December 7, 2012

**Cover letter addressing screening criteria**

**Re:** Junior English Editor IS-2, NRC Construction Portfolio

**Applicant:** Kimberly Lochhead

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I apply for this role as Junior English Editor at the National Research Council within the Construction Portfolio. To date, my work experience has been entirely based around writing, editing, proofreading, communications and staff and production management. I believe I’d be well suited to this position for a variety of reasons. Below, I address how my experience relates to each of the qualifications listed in the job posting:

**Degree from a recognized university in English, Communications, Journalism, or a related field.**

I hold an honours Bachelor of Journalism (double major in history) from Carleton University. The program’s demanding and rigorous nature fostered in me an excellent ability to write and edit technical material on a wide range of subjects. The program’s emphasis on meeting deadlines and ensuring high quality, error-free writing prepared me well for a career focused on the written word.

**Experience in copy-editing and proofreading technical documents in English.**

In my current role as Writer/Editor/Project Manager at Ascribe Marketing Communications Inc., I proofread and edit marketing material, white papers, annual reports and other confidential documents for a range of high profile clients. These include the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Royal Canadian Mint, Bell Canada, Minto Developments Inc. and global telecommunications corporation Alcatel-Lucent. Whether concerning corporate strategic plans or the latest technology trends, these documents are highly technical in language and require referencing corporate style guides as well as large volumes of research material. As an English-based company, all of my editing and proofreading work is completed in English.

In my journalism experience as a Reporter at the EMC Newspaper and Assistant Editor at Ottawa Life Magazine, I wrote extensively about construction issues including building fires, the national building code and standards in construction, planning, development, urban infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainable materials. These articles involved in-depth interviews with construction industry professionals and engineers as well as consulting construction-specific reference material and public government documents. This improved my knowledge and understanding of the construction industry and its prevalent issues.

**Experience in the use of electronic publishing tools to edit, such as mark-up language (XML preferred), Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat and content management systems.**

As an Editor at Ascribe I edit and proofread documents in XML, Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Illustrator and InDesign. In my previous experience as Assistant Editor/Director of Operations at Ottawa Life Magazine and as a Reporter at the EMC newspaper, I edited articles, photographs and graphics in these formats. My knowledge of this software extends beyond basic use as I understand many of their hidden features and shortcuts and have the ability to work in different versions of HTML/XML markup software. I can also export information between different programs and transfer content from one application to another as projects move forward during production.

As the sole person responsible for Ottawa Life Magazine’s website, I worked in XML to publish each issue online, format pages and upload and modify content from a central interface, managed through our in-house open-source content management system (one based on Drupal and PHP). This process also allowed me to maintain revision and version control, index articles and search our database for archived content.

**Experience in modifying graphics using software such as Adobe Illustrator.**

Also at Ottawa Life Magazine, I modified graphics using Adobe Illustrator during the layout process before sending each issue/publication to print. I also have experience with Adobe Photoshop, which I used to adjust photographs for Ottawa Life as well as newspapers I have worked at previously. Using software such as Illustrator allows the editor to adjust colour, contrast, aspect ratio and size/pixels. This helps the graphic/image fit the final product perfectly, thereby increasing the overall quality of the publication. Indeed, I understand the importance of tools such as Adobe Illustrator and have an in-depth knowledge of its features, uses and tricks.

**Knowledge of the editorial and publication processes.**

As I stated above, in my current capacity at Ascribe, I have a great deal of experience editing and proofreading various technical and legal documents for clients in both the public and private sectors (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, DFAIT, Transport Canada, etc). When required, I consult corporate style guides, technical codes and documents, as well as the Canadian Press Style Guide. I am very familiar with the production process, which can involve many rounds of revisions and translation before layout and final approvals. Using my strong organizational skills, I plan and schedule all internal and external meetings, managing my own time as well as that of each team member. I all the writers and editors prioritize their workloads by keeping them aware of upcoming deadlines and shifting assignments if necessary.

From my reporting and magazine experience, I am also skilled in layout and graphics production using InDesign and Adobe Illustrator. In these formats, I have edited technical and legal documents, providing a final proofread before they are sent for publication. Previously as Assistant Editor at Ottawa Life Magazine, I supervised the production and publication process and ensured stringent deadlines were met.

**Knowledge of the rules of the English language.**

English is my mother tongue and I have spoken it all my life. Having completed a rigorous degree in Journalism from Carleton University, and having worked in writing and editing for over five years, I have gained a mastery of reading, writing and speaking the English language. I should also note that I have worked in and studied French, which I know can be useful for any government position.

**Ability to use computer software for hypertext mark-up, copy-editing, graphics production (Adobe Illustrator) and page layout.**

Working with design partners to create marketing material at Ascribe, I work daily in a variety of software applications including Outlook, Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. Because many of our clients use different software tools, we liaise with them and submit work to them in a host of formats, using advanced features such as track changes to monitor the production and layout processes. I have also edited documents for the web using hypertext mark-up and PDF files in Adobe Acrobat using the notes tool.

During my time as Assistant Editor at Ottawa Life Magazine and as a Reporter at the EMC, I was responsible for laying out each issue using Adobe Illustrator. I formatted content, ensuring every page was perfectly aligned, that all content and graphics were properly spaced and made margin adjustments when necessary. As I stated earlier, I was also responsible for Ottawa Life Magazine’s website. I worked in XML code to publish each issue online, using the content management system to format pages and upload/modify content from a central interface. This process also allowed me to maintain revision and version control, index articles and search our database for archived content.

**Ability to carry out instructions and to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.**

In each of my previous I mentioned above, I was tasked with multiple duties necessary to complete a final project or publish a final publication, whether it was a newspaper, magazine, report or other document. In each case, accurately following instructions and effective written and verbal communications were crucial to creating a high quality product. In my current role as Writer/Editor and Project Manager, I receive instructions from my supervisor (the company’s president), and then delegate instructions, ensuring they are followed and that projects remain on track.

As I mentioned earlier, I hold a Bachelor of Journalism (with a double major in history) from Carleton University. Through my courses there, I learned the foundation of writing, editing and the general art of communicating. The program’s emphasis on accuracy and quality allowed me to develop a strong sense of attention to detail, as well as the ability to work well under very tight deadlines. Most importantly, the program developed my ability to communicate both efficiently and effectively; on a fundamental level, I learned how to make writing accurate, clear and consistent. Through my radio and television courses, I also improved my speaking skills, learning to properly articulate and enunciate script copy.

In summary, I firmly believe that my education, work experience, strong editorial background and knowledge of would render me a choice candidate for this Junior English Editor position.

Many thanks for your time and consideration,

Kimberly Lochhead

(613) 769-9404

kimberly.lochhead@gmail.com