WORK REPORT GUIDELINES
SFU Science & Environment Co-op
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WORK TERM DOCUMENTS:

Four separate documents are required in order to receive a Pass (P) grade for your co-op work term practicum course (or Satisfactory (S) for graduate level co-op courses):

1) Work Report/Project (including standard title page)
2) Project Release & Evaluation Form – completed by your supervisor (note: only required for some report types – see individual report type descriptions for details)
3) Supervisor Evaluation Form – completed by your supervisor
4) Student Evaluation

Please see the “Work Term Report/Project Types” section below for information regarding the options. The Project Release & Evaluation Form can be found in the Forms section of your home co-op program area on the www.sfu.ca/coop website (and is only required for some report types – see individual report type descriptions for details). Your supervisor will be e-mailed a link to an online evaluation form during the work term period (and a sample of the evaluation form can be found in the Forms section of your home co-op program area on the www.sfu.ca/coop website).

The Student Evaluation form can be found online in Symplicity under your current co-op placement.

DEADLINES & GRADING:

Your workplace supervisor will provide an evaluation of your finished report (for some of the report types) using the Project Release & Evaluation Form, and your co-op coordinator will also review the report (for all report types). Your report receives an overall evaluation on a scale ranging from “Excellent” to “Unsatisfactory”. If your report is marked as “Unsatisfactory”, you will need to discuss this with your co-op coordinator and you will be given the opportunity to make revisions.

The deadline dates for submitting work term reports and other documents (as listed above in Work Term Documents section) are:

- Spring Term: April 15
- Summer Term: August 15
- Fall Term: December 15

If any items are missing by the deadline, then a deferred (DE) grade will be recorded. This grade automatically changes to an Incomplete Course (N) by the end of the first week of classes of the following term (or Unsatisfactory (U) for graduate level co-op courses by the fourth week of classes). Once required documents are received, change of grade requests will be submitted, but please note that due to the high volume of data entry by Student Services at the start of each term, it may take some time for the grade change to be processed. This is particularly worth noting if you are applying for scholarships, bursaries or graduation.
HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR DOCUMENTS:

The work report/project and project release & evaluation form (if required) can be submitted to the Science & Environment Co-op office (P9447) in one of the following ways:

- By email to your co-op coordinator (PDF of report and scanned forms – please do as a single PDF)
- Drop off in person or through mail slot in door of P9447
- By regular mail to the Science & Environment Co-op office (mailing address at top of first page of these guidelines)
- By fax to 778-782-3031 (fax machine in Science & Environment Co-op office)

CONFIDENTIALITY OF WORK TERM REPORT/PROJECT:

Please note that work term reports must be non-confidential such that the entire report can be submitted to the SFU Co-op Office. You are encouraged to discuss this with your co-op workplace supervisor and/or contact your co-op coordinator if you would like some advice regarding choice of an option and topic. For some report types, your supervisor must be given the opportunity to review the report and sign the Project Release & Evaluation Form before you submit it to the SFU Co-op Office. Your employer may thus allow other students to view your work report for research purposes, or they may choose to request that only SFU Co-op staff view the report.

WORK TERM REPORT/PROJECT TYPES:

There are seven work term report/project options:

1) Technical Report
2) Literature Review
3) Informational Interviews
4) Oral Presentation
5) Scientific Poster
6) Reflective Report: Analysis of Work Term
7) Article/Blog Posts for the Online Learning Community (OLC)

All work term report/project submissions should include a standard title page (Standard Work Report Title Page) that includes:

- Organization name
- Your supervisor’s name
- Your job title
- Your report title
- Your name (but NOT your student number, address or phone number)
- Your degree and major (e.g., BSc, Chemistry)
- Semester and work term number (e.g., Summer 2012 – Work Term 2)

A template for the title page can be found in the Forms section of your home co-op program area on the www.sfu.ca/coop website.

