

# International Development Studies

## Work Term I: Work Term Report Guidelines

### Developing your Work Term Report

Your work term report is designed to give you an opportunity to reflect on your co-op work term experience. Reflection is a purposeful activity that is critical to connecting theory with practice, and helps you to make sense and learn from your experiences. Graham Gibbs' *Reflective Learning Cycle* (Figure 1, below) provides a structured model of reflection that allows individuals to review their experiences through iterative phases:

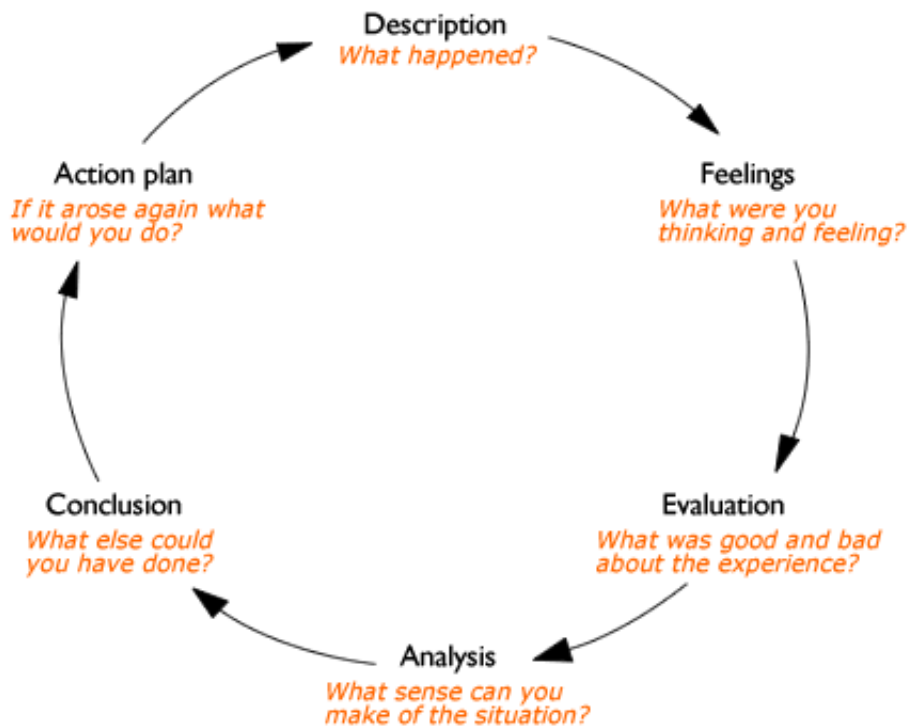


Figure 1: Reflective Learning Cycle (Attributed to Lia, P.)

More details pertaining to Gibb's mode of reflective academic writing can be found [online](#).

### Work Term Report

Create an 8-10 page report detailing what you've learned professionally and personally on your work term and how your workplace learning integrates with your academic learning. Your report should not be a description of work term and your daily activities, it should involve purposeful and clear examples that demonstrate your reflections. Your reflective paper should be organized into relevant sections using headings, the suggestions outlined below provide a guide for the development of your report. The learning objectives you developed at the beginning of your work term will also help guide your reflection of your work term experience.

#### a. Introduction

Provide an introduction to your work term experience including:

Background information on the organization (include what type of organization they are, who they serve, their organizational goals/purpose).

Where you spent your co-op work term, the learning objectives you created for your work term, and your main job responsibilities.

Outline what you consider to be your key accomplishments during your work term, and consider how these were informed by your work-term learning objectives.

**b. Reflection of co-op experience**

Reflecting back on your work term:

What did you like or dislike about this particular position and its related duties and responsibilities?

What skills and knowledge did you develop?

What would you have done differently?

How did you negotiate differences of opinion and conflict in the workplace?

How did this experience challenge you with respect to your abilities?

What do you consider to have been the biggest benefit of this work experience for you?

**c. Social Identity in the workplace**

You bring your worldview (values, beliefs, assumptions), social location and identity (gender, nationality, race/ethnicity, education level, age, etc.) to your co-op work term.

Discuss your social identity and how it may have influenced your work term: reflect on how you responded to power differentials in different contexts and how your social identity influenced interactions and relationships with your supervisor, colleagues, community partners, and/or stakeholders.

If you worked within an intercultural/international context, reflect on how your identity influenced your work placement. Was language an issue?

Did you feel you were able to integrate into your workplace community?

Consider creating a [social identity map](#) to include in your report.

**d. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) in the workplace**

Many organizations have developed , or are developing, EDI policies.

What policies does your co-op workplace have in place to address EDI or advance equity-seeking groups in the organization?

Would you consider the organization a diverse workplace?

Is an effort made to include diverse perspectives and voices into the decision-making process?

What recommendations would have for your employer to further addressing EDI?

Reflect on how your perspective on EDI connects to your social identity.

**e. Academic Development**

Reflecting back on your academic learning to date:

Were you able to apply classroom theory to your workplace experience?

Did your co-op work term corroborate your academic learning?

Did it challenge your previously held knowledge or conceptions of the international development field?

**f. Professional Development**

Describe what you have learned about the professional workplace during your work term:

Are there professional standards in place that you previously were unaware of or was the workplace culture different from what you expected?

Were your career goals met through your co-op experience?

What skills and knowledge have you learned that will assist you in your career?

g. **Personal Development**

How did your work term help you build an understanding of yourself, such as learning coping strategies in dealing with challenging or stressful situations?

Many students identify that self-confidence increased, judgement matured, interpersonal communication skills improved, and that they learned to set high standards for themselves.

Other areas which you could explore are: an understanding of what you want from a career, how you view yourself, and the perceptions others have of you. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on the changes you have undergone and experienced as an individual.

h. **Summary/Conclusions**

Provide a concluding statement on your work experience including:

How the experience has provided insight into the international development field.

What you've learned personally and professionally.

What advice would you give international development students undertaking a similar work term experience?

i. **Action Plan**

Referring back to your work term experience:

List any competencies, skills, academic/technical knowledge that you feel you need to further develop to pursue employment in the international development field and/or prepare for future work terms.

List what steps will you take to achieve this (i.e., courses, professional development, international internship/study abroad), and how will you prioritize these steps?

### Formatting your Work Term Report

The work term report should be 8-10 pages in length, not including the cover page, executive summary, references, or appendices. The report structure is provided below, along with suggestions for the organization of your reflection paper. Organize your reflection into relevant and meaningful sections using headings.

- 1. Cover page:** Include your name, student ID number, your employer, and work term semesters (e.g. Summer 2021). If your report is for 2 semesters, please identify this (e.g. Summer and Fall 2021)
- 2. Executive Summary:** A one-page summary that outlines the purpose and scope of the report, along with key conclusions and recommendations.
- 3. Table of Contents**
- 4. The Reflection Paper (see above)**
- 5. References (if required)**

### Submission and Evaluation

The deadline for submission for work term reports is the 5<sup>th</sup> class day of the semester following completion of your work term. Email an electronic copy of your work term report to [idadvisor@uoguelph.ca](mailto:idadvisor@uoguelph.ca)

The Co-op Faculty Advisor uses the CECS [Evaluation of Work Term Report](#) to evaluate work term reports.