

THE CO-OP WORK TERM REPORT

PSYCHOLOGY

Revised February 2024

Your co-op work term is designed to complement and enrich your academic program with work experience. The co-op work term gives you practical exposure to and experience in the discipline that you are studying. It also assists in funding your education and providing guidance for future career specialization. For Psychology students, the goal of the work term is to develop in the following crucial areas:

- to enrich and complement academic learning with practical work experience.
- to develop transferable professional skills.
- to develop confidence and professional communication skills (written and oral).
- to provide opportunities for mentorship by professionals in a workplace context.
- to increase awareness of opportunities and your interests in your area of specialization.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK REPORT

One of the key components to maximizing the co-op work term experiential learning experience is reflection. Through reflection students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the learning and development experienced during their co-op work term. The purpose of the first work term report is to help you reflect and learn from your work term experience. Listed below are the potential outcomes of your co-op work term.

1. **Academic Learning Outcomes.**

- a. Reflect on how the co-op work term experience:
 - i. enriched or complemented your academic learning.
 - ii. affected your academic motivation and interest in your area of specialization.
 - iii. provided a deeper and broader understanding of the discipline of psychology.

2. **Professional Development Outcomes.**

- a. Reflect on:
 - i. whether the personal learning goals you established for your co-op work term were met.
 - ii. what transferable professional skills (e.g., project management, decision-making, information management, communication, or teamwork) were developed during your co-op work term.

3. **Self-Development Outcomes.**

- a. Reflect on:
 - i. how your confidence developed throughout the work term.
 - ii. any opportunities, challenges, successes and/or failures you had during your work term.
 - iii. your strengths and areas for improvement.

2. APPROACH TO WORK REPORT DEVELOPMENT

Your work term reflection report will be based on your learning throughout your work term. As a starting point, you might think about your experience within the context of the personal learning goals that you established for your co-op work term. To guide you in developing your work term reflection report you could consider the following specific areas for reflection:

- 1. Reflections on Academic Outcomes:** Have you developed greater clarity about your academic goals throughout your co-op work term? Are there particular courses that you have completed that prepared you for this position or courses that you will take in the future that you now feel will be relevant/useful? How were the theories you learned in the classroom reflected in your practical experiences during your work term? Reflecting on your experience gained from the co-op program, what has the practical application of classroom knowledge in the workplace done to your evolution as a student?
- 2. Reflections on Professional Outcomes:** How did your co-op experience influence your development as a professional? What knowledge and skills did you develop during your work term? For example, did you learn or improve your project management skills, decision-making abilities, information management knowledge, professional communication skills, or teamwork skills? What did you observe and learn about workplace language, etiquette, management styles, and organizational policies and procedures? How did your overall work ethic and on-the-job performance progress throughout your work term? Do you approach work differently now than when you entered the co-op program? If so, describe the changes.
- 3. Reflections on Self-Development Outcomes.** How did your co-op experience influence your self-development? How has your self-confidence changed? Reflect on the opportunities or challenges that you faced at work. You could also discuss your strengths and areas for improvement identified during the work term. Overall, this is an opportunity for you to reflect on the changes you have undergone and experienced during your work term.

Add the Academic Component.

Your work term report must have an academic or research component. This identifying research that has previously been done that is related to the topic(s) of your reflection. Depending on your topic(s), you may use the University of Guelph Library website, Google Scholar, various textbooks and/or specific information you have learned in courses. Your work term report should include at least 3-5 scholarly references. Ideally, your references should be no older than 2000, unless they are classic references.

- i. 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.
- ii. Using other University Libraries.** Most academic libraries are committed to the Canadian University Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement which allows students to check out books directly from another university library. Within Ontario you should be able to check out books from other university libraries with your University of Guelph student card. There are some exceptions to this agreement: most notably, the University of Toronto does not lend to undergraduates from other institutions. Complete details can be found at: <http://www.coppul.ca/rb/rbhow.html>
- iii. 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/assistance/ask_us/.
- iv. Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is the presentation of the ideas or work of others as your own. It includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and representing these as your thoughts by not acknowledging the appropriate source or by the failure to use appropriate quotation marks. For more details, please see: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconductoffen.shtml>
- v. Statement on the use of AI.** Students' work must reflect their unique intellectual capacity and demonstrate the application of reflection and critical thinking. Therefore, the use of AI (e.g., Chat GPT) to complete any form of assessment is not permitted. Submission of materials completed by AI constitutes an offence under the University's academic misconduct policies, either as a form of plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids.

