



ACE Advice



Practical Experience | Expert Insight

A Virtual Chat with Sarah Lockyer



BSc Anthropology
MSc Forensic Archaeological
Science
PhD Bioarchaeology



BSc Université de Montréal
MSc University College
London
PhD Bournemouth
University



Specialty/Research Focus:
PhD research looked at
fracture patterns and
interpersonal violence in
18th- and 19th-century
London.

Online
Office Hrs



See our list of
events to register
for Sarah's
upcoming office
hours.

I currently work as the casualty identification coordinator for the Canadian Armed Forces. I manage the Casualty Identification Program, which has the mandate of identifying the newly discovered skeletal remains of Canadian service personnel killed in action during the First and Second World Wars and the Korean conflict. I am also responsible for the anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains. The program is also responsible for identifying soldiers buried as unknown soldiers where significant historical and archival evidence can exclude any other possible candidate.

I found my current position while on a temporary contract working as an executive assistant in Human Resources at Parks Canada, it was my second temporary contract as an executive assistant in the Canadian public service. During these contracts, I made sure to introduce myself to as many people as possible within the executive cadre and give them an idea of my background and the value I could bring to various positions. This opened doors and revealed opportunities that were not advertised. When I found the job posting for casualty identification coordinator, it was for a 10-month contract. I did not have the required status to apply for the position at the time as it was an internal job posting and I was not yet a public servant. I decided to reach out to the hiring manager to introduce myself and let them know that I would be qualified and interested in the position, should I become eligible in the future and the position was available. I proceeded to reach out and update the hiring manager on my status, and continued movement with various positions in the public service every three to four months. Maintaining that contact led to the hiring manager offering me a contract at a later date when no restrictions were preventing me from accepting the position.

I use my anthropological expertise when analyzing human remains and when reviewing the archaeological data. However, what I feel has been the most useful in the various positions I have had in the public service are the transferable skills (i.e. critical thinking, problem solving, writing, organization, time-management, research, etc.) that I obtained throughout my studies. These skills are highly sought in the public service and should definitely be touted as assets when describing the value you can bring to various projects.