Your co-op work term is designed to give you practical exposure to and experience related to your program of study. The work term allows development in the following crucial areas: (1) general workplace practices; (2) your area of specialization; and (3) transferable and/or soft skills.

During your first work term, you will prepare a work term report to blend what you learn in school with “real world” experience. In creating your work term report, it is important that you consider the following factors:

- The work term report is built into your work experience.
- The work term report allows you to “think” about what you are learning, rather than just “doing” your work.
- The work term report becomes more purposeful when the report is a value-added document for your employer. Not only can your report be utilized by your employer, but you also then have an opportunity to hone your professional and workplace writing abilities. However, the work term report should not just be a report written as a component of your responsibilities at work; there needs to be additional “research included”. For example, let’s say your job was at the university childcare centre and your report is a guide for parents concerning separation anxiety in young children. You could supplement the information you provide in a booklet for the parents, with an appendix summarizing the research literature on separation anxiety.
- The work term report will allow for you to build your professional portfolio. You will receive feedback on it from your faculty advisor using an electronic template. If you would like more detailed feedback, please contact your advisor by email and make an appointment to review the paper.
- You must submit your presentation to your BASc Faculty Advisor by the fifth class day of the semester following your work term; submissions will be made to the CourseLink site set up for co-op students.

A. DEVELOPING YOUR WORK TERM REPORT

1. **Determine your work term report topic.** Approach your employer. Have you seen potential projects that you might be able to get involved in? Does your employer have any projects, reports, surveys, etc. that it would find useful to have completed that were not part of the original work for the term?
2. **Decide on the intended audience.** Who are you writing for? Your employer, future students, users of your material, or your co-op faculty advisor? This will govern the style you use in writing your report.
3. **Add the academic component.** Your work term report must have an academic or research component. This involves searching to see research that has previously been done that is related to your project. Depending on your topic, you may use the University of Guelph Library website, Google Scholar, various text books, and/or specific information you have learned in courses. Published references (8 minimum) should be used for the **background** of your project. Your references should not all be online references. Ideally, they not be from prior to 2000, unless they are classic references.
   a) **Access to University of Guelph Library Resources.** To assist with your work term report, you can access the Library’s electronic resources (databases, electronic books, etc.) from off-campus. Click on the “Off-campus Log in” link from the Library’s home page (http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/) and sign in using your central ID and password. Key business literature databases (e.g. ABI/INFORM, Business Source Complete) can be found under the “Journal articles” link.
   b) **Getting Research Help.** If you need help with researching your work term report, the Library provides many avenues for assistance. You can chat, instant message, email, phone, or visit with a librarian. For complete contact information visit: http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/ask-us/.
4. **Contact your Faculty Advisor.** Once you have a topic in mind, contact your Faculty Advisor. In your e-mail,
please indicate your co-op work term employer, your position, and your primary responsibilities. Describe your ideas for your work report and your Faculty Advisor will reply with specific suggestions or refinements to your topic.

B. FORMATTING YOUR WORK TERM REPORT

Your final report will be no more than 8 pages, double-spaced (not including the cover page, introductory letter, table of contents, or references). Your final report will be formatted to include the following sections:

1. **Cover page.** Include your name, student ID number, your employer, the title of your report and the term during which you worked for your employer (e.g., Summer 2016).

2. **Introductory letter.** Your letter should be addressed to your Faculty Advisor. Include in your letter: information regarding where you worked, your position title, your main responsibilities/projects, a clear statement of the purpose of your report, acknowledgement of any assistance given in the preparation of the report, and a statement of confidentiality (if applicable).

3. **Table of contents.** The table of contents sets out the major sections and subsections of your report with their titles and page numbers.

4. **Summary.** The summary is similar to an abstract for an article in that it conveys to the intended audience a statement of the topic and purpose of the report, the major points in the report, and any main conclusions and/or recommendations arising from the conclusions. This summary is used to inform readers of the principal content of the report with their having to read the entire report. The summary should be original wording (i.e., not copied directly from the main report) and should be less than one page in length.

5. **The report.** The report typically includes the following sections: Introduction, main content, conclusions, recommendations (if applicable). However, given that there is flexibility in this report to allow you to provide a “value-added” document for your employer, these sections may not be applicable. Depending on your topic and project, you may have a stand-alone document for the organization; in cases like this, you must include that document and, in addition, a written piece that provides the academic/research component for your work. This component will provide the research-based, background information for your project.

6. **References.**

7. **Employer evaluation.** If available at the time of submission, attach your employer’s comments on your report (available in the FORMS section of the co-op website).

C. EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

Examples of projects* that students have worked on include:

- Manual for other co-op students coming to work for this organization, along with background on how effective training manuals should be developed.
- A review of the literature of generational differences in the workplace referring to current workplace.
- A manual for parents on separation anxiety in preschoolers and review of the relevant literature.
- A review of developmental disabilities with reference to the employment context in a group home.
- Therapeutic and other benefits of day camp.
- Review of recent evidence on interventions to reduce depression in long-term care homes along with recommendations for implementation.

You can write about almost any topic provided you relate the content to your academic studies. If, for example, your report is to focus on a training manual for new staff, then you might consider discussing traits and skills that are important in this sector of the business, important qualifications for the job, how this segment of the industry relates to other segments, and what features need to be incorporated into training manuals to make them effective documents etc.

*Please note that your report is not a diary of your activities during your work term.