Political Science Work Term Report Guidelines

The ability to effectively gather information, and to analyze and present it in an interesting, informative, and persuasive style, is essential for political science students. Completing co-op term reports not only enables you to practice these skills but also enables you to reflect on

• your learning accomplishments from the co-op term
• how political science theories are actualized or implemented in the working world

FORMAT
The format of the report depends on which Poli Sci co-op term you are completing. As you complete more co-op terms, and more Poli Sci courses you will develop stronger analytical and writing skills. As such, the criteria for the co-op term report change. For all reports, we expect a professional, formal, and original document that is well-written and well-thought out. We encourage you to think quality not quantity but in general your report should be 5-10 pages in length, depending on the complexity of your work assignment and your own reflections. Your report will be assessed on:

• Presentation: Are correct spelling, sound grammar, clarity, formal formatting, and organizational features (like general information flow, headings and table of contents) present?
• Critical thinking & analysis: Have you gone beyond a summary to make connections to a larger context either for you personally or to Political Science?

Your Report will be read by your Co-op Coordinator, Barb Fisher, and will be marked by the Poli Sci Faculty Co-op Rep, Dr. Colin Bennett

Format A - Reflective Analysis
APPLIES TO
• undergrad Poli Sci major co-op students in their 1st and 2nd co-op terms
• undergrad Poli Sci students with two majors/co-op programs (eg Poli Sci/ES Co-op) in their 1st Poli Sci Co-op term
• graduate Poli Sci students in their 1st co-op term

Reporting the nature of your duties in your co-op term is helpful from an educational perspective and from a career-building one. Keeping track of your work accomplishments and experience, then reflecting upon the competencies you developed will help you when you are applying to future co-op placements and jobs. Reflective analysis also allows you to think about your Political Science major and how it influences your views and your educational and career goals.

First contextualize your reflections by describing your work place setting: the organization, it’s goals and or mandate plus what you did to help them reach those goals. You should also include some analysis that explores and answers ‘Why’ and ‘How’ questions.

If you completed a report or other document during your term, you can use this document as part of your report but in addition to the general introduction described above, you should also put the report in context by answering these questions:

• Why did you write the report? For whom?
• What was involved? What did you learn from the process? What would you do differently/the same next time?

If your work was more operational and did not include the creation of a document or report you can reflect on such things as:

• How was the co-op term related to political science? What skills did you develop/use that are beneficial to political science students or grads?
• Were there any surprises for you? Was the work different than you expected or different than you learned in courses? What/How?
• For a poli sci co---op student, was the experience beneficial or enjoyable? Why? Does this surprise you?
• Has the experience influenced your career or education goals? How?
• What do you think you did well? Why?
• Do you have recommendations for the employer or for future students going to work there?

Format B - Analysis of Political Theory in Action

APPLIES TO

• undergrad Poli Sci major co-op students in their 3rd, 4th, or optional 5th co-op term
• undergrad Poli Sci students with two majors/co-op programs (eg Poli Sci/ES Co-op) in their 2nd Poli Sci Co-op term
• graduate Poli Sci students in their 2nd or optional 3rd co-op term

As Political Science students, you bring a perspective that is unique. You have studied various theories and perspectives that will influence the way you approach problems and create solutions. You will be able to look at issues through the ideas of philosophers and question the ideologies and assumptions that are inherent in communications, procedures, policies, and entire institutions.

So, think about some aspect of your co-op placement and reflect on how it relates to a political theory or other content from Political Science courses. It would be ideal to choose a theory from a course that you just finished or one that you will be taking in your next campus semester. For grad and honours students, choosing a topic related to your thesis would also be good.

Sample questions/topics:

• In the organization you are working with, how are power and authority exercised?
• How is democracy realized in the branch you are involved with?
• What political ideologies do you think underpin the work of your organization? Why?
• Outline the policy environment you were working in. What is the policy problem, who are the stakeholders and what are their interests, how is policy analysis or the policy itself being implemented, do you have any recommendations, etc?

If you have any questions about the report, please contact:

• Barb Fisher, Political Science Co-op Coordinator, bfisher@uvic.ca, 250 721-8969
• Dr. Jamie Lawson, Political Science Faculty Co-op Rep, lawsonj@uvic.ca, 250 721-7496