no single portal — lots of clicking around.
 - Managing CVs/letters, tailoring, uploading transcripts, filling long forms.
 - Chasing references and giving referees enough time/materials.

...

- Recruiter visits
 - ATTEND. BE INTERESTED. Ask questions as we go.
 - Keep a good reputation for your program.
- Job fairs
- Networking
 - Events (see TABE/CABE later).
 - Alumni reach-outs.
 - LinkedIn to discover pathways.

Planning is essential

- Plan ahead and track deadlines.
 - Some paths require lots of paperwork and early steps.
- Materials live on Avenue to Learn ("Economics Graduate Careers"); if you can't see it, email econgrd@mcmaster.ca.
- Email discipline & responsiveness
 - Treat list emails as deadlines; opportunities are time-sensitive.
 - Apply when a posting fits; do not "batch" apply.
- Many federal processes cannot be joined in spring.
 - Typical outcome: wait 4–5 months to apply for a job that starts ~14 months later.
 - Plan now to avoid this.
 - I will be sympathetic but unable to help.

Writing matters

- Writing is underemphasized in coursework, but is important for success.
- It is a skill that can be acquired with practice.
- Writing is a hiring signal and an easy screening margin when there's 1 job and 300 applicants.
- Show, don't tell.
 - Typical ad: "strong quantitative/statistical skills, excellent writing, strategic thinker."
 - Sell yourself (credibly).
 - Don't just list courses.
 - Show outputs and impact.
 - Use micro-examples (memos, dashboards, research briefs, code + results).
- Practical tips
 - Lead with the reader's problem; mirror the posting's language (don't parrot).

- Short sentences; verbs over nouns; cut filler; proofread aloud.
 - Avoid faux-formal prose; fix articles (a/an/the) if that's a weakness (see reference).
-

- References
 - McCloskey, *Economical Writing* — [PDF](#)
 - *Schaum's Outline of English Grammar* — [PDF](#)
 - Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style* — [PDF](#)
 - Prep before writing your drafts
 - CBC *Under the Influence* — “Selling Yourself: The Art of Personal Branding” (27 min):
– [Transcript](#)
-

- AI / LLM / ChatGPT and co. can help
 - Check restrictions in job post
 - Be careful when peer reviewing
 - Be careful when feeding in your background info
 - *Jevons Paradox*

Career paths — overview

Versatility

- You can do whatever you want with an MA/MAEP in ECON
 - policy, research, analytics
 - industry, non-profit, start-ups
 - start your own business (entrepreneurship/self-employment)
 - freelance consulting
 - advanced jobs or faculty position via PhD
 - do something completely unrelated to ECON
 - ...

...

- Alumni move across sectors
 - government ↔ private
 - policy ↔ data science
 - research ↔ management
- Careers are often non-linear
 - co-ops/terms → analyst roles → senior economist/manager
 - industry → PhD → academia
 - analyst → founder and CEO

...

- Today's focus: logistics that unlock common next steps on your path

Alumni snapshots (mixing MA and MAEP)

Not posted, for privacy reasons.

Career Pathways

- We will consider 6 types of career pathways:
 - Federal
 - Other government (provincial, ...)
 - International organizations
 - Private sector
 - Co-ops/WIL
 - Further study
 - Next slide: examples
 - After that: specific logistics for each path:
 - timelines, where to look, how to apply, and common pitfalls.
-

- Federal
 - Central Hubs
 - Dept. of Finance, Bank of Canada, StatCan, PBO
 - Economic & Social Departments
 - ISED, Environment (ECCC), ESDC
 - Regulators: Competition Bureau, OSFI
 - Crown Corporations: CMHC, EDC, BDC
 - Other government
 - Provincial
 - Ministries of Finance (ON, BC, AB)
 - Ministries of Health, Energy, Labour
 - Municipal & Regional
 - Cities of Toronto, Vancouver, ...
 - Transit (Metrolinx, ...)
 - Crowns / Quasi-governmental
 - Hydro One, BC Hydro, WSIB
 - International Organizations
 - Multilateral Institutions
 - World Bank, IMF, OECD
 - UN Agencies
 - WHO, ILO, UNICEF, UNDP
 - Regional Development Banks
 - ADB, EBRD, IDB
-

