

Case Study 4

>> *This case study describes the approach Career Services at the University of Waterloo has used to evaluate their resume service.*

This case addresses the evaluation of

Inputs	no
Processes	yes
Outcomes	yes
• Learning outcomes	yes
• Personal attribute outcomes	no
• Impact outcomes	no

Evaluating Resume Services at Career Services, University of Waterloo

We decided to evaluate our resume services in order to a) measure the effectiveness of our online and face-to-face resume advising and b) provide support and information in our annual report regarding the effectiveness of our resume advising services.

(I think readers may need some more context to help them understand this case, because it was more than just an internal quality improvement activity, but a full research project. Might you indicate that this was a research project, received funding, etc? Perhaps a few lines could be copied from your research proposal, or another document where you have introduced or described the overall project).

The data will serve as a benchmark for effectiveness of our service and to determine whether both services (online and face-to-face) should be offered and their relative effectiveness.

The Evaluation Tools

We developed and used two tools. The first is a resume rubric (could you include a definition of this – eg the rubric lays out ... in order to compare a student's resume against a set of standards.) The second is a student survey about their perception of the value of online and face-to-face advising. Both tools were developed by Career Services staff after reviewing other available tools.

Resume Rubric



Student Perception Resume Survey



Logistics

Who the tool(s) were used with	The tools were used with students. The resume rubric was validated by employers.
When the tools were administered	The resume rubric is regularly used in our co-op prep courses but this use, as part of a larger study, was new. The student surveys were developed for this work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first survey determined eligibility for participation based on prior use of Career Services ▪ Students who qualified and completed all followed this path: online survey and resume submission, complete online resume-related reading/activities, 2nd survey and submission of revised resume, face-to-face resume critique, 3rd survey and 3rd resume submission
How the tools were administered	Online work on resumes, surveys online, submission of resumes online, one face-to-face meeting. (could this be clarified – were the student surveys done online?)
Response rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A notice about the research was sent to all full-time students (20,000+), however many were soon eliminated as they had prior experience with Career Services and we wanted only “new” users so our group of 549 was reduced to 350. ▪ This was a very involved, multi-step process. Students needed to fill out 3 surveys, submit resumes at 3 points in time, complete online work, and have an individual advisement meeting. Ultimately, only 29 students completed all of the steps. Larger sample sizes were used in analysis for the aspects that were completed by those students.
Summarizing and analyzing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A faculty member and the Director, Career Services, directed a research assistant, who used SPSS to analyze the statistical data. ▪ To score resumes against the rubric, students were trained to mark using the rubric. Resumes submitted each time were coded and graded by. Each marker marked each resume (not knowing whether it was first, second or third resume version).

Our Results and Learnings

The feedback confirmed that students enhanced their perception of their resumes and the quality of their resumes (based on grades). Certain resume section grades increased more than others. There were some statistically significant results. We have included the results our annual report to support the measurement of learning outcomes and results were shared at conferences (WACE, CACEE) in Spring 2009.

We think the following were strengths of our approach:

- The resume rubric we created is sound as it was validated by employers
- a survey strength was that in the 2nd and 3rd surveys we asked students to reconsider their previous resume versions and rate them in light of what they now know
- it was good to have both subjective (student perception) and objective (resume grade) measures

We think the following were weaknesses of our approach:

- we may need to rethink the marking scheme to weight certain sections more heavily although the downside is making it more complicated for students (and markers)
- from the data we were able to collect, it is not clear whether online learning was better or whether higher impact because it was the first educational piece in this study (without the specific results of your study, this point is not that clear to the reader – can you clarify or make it more general?)

We have learned that doing such longitudinal, multi-step, multi-method research study is complicated and time consuming. We've also learned that partnering with research experts on campus was very helpful. In the future, if we were in a similar situation, we would do this mostly the same with some very small tweaks; need to choose in-depth study topic wisely. Before embarking on a project like this, a good question to ask ourselves is, how deep do we need to go to meet our objectives?