

FINAL WORK TERM REPORT

PURPOSE

The work term report is a requirement you must complete to obtain your co-op credit. The report is an integral part of the learning and evaluation process in Cooperative Education.

The benefits include:

- integration of theoretical concepts and practical experience
- identifies the value of experiential learning
- clarifies future learning objectives and career goals
- forms a permanent record of your work and capabilities
- facilitates an understanding of the employer's organization and work environment
- refines writing skills to prepare professional quality reports
- fosters communication with the company's managers
- provides an opportunity for employer recognition of your skills
- provides data for future employment searches
- contributes valuable information for students and faculty in your program
- meets the requirements for a Cooperative Education endorsed diploma/degree
- complies with the Canadian Association for Cooperative Education's guidelines

PROCESS

Use the following steps as a guide in completing your work term reports.

1. Discuss your report with your supervisor/manager early in your work term.
2. Maintain regular notes of your activities and experiences in a work journal – memories sometimes fail and having a journal makes writing the report much easier.
3. Prepare initial drafts of work reports.
4. Is it possible to review the draft with your manager/supervisor?
5. Prepare a final draft.
6. Proofread for accuracy, completeness, spelling and grammar.
7. Upload the work term report to Blackboard. Your work term has a specific course code.
8. Give your employer this link so that they can confirm they have read and approve of the report. <http://www.algonquincollege.com/coop/forms/confirmation.htm>
9. Your faculty program coordinator will mark the report and submit marks however sometimes you will see an IF on your transcript until the faculty submit the marks.

GUIDELINES FOR FORMAL WORK TERM REPORT

Report requirements:

Start early in your work term preparing your report. Gather information and background material. Meet briefly with your supervisor to discuss the requirements for your report. Discuss issues that may be confidential/proprietary in nature that would preclude your report being submitted to the College for evaluation and grading.

Your report is not merely a user guide, a technical description or an informational report. It must contain your own ideas and be an analysis of your work term. The content must be your own work.

Content of your Work Term Report:

Your report should relate to activities during the work term. Your report should provide an overview of the organization/company, description of your work environment, describe organization's products and/or services, your job responsibilities/duties, projects you were involved with, training received, contributions you may have made etc. Your report you will also review your learning objectives (i.e. achievement or lack of achievement of your objectives), review future employment opportunities in your chosen career, outline any recommendations regarding your work term (i.e. suitable or not to your program of study, maximize your skills, provide excellent training opportunities etc.) Your report will also include a section entitled "Recommendations" where you can outline any recommendation regarding your work term (great learning opportunity directly related to field of study, would be an extremely suitable work experience for future students from a similar program of study etc.)

Writing Style

Reports should communicate ideas effectively to those responsible for evaluating it as well as employers, instructors and students who might benefit from its contents.

A proper plan that assures that your report is developed in orderly and rational style aides greatly in achieving these criteria. Prepare an outline of the report before you start. Identify the essential elements of your report and avoid great a mounts of extraneous material that may obscure your ideas.

Your reports should contain between approximately 2,000 to 2,500 words. More important than length is the conciseness, clarity, accuracy and completeness of the report.

Many ideas are better explained using graphs, charts, diagrams or photographs, instead of words. The main ideas must be clearly discernable. Simply photocopying pages from texts or manuals will not be satisfactory. Reports must be professional in presentation: neat, adequately documented, correct spelling and grammar. Errors are not acceptable at the professional level.

The only way to write effectively is by practicing. Each work term report will be read/evaluated by the college and reviewed by your employer. Their comments and criticisms are meant to assist you in developing your skills in writing and self-criticism.

As a professional you will need to be your own critic, but it is good practice to have a colleague or friend check your work whenever this is possible. Most reports go through two or three drafts before the final version is issued. You should always review and revise your drafts until the report is of satisfactory quality. When the final draft is produced, it must be proofread for spelling, grammar and typing errors before submitting it for evaluation.

In addition to referring to published material relative to the employer (in either internal or external publications), it will likely be necessary to ask questions of certain individuals within the organization. In most instances, you can expect your questions to be answered. There may be the odd case in which you are met with strong resistance or even outright refusal to be co-operated by the person being questioned. To avoid such a situation you would be wise to:

- Choose your resource people carefully
- be well prepared before you ask your questions and know exactly the information you require
- phrase your questions so they are as straight-forward as possible

Report Format

The main elements of a formal work term report are listed below:

- Title page
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Main Body of Report
- Evaluation
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Glossary
- Bibliography
- Appendices

Title Page

Title of Report Student Author's Name Program

Name of Employer Date of Issue Name of Educational Institution

Title Page Format/Sample

- Title of Report
- Prepared by
- Name of Student
- Co-operative Education
- (Program Name, Division)
- Specify work term (e.g. FALL 2001)
- Institution Name
- Name of Co-op Educator
- Name of Employer
- City, Province
- Date

Table of Contents

Indicate by page number the position of summary, introduction, all headings of report (and important minor headings, intended to show relative importance), appendix and references.

Introduction

The introduction is an important part of the report. It should:

- capture the reader's interest
- indicate why the report is important to the reader
- define the purpose of the report

The form of an introduction may vary considerably. Sometimes it is a single paragraph at the beginning of the body of the report, sometimes it is required at beginning of sections or sub-sections and sometimes it is a complete section that provide historical background, limitations, qualifications, methods and/or procedures used.

5. Main Body of Report

Note: "Main Body of Report" is not used as a heading.

The theme of the report is developed in the main body of the text. Planning before writing will help you develop your ideas in an orderly and clear manner.

The use of topical headings indicate division of the material and assist the development of ideas in a logical manner. Headings and major sub-headings should be listed in the table of contents.

Sources should be given for all diagrams, tables, photographs, etc., included in the body of the report.

6. Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

Depending on the type of report, it may be useful to include a summary and separate sections for both conclusions and recommendations, even though this may mean repeating statements already given in the preceding discussion. Conclusions and recommendations should be listed in logical order and based only on the evidence presented in the body of the report.

7. Glossary

Reports which require the frequent use of unusual technical or "trade" words, or acronyms and where the meanings of these words are not clear from the context, should contain a glossary or list of definitions of these words. A glossary of symbols is sometimes useful to summarize the symbols used in one convenient location. Glossaries may be placed either at the beginning of the report (before the Introduction) or as an Appendix.

8. Bibliography

For some reports a bibliography listing major sources of information may be useful to the reader, particularly for the reader who desires more information, or who wishes to pursue the subject in greater depth. Books listed in the bibliography would not necessarily have been cited in the report, whereas all entries in References must have been cited in the report.

In addition, important details of the organization which are obtained through interviews or conversations with company executives should also be referenced.

9. Appendices

This is the place for documentary material (detailed calculations, charts, statistics, etc.) which needs to be included in the report, but is not an integral part of the main body of the text. Every section of the Appendix should be keyed to the text by a footnote or a direct reference in the text. All items in the Appendix should be identified as to a source.

Sections of the Appendix should be arranged in the same order in which they are first identified in the text and should be lettered "Appendix A", "Appendix B", etc. - one item or related item to each Appendix. Each item or exhibit should be listed under "Appendix" in the Table of Contents or in a special Table of Contents preceding the Appendix, if numerous exhibits are included.

Evaluation of the Formal Report

Your report will be evaluated based on the following criteria: format, literary, quality, content and appearance. The mark given is either a pass or fail.