3. FORMAT OF THE WORK TERM REPORT

- The work term reflection report should be approximately 8-10 pages in length. This does not include the title page, references, or any appendices. The report should be APA style (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, etc.)
- **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 (Winter 2024, etc.).
- **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, the topic of your report, and finally acknowledge the employer for his/her assistance during your placement.
- **The report.** This work term reflection report can focus on one, two, or all three of the outcomes identified earlier in this document (academic learning, professional development, and self-development). Please include concrete examples from your work term to support your reflection. In addition, there needs to be a research component with a minimum of 3-5 scholarly references. Despite the fact this is a reflective paper, you should still approach the development of this report like a business report, using subheadings and sections where appropriate. Work term reports should be written clearly and concisely, free of spelling and grammatical errors. **Please note that your report is not a diary of your activities during your work term.**
- **References.** In-text citations and your reference list must be formatted according to the latest Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (e.g., 7th edition). Information on APA style is available from the University of Guelph library at <https://guides.lib.uoguelph.ca/APA>.
- **NOTE.** Because of the confidential nature of the material in your reflection paper, you should not seek your supervisor's signature on the Coop Work Term Report – Employer Comments Form. It is not required for this work term report submission. Your reflections will only be shared with your Faculty Advisor.
- The grading sheet which will be used to evaluate your report is attached in Appendix 1. Please note that this is a generic form used by Co-operative Education. There will be sections under "Structure" that do not apply to Psychology co-op work term reports. Please proceed with the sections laid out above.

4. MISCELLANEOUS

- Any e-mail correspondence to your faculty advisor should include the word Co-op in the subject line. This will help your faculty advisor to identify your e-mail more quickly and respond to you more efficiently. If you have not heard back from him/her within one week, please resend your email. Your original message may have gone into "cyberspace"!
- If you need to speak directly with your faculty advisor, please indicate where she/he can reach you and when. This, again, will be helpful when he is trying to return your call. Please indicate the nature of your call in your message.
- Please ensure that you keep an electronic copy and a hard copy of your work term report until you have received a grade.

5. DEADLINES . . . WHAT GOES WHERE AND WHEN

Following your work term, please ensure that co-op requirements are submitted to the appropriate location.

Due the **second class** day following the work term
To be completed online.

- Work Term Performance Evaluation
Completed online by your supervisor,
and can be viewed in your RG profile
- Learning Goals - Reflection
Completed online by the student

Due the **fifth class** day following the work term to
your faculty advisor – preferably as an e-mail
attachment.

- Work term report

You must use the standardized naming convention for your work term report:

- [First Name] [Last Name] [student number] [semester] [Work Term Report]
- Example: Joe Smith 0123456789 Winter2024 Work Term Report

Please note that Faculty Advisors will grade reports during the semester in which they have been submitted.

- The Co-op Faculty Advisor uses the following evaluation scheme supplied by the co-op office as criteria to grade the [Work Term Report: Grading Scheme for the Report](#).
- Students will be notified when their marked reports are available from the Co-op Advisor for feedback.
- Any reports that are deemed Unsatisfactory must be resubmitted. A student who receives a grade of Unsatisfactory a second time will be required to withdraw from the Co-op program.
- All reports are kept on file after being evaluated.

This work term report is adapted from Work Term Report Guidelines from Mount Saint Vincent University available at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/cooperativeeducation/formsanddocuments/default.aspx>
and University of Manitoba at: https://umanitoba.ca/architecture/sites/architecture/files/2023-11/COOP_ARCG_WorkTermReportGuidelines_2023_2024.pdf

