Science & Environment Co-op Education

Work Report Guidelines
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Work Term Documents

The following five items must be completed 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 (including Standard Work Report 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 online by your supervisor
4. Student Evaluation (online)
5. “Rights and Responsibilities & Health, Safety and Well-Being” module in the Canvas course associated with your co-op work term practicum course enrollment (first work term students only).

The Project Release & Evaluation Form 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 supervisor evaluation form near the end of the work term semester.

The Student Online Evaluation form can be found online in myExperience under your current co-op work term record.

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 reports and other documents are:

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<tr>
<td>Spring Term</td>
<td>April 15th</td>
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<td>Summer Term</td>
<td>August 15th</td>
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<td>Fall Term</td>
<td>December 15th</td>
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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 at the start of each term, but 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 and project release & evaluation form (if required) should be submitted via email to your co-op coordinator (PDF of report and scanned forms – please do as a single PDF).

Confidentiality of Work Term Reports

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. Article/Blog Post for the Online Learning Community (OLC)
7. Reflective Report: Analysis of Work Term

All work report submissions must include:

1. Standard Work Report Title Page
2. Project Release & Evaluation Form (signed by your supervisor is required for most report types)
OPTION #1 - Technical Report

| Is a Project Release & Evaluation Form required? | Yes |
| Will the report be added to Co-op Work Report Library and be accessible by other Co-op students? | Yes |
| Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option? | No |
| Length of report? (# of words) excluding any appendices | 1,500 – 3,000 |

**Purpose**
A technical report is the most formal method of presenting the results of professional work.

**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 and Co-op Coordinator. If your supervisor does not provide you with a report template, please follow the Common Technical Report Section guidelines found on the following page.

The report should be 1500-3000 words in length, excluding any appendices.

This report should include a summary, table of contents, list of figures and tables (if applicable), introduction, discussion, conclusion, recommendations, and glossary (if applicable). Properly cite all external resources and include references. Appendices may be used for additional context.

**Technical Report Variations**
Since the type of work can vary across co-op roles, we have created several options within the technical report category to meet the needs of different positions. Please carefully review these options and select the one that fits best.

**Project or Research Summary:**
Share the details of a project or experiment that you participated in and the discussion of your analysis.

**Problem Exploration:**
Describe a complex problem you explored during your work term and the processes (both technical and theoretical) you used for exploring and solving it.

**Technical Role Overview:**
Discuss and explain all the technical processes involved in your role and could be used as a future training or instruction document.
OPTION #1 - Technical Report (continued)

Common Technical Report Section Descriptions

- **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**: Identifies any figures, drawings, photographs, maps, etc. shown in the report.
- **List of Tables**: Identifies any tables shown in the report.
- **Introduction**: Introduces the subject of the report to the reader. Remember that the reader may not have any familiarity with the subject area of your report and require a quick orientation to the subject area.
- **Discussion**: Presents evidence (facts, arguments, details, data, test results, etc.), processes and procedures, and/or analysis conducted as part of the project work.
- **Conclusions**: States briefly the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion.
- **Recommendations**: Suggests a course of action based on the findings and conclusions.
- **Glossary**: List of technical terminology/acronyms and their definitions referenced in the report or used in the role.
- **References/Bibliography**: Acknowledge use of materials 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](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help) under the Cite + Write section.
- **Appendices**: 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

| Is a Project Release & Evaluation Form required? | Yes |
| Will the report be added to Co-op Work Report Library and be accessible by other Co-op students? | Yes |
| Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option? | No |
| Length of report? (# of words) | 1,500 min |

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.

Expectations
Review three academic articles related to a topic in your field of study and write a literature review to present your findings.

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 common 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 [http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help) under the Cite + Write section.

Further Resources
- For more information on literature reviews, please see the Writing Handouts available on the SFU Student Learning Commons website [www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/slc](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/slc)
OPTION #3 - Informational Interviews

| Is a Project Release & Evaluation Form required? | No |
| Will the report be added to Co-op Work Report Library and be accessible by other Co-op students? | No |
| Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option? | No |
| Length of report? (# of words) | 1,700 min |

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.

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).

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 (e.g., junior, and senior employees) to gain some different perspectives. Note: while co-op students are a source of insight, please focus instead on employees at a more advanced career stage for maximum insight.

When coordinating your interviews, please be mindful of the time requested. Most informational interviews will last 20-30 minutes.

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

Further Resources
- [www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html)
OPTION #4 - Oral Presentation

| Is a Project Release & Evaluation Form required? | Yes |
| Will the report be added to Co-op Work Report Library and be accessible by other Co-op students? | Yes |
| Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option? | No |
| Length of report? (# of words) | N/A |

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

**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. If a group presentation is submitted, the specific slides and content that you created and presented should be noted and your individual presentation portion should be 10-15 minutes (as part of the overall presenting group).

**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

| Is a Project Release & Evaluation Form required? | Yes |
| Will the report be added to Co-op Work Report Library and be accessible by other Co-op students? | Yes |
| Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option? | Yes |
| Length of report? (# of words) | 500 - 800 |

**Purpose**

Scientific posters communicate the highlights of scientific research, and the target audience is usually other researchers with some expertise or interest in this area. Scientific posters give readers a ‘visual overview’ of a particular project. In contrast to primarily text-based documents like research papers or lab reports, posters are visually dominant.

**Expectations**

When submitting the poster to the SFU Co-op Office, you should provide a PDF version along with the Standard Work Report Title Page.

**What makes a good poster?**

- Important information should be readable from about 6 feet away.
- Title is short and draws interest.
- Word count of about 500 to 800 words.
- Text is clear and to the point.
- Use of bullets, numbering, and headlines make it easy to read.
- Effective use of graphics, colour and fonts.
- **Focus on the science**: Although it might be tempting to design an elaborate or artistic poster, remember that your poster is there to communicate a scientific story. Anything that detracts from the science brings your poster farther from that goal.
- **Be clear and concise**: More critical than in any other medium, conciseness will allow you to convey the most information in the smallest amount of space without intimidating or confusing your audience.

**Further Resources**

- [https://www.makesigns.com/tutorials/poster-design-layout.aspx](https://www.makesigns.com/tutorials/poster-design-layout.aspx)
- [https://guides.nyu.edu/posters](https://guides.nyu.edu/posters)
OPTION #6 - Article/Blog Post for the Online Learning Community (OLC)

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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of report? (# of words)</td>
<td>700 - 900</td>
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**Purpose**

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

**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 to ensure sufficient variety of posts/articles in the OLC.

**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.

Write an article between 700-900 words in length. Make your post fun and interesting for other students – be creative. Submit to your Co-op Coordinator in Word format. Attach at least two relevant, high-quality photos 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.

**How to submit a Blog article?**

- Please review the OLC Blog submission guidelines prior to starting: https://olc.sfu.ca/submissions/blog
- Please do not submit your article to the OLC directly online. Submit it to your Co-op Coordinator upon completion, and once approved we will submit it to the OLC on your behalf.

**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?
OPTION #7 - Reflective Report: Analysis of Work Term

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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you require permission from a Co-op Coordinator for this option?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of report? (# of words)</td>
<td>2,500 – 3,000</td>
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**Purpose**

A reflective report 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.

**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.

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.

**The report 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.).