- Private Sector

- Finance & Asset Management
 - Banks: RBC, TD, BMO, Scotiabank, CIBC
 - Pension Funds: CPP Investments, OTPP, CDPQ
 - Insurance: Manulife, Sun Life
- Consulting
 - Economic: Analysis Group, CRA (*PhD preferred*)
 - Management: McKinsey, BCG, Bain
 - Big 4: Deloitte, PwC, EY, KPMG
- Corporate & Industry
 - Strategy/Forecasting: Bell, Canadian Tire, Enbridge
 - Pricing: Air Canada, CN Rail
 - Data/Tech: Shopify, Loblaws PC Optimum
- Startups
- Third Sector
 - Think Tanks & Institutes
 - C.D. Howe Institute
 - Conference Board of Canada
 - NGOs & Charities
 - Red Cross, Amnesty International
 - Industry & Sector Associations
 - Canadian Bankers Association
 - Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- Co-ops / WIL
- Further study

Federal

At a glance

- Why it's attractive
 - Scale, training, mobility across departments, mission-driven work, and a structured early-career pipeline.
 - Easy to move around horizontally: where you start does not determine your career.
 - May hire initially through internships/co-ops; can then apply internally.
- Typical starting roles
 - EC stream work: research, policy analysis, program evaluation, forecasting, data analytics.
- Where jobs are
 - Mostly Ottawa
 - Some roles in Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton
 - Some hybrid/remote.

Process

- How hiring works
 - Central postings
 - Multi-stage processes (screening → online testing → interview → references → security).
- Highly structured recruiting aimed at top talent and a “fair” process; strong interest in diversity/equity (geographic, linguistic, disciplinary, ethnic).
- Very formalized: you must follow procedures and deadlines precisely; the process takes time/effort and has multiple stages.
- Example: [Public Service Entrance Exam \(PSEE\)](#), now [Test of Judgement 376 \(TOJ 376\)](#).
- Immigration status matters:
 - Strong preference for citizens
 - Preference ordering often veterans/citizens/PRs
 - Non-citizens can apply, but odds are lower and some streams restrict eligibility.

Timelines (Sept–Nov heavy)

- Reason for the timing of this session.
- For next-summer starts, many campaigns run now.
 - Screening and assessments can span months.
 - It’s normal to be in multiple processes at once.
- Start early:
 - Block time for tests/interviews.
 - Maintain a tracker (process, deadlines, contacts, status).
 - Line up references early if needed.

Warning

Missed the fall window?

Students who ask in April/May how to start that summer typically must wait 4–5 months and apply for a job that starts ~14 months later (co-ops later).

Key portals & programs (next-summer starts)

- GC Jobs (official search/apply portal) – [Portal](#)
- PSC recruitment overview – [Recruitment programs](#)
- Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) – [PSR programs](#)
- Advanced Policy Analyst Program (APAP) – [Program page](#)
- Department of Finance – University/Annual Recruitment – [Recruitment](#)
- Bank of Canada – Careers / Students – [Careers · Students](#)
- Research Affiliate Program – [RAP overview](#)
- [Federal Student Work Experience Program](#)

Other government

Provincial

- Less structured overall; many applications in late winter/spring. Ontario jobs portal: [Ontario Jobs](#). See the department site for links to all provinces.
- Ontario Internship Program (OIP) — opens Jan/Feb; short window; policy is competitive — also consider Program & Service Delivery, Labour, etc. [OIP page](#)
- Don't forget provinces beyond Ontario.
- Who's eligible?
 - Provinces are generally more open to PRs and visa students than the federal government.

Municipal & quasi-governmental / Crowns

- Check department links and general job boards; make cold calls and cold CV submissions.
- Examples to search:
 - Ontario Hydro; Ontario Lottery & Gaming (OLG); Ports Authority, etc.
 - Extensive list in appendix

International organizations

What these organizations are

- Who: World Bank, IMF, UN (UNICEF, ILO), ADB, EBRD, WHO, OECD.
- Roles for MA/MAEP: research assistants/analysts, policy/economic analysts, monitoring & evaluation; HEOR/health analytics (e.g., WHO); junior-economist tracks
- PhD expectations: some non-field roles prefer/require a PhD; check fine print.

Entry routes & programs

- Young Professionals Programs (YPPs) (e.g., UN YPP) — check nationality/eligibility.
- Internships/terms — summer and off-cycle; department-specific portals.
- Direct hire — via organization job boards; networking + informational chats help.