A Project Release & Evaluation Form signed by your supervisor is required for all seven report types except option 2 – Literature Review, option 3 – Informational Interviews, and Option 7 – Article/Blog Posts for OLC (unless article mentions employer, in which case release form is required).
OPTION 1: TECHNICAL REPORT

Purpose:

A technical report is the most formal method of presenting the results of professional work which may come from a research project or study.

Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?
Yes.

Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?
Yes if approved on release form by supervisor.

Expectations:

When writing a technical report, your supervisor may provide you with a report template that conforms to internal organizational guidelines. You may use such a report template, but please attach the Standard Work Report Title Page before submitting to the SFU Co-op Office and ensure that the report is non-confidential. You are encouraged to discuss the format of your report with your supervisor.

The report should be 1500-3000 words in length, excluding any appendices, and should include the following sections:

- **Standard Work Report Title Page**
- **Summary:** This is an information abstract no more than one page in length that is a short concise summary of the important points of each section of the main report.
- **Table of Contents:** Identifies contents and organization of the document including page numbers.
- **List of Figures (optional):** Identifies any figures, drawings, or photographs shown in the report.
- **List of Tables (optional):** Identifies any tables shown in the report.
- **Introduction:** Introduces the subject of the report to the reader. Remember that the reader will require some orientation to the subject of your report.
- **Discussion:** Presents evidence (facts, arguments, details, data, test results, etc.) necessary to the purpose of the report.
- **Conclusions:** States briefly the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion.
- **Recommendations (if applicable):** Suggests a course of action based on the findings and conclusions.
- **References/Bibliography:** Acknowledge use of materials from printed sources in the preparation of your report. Indicate exact source of all quotations and/or results of previous work. Use APA Style – more information available at www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing.
- **Appendices (optional):** Includes data, which was not necessary to include in the main body of the report for an immediate understanding of the discussion.

OPTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose:

A literature review summarizes and showcases the ideas from a field of study by critically evaluating different works presented on the topic. This can be a useful tool for staying up to date on current trends in the field.

Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?
No, although we would appreciate it if your supervisor reviewed the report and completed the evaluation section.

Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?
Yes.

Expectations:
Review three academic articles related to a topic in your field of study and write a literature review to present your findings (minimum 1500 words).

Your literature review should include the following details:

- **Standard Work Report Title Page**
- **Introduction:** Explain the topic you are exploring with your research.
  - Tip: use a theme or research question to provide your review with some focus
- **Discussion and Conclusion:** Organize and present information.
  - Tip: two commons methods for organizing literature reviews include chronologically [e.g., development or progress in a field] and thematically [e.g., grouping by themes]
- **References:** Use APA Style – more information available at www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing

Further Resources:

For more information on literature reviews, please see the Writing Handouts available on the SFU Student Learning Commons website (www.learningcommons.sfu.ca).

**OPTION 3: INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS**

**Purpose:**

Informational interviews provide insight into how people have made their career decisions and the paths they have followed, which can help you in determining your future career steps.

**Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?**

No.

**Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?**

No. This type of report is read only by SFU Co-op staff.

**Expectations:**

Conduct informational interviews with at least three colleagues and provide a written analysis for each of these meetings (500 words per interview plus 200 word overall conclusion section, and an appendix listing the questions you asked during each interview).

Your interview analysis should include the following details:

- **Standard Work Report Title Page**
- **An introduction of each interviewee** (Name, Position Title, Organization)
- **Your reasons for selecting each interviewee**
- **Discussion of each interview:** (500 words per interview)
  - Evaluate the information shared during the interview and discuss how it applies to your current goals. Topics could include: their current role, their educational and work related backgrounds, their volunteer commitments and their recommendations for anyone planning a career in their field.
- **Conclusion:** (200 words)
  - Compare the results of all three interviews – Do any trends emerge from the information? Are there similarities/differences in the advice provided?
- **Appendix:**
  - A list of questions you asked during each interview

Interviewees can be a supervisor, co-worker, team member, or colleague. At least one of the interviews should be conducted with someone from outside your department or organization. You may wish to interview people at different stages of their career (eg. junior and senior employees) to gain some different perspectives.
When coordinating your interviews, please be mindful of the time requested. Most informational interviews will last 20-30 minutes.

