Physics and Astronomy Co-op—Work Term Report Guidelines

You’ll complete a work term report for each of your work terms. This is a scientific report on a topic related to your work, which you will choose in consultation with your supervisor, and will help you build your professional/scientific writing skills.

A) STEPS TO CREATING A WORK TERM REPORT

1. **Choose a topic** by the start of your second month on the job.
2. The marker could be your coordinator, your employer, or a faculty member.
3. Write the **first draft** by the end of the third month of your work term and submit it to your employer for feedback.
4. Create a **final version** and submit it to your employer and your coordinator by the deadline. Deadlines are:
   - September 15 if your work term ended in August
   - January 15 if your work term ended in December
   - May 15 if your work term ended in April
5. Your report will typically be marked by a Chemistry faculty member (or your supervisor should the report be deemed confidential and not available for viewing outside of the employer's organization). The reader will usually have some expertise about the subject matter you've chosen for your report.
6. Your work term will be commented on and marked with a grade of “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.” Unsatisfactory reports need to be redone within two weeks and awarded a “Satisfactory” grade in order to receive credit for the work term.

7. Your report must be:
   - approximately 3,000 words and must include a title page
   - concise, organized and logical
   - accurate, consistent and complete
   - professional and readable

B) WORK TERM REPORT TYPES

Here's your chance to write like a professional scientist. Your report should be useful to the employer and other co-op students.

Co-op jobs are varied, so there are a number of possible formats for your report. Reports should be about 3,000 words in length.

1. **Research report**: Use this type if you’re reporting on a research project. Research reports should conform with accepted journal style and be written in standard scientific format. This type of report includes:
2. **Professional report**: A combination of the scientific format and formal essay. This style is useful in consulting work, government and industry. It includes:

   a) title page  
   b) abstract  
   c) table of contents  
   d) lists of tables and figures  
   e) introduction  
   f) materials/data and methods  
   g) results  
   h) discussion  
   i) conclusions  
   j) references  
   k) appendices (optional)

3. **Procedural report**: Use this format when reporting on routine work carried out in a situation where no original experiential research is performed. This is similar to the research report but will report on routine procedures and discuss the significance, applications and consequences of the results. It should include:

   j) title page  
   k) abstract  
   l) table of contents  
   m) lists of tables and figures  
   n) introduction  
   o) discussion  
   p) conclusions  
   q) references  
   r) appendices (optional)

4. **Employer’s report**: If your employer asks for a format different from these styles, check with your coordinator. This type of report might be in the form of an internal technical paper, a user manual, procedural documentation, online resource, etc.
C) WHAT TO INCLUDE

1. **Title page:** Check out this sample:

   THE MEASUREMENT OF OCEAN SALINITY
   
   by
   
   John Doe
   
   The Canadian Scientific Centre
   1000 West Road
   Spuzzum, BC
   
   Physics & Astronomy Co-op Work Term Report
   in partial fulfillment
   of the requirements of the Physics & Astronomy Co-op Program
   
   Spring 1990
   
   John Doe
   
   Department of Physics and Astronomy
   University of Victoria

2. **Abstract:** This is where you *summarize the main point* of the main text, *including conclusions and recommendations*—it's usually about half a page long.

3. **Table of contents:** A list that identifies all the major sections with their titles and page numbers.

4. **List of tables:** Include all tables with their individual numbers, titles, and page numbers. Use the same format as the table of contents.

5. **List of figures/illustrations:** Include all figures/illustrations with their individual numbers, titles and page numbers (illustrations, tables and other supporting material not critical to the text should go in the appendices, and don’t need to appear in the list of figures).

6. **Introduction:** Present your background, approach and main objectives and give the reader a sense of where this work fits into the larger picture.

7. **Experimental Details or Theoretical Basis:** The method of approaching the problem or testing the hypothesis is presented. This may include the type and methods of data collection, a description of techniques or analyses used, or a presentation of a theory.

8. **Results:** Summarize the data collected and their analytical treatment.
9. **Discussion:** Interpret and compare the results. Information should be well organized, clearly presented, and analyzed with rigid objectivity. Include information that conflicts with your hypothesis by discussing and suggesting alternate explanations.

10. **Conclusions:** A brief statement of the major conclusions of your report. It should end with a series of recommendations.

11. **Acknowledgements:** You should acknowledge your work supervisor and anyone else who contributed to the work term report content.

12. **Appendices:** These give the reader additional information that elaborates on the main text but isn't essential to the principle theme of the report. Appendices could include calculations, illustrations, etc. Appendices should be referred to in the main text.

13. **References:** In-text references should follow the format of a recognized journal (e.g. “This agrees with conclusions drawn by other workers (Bacq and Alexander 1961) but stands in contrast to the claim by Brunst, et al. (1965) that irradiation actually enhances mitosis. References in the reference section should be listed alphabetically by author. Include the author, year, title, journal, publisher and relevant pages (e.g. Bacq, A.M. and V. Alexander, 1961. Fundamentals of Radio-Biology. 2nd edition. Pergamon Press, New York, 300pp.)

Not sure where to start? Contact your co-op office to see samples of past reports.

**D) PRESENTATION**

- **Mathematical equations:** All equations should be centered horizontally between lines of text with double spacing above and below.
- **Tables:** Each table should have a title and should be referred to in the text of the report.
- **Illustrations and graphs:** Each figure should have a number and a clear title and should be referred to in the text of the report.
- **Footnotes:** You can include footnotes to elaborate on or give background to material without interrupting the main flow of thought. Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page, separated from the main text by a solid line from margin to margin, and be single-spaced.