# Generative AI in Co-op: How to Leverage New Technology to Fuel Student Job Searches

| Course Subject: | Professional Development for Co-op |
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| Student Level: | Undergraduate – Second Year |
| Number of Students: | 19-39 |
| Developed by: | Michelle Zaff, Senior Co-op Coordinator, CSSH Co-op |

## What Students Did

Students in the co-op preparation course use generative AI throughout the job search process, including writing resumes and cover letters, creating LinkedIn profiles, preparing for interviews, and even exploring careers. Positioning generative AI as one tool in a toolbox, Michelle Zaff devised exercises to help students use AI to improve language/word choices and communication skills and to strengthen their professional brand.

**Learning Goals and Purpose**

The purpose and goals of these activities are for students to:

- Articulate their strengths and differentiate themselves from other applicants in a thoughtful, strategic, meaningful way to allow them to be successful in their job searches.
- Enhance their self-awareness and assessment of their strengths and weaknesses.

- Recognize the opportunities and challenges that gen AI offers in this space and how that might transfer to other spaces.
- Develop their individual voice, critical thinking and authenticity by blending an AI voice with their own.
- Build their communication skills, vocabulary, and critical thinking.

## Assessment

The students' use of AI is not formally assessed. Anecdotal feedback from both students and co-op employers has been positive and the practices have been shared with other co-op coordinators across the colleges.

## Faculty Reflections

Learning about the benefits and limitations of generative AI grew from my own commitment to embracing lifelong learning. My goal is to help students use AI as a tool without losing their own creativity and authenticity. I did an experiment with employers, sending them two resumes by the same student – one written with AI and one not. Employers could tell which was AI-assisted, and they preferred the authentic student voice. They valued credibility. I caution students that if the vocabulary, skills and personality conveyed during an interview doesn't match those reflected on their resume and pre-interview communication, then it can harm them. We need to work with students to think critically about AI output and use it to their benefit.

# Step-by-Step Directions for Each Activity

| Activity 1 | **Introducing and Reflecting on AI**<br><br>AI and Co-op Initial Reflection prompt: Please comment on the following:<br><br>1. What are some potential benefits and potential drawbacks of using AI in the job application process (ie. to help with drafting your resume or in preparing for a job interview)?<br>2. Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI platforms? If so, please list and describe which platform you used, for what purpose/task/assignment/goal whether you found it helpful, and why or why not.<br>3. Comment on ethical issues and possible biases inherent in current versions of ChatGPT and other AI platforms. |
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| Activity 2 | **Enhance your Resume** (See related materials document titled, "Resume and AI Exercises.docx" for more detail)<br><br>1. Prepare your resume on your own.<br>2. Take bullet points from different sections and input to ChatGPT. Ask for particular feedback on how to make it stronger.<br>3. Evaluate whether or not the suggestions you receive are an improvement. |
| Activity 3 | **Improve your LinkedIn Headline** (Recruiters look at job seekers' headlines on LinkedIn, and this activity helps you generate one.)<br><br>1. Find 10 job descriptions for your target job, and paste description into word cloud generator. This will give you keywords. |

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| | 2. Put keywords into ChatGPT and ask it to create a LinkedIn headline using these words. |
| **Activity 4** | **Prepare for Job Interviews**<br><br>1. Upload a job description into ChatGPT and ask it to generate interview questions (suggest a number).<br>2. Upload an anonymized resume and ask for answers to the interview questions it just generated.<br>3. Make sure you think carefully about the responses you get to avoid "hallucinations" from the AI. |
| **Activity 5** | **Explore Careers** (You may not have a clear idea of what you want to do for a career, or there may be careers you are not aware of. This activity helps you investigate possibilities suited to you.)<br><br>1. Take the results of the "Values in Action" instrument you completed in class to help you determine your strengths.<br>2. Enter your strengths, past jobs and classes into ChatGPT and ask for a list of jobs you may find interesting and 10 employers that would be relevant in these sectors and highlight those which offer internships. |

**Related Materials**

- [Resume and AI Exercises](#)
- [AI Prompts to Support a Job Search](#)