

Purpose of the Work Term Report

The work term report is an integral part of your co-op learning experience. Its purpose is to help you:

- develop technical and report writing skills;
- develop the ability to write a coherent report;
- develop organizational and analytical skills;
- gain an overview of the work term job and/or the employing operation.

Think of the work term report in the same way you would think of a report that might be prepared in the working environment for review by higher levels of management. Envision your target audience as a person who is not technically trained but with a general understanding of technical issues. Form, writing style (grammar, spelling etc.) and of course, content, are all very important.

You should begin gathering the materials for your work term report after the first 4 weeks on the job. This might include keeping a diary of activities, keeping notes on specific technical problems and the process involved in resolving them, or keeping track of development processes.

Contents of the Report

The work term report should be primarily analytical. The report must, however, include a description of the employer organization, your responsibilities and how your tasks interrelate with and contribute to the activities of that department and the rest of the employer organization.

The report must not be overly technical or overly simplistic. It must be appreciated by both a technical and non-technical audience. Highly technical materials can be included as Appendices but must be referred to in the text.

Where possible, relate what you have learned in academic studies to the work experience.

The report should demonstrate that you have successfully integrated concepts from your academic studies and earlier work experiences with your latest work experience. In order to undertake a meaningful analysis, set objectives early in the work term and maintain an awareness of the varied activities beyond your own day-to-day responsibilities.

Writing Style

The report should demonstrate organization of thoughts and ideas. It should be concise and coherent.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation are all important. Remember, you would not submit a written document with spelling errors or poor grammar to management in business or government.

should write at least two drafts.

Before producing the final report, you

Form of Written Presentation

The report should be typed and between 2,000 and 2,500 words in length. The report should include:

- *A title page* – the title of your report gives the reader an insight into the nature of the discussion in the report (e.g. "Work Term Report #3" is not a suitable title). In addition to your title, include your name, year of study, period of your work term and state whether this is your first, second or third work term.
- *An executive summary* of 100 words or less.
- *Table of contents* that lists the topics in your report and page number.
- *Introduction* – addresses the objectives of the report and the rationale for these objectives.
- *An overview of the work term* – includes the name of your employer, a description of the nature of the work carried out at the organization and/or within your department and includes a description of your role and responsibilities. This section should be between 200 and 400 words.
- *Main body/analytical section* – you can analyze any aspect of the job or the work of the organization or department.
- The report must not be overly technical or overly simplistic. It must be appreciated by both a technical and non- technical audience.
- *Conclusions and recommendations* – stand back from your analysis and draw some conclusions or "so what" statements. These conclusions might summarize, for example, what is important about this topic, what should be done about the findings or where further efforts should be directed to address problems uncovered.
- *Appendices* – include here any graphs or tables supporting your report as well as any information of a purely descriptive nature.
- *Bibliography* – provide using standard bibliography format any resources you have drawn on in your research.

Evaluation of the Work Term Report

You must submit your report to the Co-op Office via CSM by the end of your work term. You will receive an email outlining instructions for submission and the deadline when you are halfway through your work term.

The report will receive one of the following evaluations: pass or rewrite. Any report receiving a grade of rewrite will be deemed unsatisfactory; recipients will be required to rewrite and resubmit their report to obtain a credit for the work term.

In order to be eligible for the next work term, students must receive both a PASS evaluation for their work term report and a satisfactory final evaluation from their work term supervisor. To

graduate from the co-op program, students must meet these evaluation requirements for all of their work terms.

Before Writing the Report

Research may be required to support the arguments in your report.

You are encouraged to discuss with your employer/supervisor, a topic or problem to analyze in their report. Their experience and familiarity with the work environment could be helpful in determining potential areas for analysis that would not only be suitable for a work term topic but would also assist them in solving a problem. Employers continually encourage and appreciate co-op students' comments, ideas and suggestions. Discussion about the work term report is appropriate.

If in doubt about the suitability of a topic, speak to the Supervisor of Studies.

The Analysis - Different Approaches for Topics

The report should be a fact-supported analysis, not a personal impression. There are several possible approaches to your topic, depending on your discipline. You can:

- Evaluate several techniques for remediation for particular types of site contamination.
- Outline the steps involved in a Phase I environmental site assessment and difficulties in conducting these assessments.
- Review compliance to a specific environmental standard and factors contributing to the standard being met or not.
- Assess and analyze a particular type of modeling for assessing climatic or other data.
- Analyse the effectiveness of the tools (software and/or hardware) used to carry out designated tasks.
- Analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the organization of human resources and tools used.
- Compare and contrast various laboratory or development techniques.
- Assess specific technologies, processes or systems and discuss the appropriateness of their deployment in different contexts.
- Use a case study approach to clearly identify and briefly outline a problem or situation. Analyze the problem and develop and evaluate alternatives. Make recommendations and support them.