

MA/MAEP Career Placement Meeting 1

McMaster Department of Economics

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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).

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- 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
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- 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.**
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- 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
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- Private Sector
 - **Finance & Asset Management**
 - **Banks:** RBC, TD, BMO, Scotiabank, CIBC
 - **Pension Funds:** CPP Investments, OTTP, 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**.

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)