Official portals

- UN YPP — [Overview](#)
- WHO — [Careers](#)
- ILO — [Jobs](#)
- World Bank — [Careers](#)
- Many job boards are easy to find on Google; good ones do not charge; see the department web page for additional links; search online.

Private sector

How recruiting differs

- The private sector tends to put less visible effort into recruiting people in your position
 - Except for big banks, whose cycles resembles federal government
- Translation: you'll see fewer formal pipelines; you must be more proactive.

i Note

Immigration status in the private sector Generally status-agnostic; skills/fit dominate.

Where economists actually work (examples)

- Banks (risk, analytics, macro/markets),
- Insurance
- Investment houses
- Consulting (e.g., KPMG)
- Pharma (HEOR, pricing)
- ... and less obvious employers.
 - Example: Canadian Tire's credit-card business is a major profit centre and is run in-house.
- See Appendix for a longer list, but options are limitless.

Start early & be proactive

- Check large-firm portals (esp. big banks) and apply directly when interested.
- Read the department's employment-resources pages; investigate options yourself (don't wait for postings).
- Talk to people; take the right courses and do well in them; leverage family/volunteer contacts.
- Use LinkedIn to spot alumni in roles you want.

TABE/CABE — networking that actually helps

- TABE (Toronto Association for Business Economics), chapter of CABE (Canadian Association for Business Economics). You will get an email soon.
CABE — [Main site](#) · TABE — [Chapter page](#)
- The department buys a group membership for students. Membership reduces, but does not eliminate, event fees (typically \$30 for lunch).
- This is a networking opportunity. It's a (mostly) volunteer-run organization. For this to be valuable for you, you need to take the initiative.

Co-ops/WIL

Timing & strategy

- Co-op applications for summer open in January; we'll hold a January session.
- A good permanent job usually trumps a co-op (start with higher pay/benefits). Our grads have done well – but it takes work.

Program mechanics & competition

- Formal co-op option in MA/MAEP; many postings with federal and Ontario governments; co-ops are often a way into those civil services.
- Winter-term co-ops can be easier (less competition; in other terms you often compete with MBAs/CS/physics).
- Practically, co-op can stretch the MA to ~2 years.
- The grad admin assistant circulates many postings – but you should also seek your own options.

Paperwork & tuition

- Read the Graduate Calendar rules.
- Co-op is for-credit (Econ 796 and 797)
 - You pay tuition and stay full-time.
- The option is not always “finished”: some accept a permanent job after 796 and don't do 797.
- To return to full-time studies, a report is required at the end of each co-op course.

International students (PGWP + program length)

- Know your PGWP rules and how they interact with program length.
- Common path from prior cohorts:
 - Extend a 12-month MA to 16–20 months via a second-year fall/winter co-op to build Canadian experience.
- Timing: Summer co-op applications open in January; paperwork can be slow → start early.

Further study

PhD & professional programs

- PhD in Economics
 - NOT FOR EVERYBODY; competitive; apply to a few places; understand which departments are strong in which fields; think about what you want to do after. GRE required in the US (and some others). Talk to your profs.
 - To encourage you, we have created a stream to move from our MA to our PhD
- Professional tracks

- Law — LSAT; Medicine — MCAT; other PhDs (e.g., Health Policy, IR, Business, Public Policy) often require GRE (esp. US).
- Register early for GRE/LSAT/MCAT and plan backwards from deadlines (prep + score reporting).

Funding — internal & external (early!)

- Start early. Internal timelines are very early; many applications take more time than you expect.
- Internal (host university)
 - Minimum stipends (e.g., MAC Econ PhD) and internal awards; often automatic if you apply early; larger awards may require extra steps.
- External (agency/foundation)
 - OGS — open to visa students and citizens/PRs; minimum A- (10.0/12); “over-time” students (e.g., 2nd-year MA in a 1-year program) not eligible; internal SGS deadline early Oct/Nov. [Scholarships overview](#)
 - SSHRC (Talent): \$20k/yr (CGS-M), \$35k/yr (Doctoral); Vanier \$50k/yr; CIHR \$50k/yr (plus research stipend in some cases). SSHRC: [Talent](#) · CIHR: [Apply through SGS](#)
 - Routing: You can apply to one of CIHR or SSHRC. Unsuccessful SSHRC/CIHR applications are usually shifted to OGS automatically — if eligible, you may as well apply.
 - Other foundations: Trudeau Foundation — [Program](#); Commonwealth Scholarships; IDRC (topic-specific) — [Funding page](#).
- Bottom line: deadlines are crazy early; strong applications require 100% effort — partial effort is usually wasted.