Further Resources:

For more information on conducting informational interviews, please see www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html

OPTION 4: ORAL PRESENTATION

Purpose:

An oral presentation develops and strengthens your communication skills in a professional setting. This will be beneficial when having to update managers on your progress or present information to colleagues.

Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?

Yes.

Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?

Yes if approved on release form by supervisor.

Expectations:

Create a 10-15 minute formal presentation (using the presentation tool of your choice) based on a specific technical project that you worked on during your co-op term. Present this to your employer during your work term period. When submitting to the Co-op Office, you must submit the slides along with detailed speaking notes which accompany each slide.

Your oral presentation should include the following:

- **Standard Work Report Title Page**
- **Overview**: A clear definition of your project along with the goals and objectives of the analysis.
- **Analytical Content**: Details of your project (e.g., details of your assumptions, problems that arose, predicted outcomes).
- **Conclusions & Recommendations**: Conclusions that were made from the analysis as well as recommendations to help address any problems that arose.

Further Resources:

For more information on how to create an effective oral presentation, please see: http://eloquentscience.com/links/#oral

OPTION 5: SCIENTIFIC POSTER

Purpose:

A poster engages the viewer visually while concisely communicating the key aspects of your project.

Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?

Yes.

Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?

Yes if approved on release form by supervisor.
Expectations:

When submitting the poster to the SFU Co-op Office, you should provide a printed version on 8.5x11 or 8.5x14 paper, along with the Standard Work Report Title Page. You may also wish to bring in the full-sized poster to show your co-op coordinator in person.

Your poster should incorporate the following elements:

- **Title**: Create a title that captures the topic. Include your name as well as your employer.
- **Introduction**: State your project and objectives clearly. Give a brief overview of your methods.
- **Materials and Methods**: Decide what visuals you would like to use that best illustrates your project (e.g., photographs, flow charts, tables, drawings, etc.).
- **Results**: Ensure that the results are presented in a form that is graphically clear and easy to read from at least six feet away.
- **Summary/Conclusions**: Summarize your findings and provide interpretations.
- **References**: Ensure that references are properly cited. Use the same style as you would for an academic paper.

Here are some general guidelines to consider when creating your poster:

- Be consistent. Stick to one font and only a few colors so that it isn’t too distracting to the reader.
- Make sure there is a lot of white space so that the information isn’t cluttered.
- Aim for 500-800 words of text.
- Use font size 22-28 for text and even larger for headings so that your reader can see it clearly.
- Avoid background images and patterns.
- Use a poster size of 36” x 48” or 36” x 56”.

Further Resources:

For more information on how to create an effective scientific poster, please see:  
http://eloquentscience.com/links/#posters

**OPTION 6: REFLECTIVE REPORT: ANALYSIS OF WORK TERM**

**Purpose:**

This is a reflective report which helps you acquire a better understanding of how your skills transfer from school to the workplace and from the workplace to school or to your future career. It will help you recognize your strengths and areas for improvement, as well as new skills and accomplishments for your resume.

**Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?**

Yes.

**Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?**

Yes if approved on release form by supervisor (and approval by student and Co-op Coordinator as well).

**Expectations:**

NOTE: A draft report must be submitted to your co-op coordinator one month before the work term report deadline date (e.g., if the final deadline date is August 15, then your draft must be submitted to your coordinator by July 15). Your coordinator will then review and provide you feedback on your draft prior to final revisions.