Conclusion & next steps

Next

- Prepare a CV (≈2 pages) and two 1-page cover letters. Keep the philosophy of the employer/granting agency in mind.
- If targeting federal roles, note Sept/Oct/Nov deadlines (Bank of Canada may close by ~3rd week of Sept). Start now.
- Keep options open (jobs and PhD); keep an eye on Avenue; watch list emails for opportunities and visits. Meet with me if you want feedback.
- Slides and extended lists live on Avenue to Learn.

Appendix — Extended Lists

Federal Government

Core Central Agencies & Economic Hubs

- Department of Finance Canada
- Bank of Canada (BoC)

- Statistics Canada (StatCan)
- Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO)
- Privy Council Office (PCO)
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS)

Key Economic & Social Departments

- Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED)
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)
- Health Canada / Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Transport Canada
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Regulators & Other Bodies

- Competition Bureau
- Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI)
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
- Canadian Transportation Agency

Crown Corporations & Federal Financial Institutions

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- Export Development Canada (EDC)
- Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)
- Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)
- Invest in Canada

Provincial & Municipal Government

Provincial Finance & Central Agencies

- Ministries of Finance (e.g., Ontario, BC, Alberta, Quebec)
- Treasury Boards
- Provincial Statistical Agencies (e.g., ISQ, BC Stats)

Provincial Line Ministries & Regulators

- Health, Labour, Education, Energy, Environment, Transportation
- Provincial Financial Regulators (e.g., FSRA in Ontario)
- Energy Regulators (e.g., Ontario Energy Board, Alberta Utilities Commission)

Municipalities & Regional Bodies

- Large Cities (e.g., Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal) for urban/transport/planning economics

- Regional Governments (e.g., Region of Peel/York)
- Transit Authorities (e.g., Metrolinx, TransLink, TTC)

Provincial Crown Corporations

- Utilities (e.g., Hydro One, BC Hydro, Hydro-Québec, OPG)
- Workers' Compensation Boards (e.g., WSIB, WorkSafeBC)
- Port Authorities (e.g., Port of Vancouver)

Asset Management & Pensions

- CPP Investments
- Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ)
- Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP)
- Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP)
- OMERS, HOOPP, OPTrust, AIMCo, BCI, IMCO

International Organizations

- Multilateral Institutions (Note: PhD often preferred for Economist roles)
 - World Bank
 - International Monetary Fund (IMF)
 - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- UN Agencies: UNICEF, ILO, WHO, UNDP, WFP
- Regional Development Banks: ADB, EBRD, IDB

Private Sector

Banking & Financial Services

- Bank Economics Depts: RBC, TD, Scotiabank, BMO, CIBC, National Bank, Desjardins
- Capital Markets/IB: Quantitative and strategy roles
- Insurance: Manulife, Sun Life, Intact Financial

Consulting

- Economic Consulting (Note: PhD strongly preferred)
 - Analysis Group, Charles River Associates, The Brattle Group, Compass Lexecon
- Management/Strategy Consulting
 - McKinsey & Co., Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Bain & Company
- "Big 4" & Policy Shops
 - Deloitte, PwC, EY, KPMG (economics/policy advisory)
 - MNP Economics, Copenhagen Economics

Industry & Corporate Roles

- Tech/Data/Telecom: Shopify, Bell, Rogers, TELUS
- Retail/CPG: Canadian Tire, Loblaw/Shoppers, Couche-Tard
- Transportation/Energy: Air Canada, CN/CP, Enbridge, Suncor

- Health Economics/Pharma: Pfizer Canada, GSK, Novartis, ICES, CADTH

Third Sector & Research

Think Tanks & Policy Institutes

- C.D. Howe Institute
- Conference Board of Canada
- Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP)
- Fraser Institute
- Broadbent Institute

Non-profits, NGOs & Associations

- Sector Associations (e.g., Canadian Bankers Association, Canadian Chamber of Commerce)
- Large NGOs (fewer dedicated economist roles)