Please also note that as your report will be made available for student reference (unless requested otherwise by either you, your supervisor or a Co-op Coordinator), the report is not the place to indicate impressions of colleagues or contain any information that you would be uncomfortable having your supervisor, co-workers or other students read. As well, please consider your audience of future students interested in this role and make it interesting and fun to read!
The report should be 2500-3000 words in length, excluding any appendices, and should include the following sections:

- **Standard Work Report Title Page**
- **Organization Profile:** Profile of the organization and your department / area
- **Recruitment Process:** Explain what the recruitment process was like for this position (e.g., the interview). Why do you think you were selected for the position? Reflect and comment on this – was it particular skills, attributes, work or volunteer experience, courses, other connection to the employer or role?
- **Projects/responsibilities:** Description of your projects, responsibilities and how they connect to the employer’s goals
- **Accomplishments:** Describe your accomplishments during the work term. What are you most proud of?
- **Skills Development:** Provide examples of the new skills (both technical and non-technical) you’ve acquired and existing skills that you’ve improved or enhanced. How were they acquired or developed?
- **Expectations:** What were your expectations of the position and organization before starting your work term? In what way did this experience meet or exceed your expectations? In what ways did it not meet your expectations?
- **Workplace Culture:** Describe the workplace culture (e.g., dress code, hours of work, etc.). What aspects of the work environment did you enjoy most? Is there anything you would change about the workplace? If so, what would you change and why?
- **Career Objectives?** Describe how the position fits with your career and educational goals.
- **Impact of the work term?** Reflection on the aspects of the work term that impacted you the most either positively or negatively (e.g., skills, connections, organizational structure, supervisory style, tasks, dress code, hours of work, etc.)

**OPTION 7: ARTICLE/BLOG POSTS FOR THE ONLINE LEARNING COMMUNITY (OLC)**

**Purpose:**

This will provide you with a professional and published artifact for a portfolio, as well as identifying areas of strength and weakness through the reflective process. The online article/blog post also provides an online presence for your co-op employer.

**Project Release & Evaluation Form Required?**

Yes, unless the article/blog posts makes no mention of the employer.

**Report Added to Co-op Work Report Library for Reference by Other Co-op Students?**

Yes, and it will be published on the OLC (more details in next section).

**Expectations:**

NOTE: You must discuss with your co-op coordinator before selecting this work report option to get their input on the topic and focus of the article. This is done in order to ensure sufficient variety of posts/articles in the OLC.

Write an article between 700-900 words in length or a series of three blog posts that are 300-500 words each. Make your post fun and interesting for other students – be creative. Submit to your Co-op Coordinator in Word format. Attach at least one relevant, high quality photo of yourself, something relevant from your work term, or work projects, for additional visual material. The OLC is accessed by other Co-op students, SFU staff and students, employers and alumni, thus, we ask that you take these audiences into consideration when crafting your articles.

Topics for consideration may include:

- **Work Term Successes:** What was unique about your work term that other students could learn from? (e.g., travel for work, work-study balance, an unusual corporate culture)
- **Project Challenges**: How were you able to tackle a difficult project? Did it involve creativity, or challenge you to think outside the box?
- **Applying Learning**: How did an SFU course or other experience help prepare you for your work term?
- **How-To**: How did you master new technology or tools? Offer tips for other students to learn these skills.
- **Interview a Colleague**: Did you work with someone who has an interesting career path or could provide advice for students starting out in the field of science?
- **Industry Stories**: What did you learn about working in your industry that would help other students understand what it’s like? (e.g., working for the government, healthcare, biotechnology or consulting, etc.?)
- **Working Out of Town**: If you were away from home for your work term, what insights can you offer other students looking to work outside the Lower Mainland or abroad?

**Further Resources:**

For more information on how to create a compelling blog or article, please see:
- [Writing Submission Guidelines](#): How to submit a blog to the SFU OLC
- [Share your co-op reflection](#): What a co-op reflection is
- [5 Reasons to share your co-op story](#)
- [Blogging 101](#): Instructional material on how to write a co-op blog post or what a blog post entails