Work Term Report Guidelines
Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education Co-op

You’ll complete a final work term report for each of your work terms. This is an opportunity to reflect on your workplace learning and to set goals for the future. Write your report with the highest academic standards in mind (pay attention to structure, format and content) and reference sources of information by following a consistent style (e.g. APA). Focus on an analysis (e.g. explore the why, how, what, so what, your recommendations, etc) of your experience. Try to avoid doing an overview of your general impressions or description of what you’ve done. While quality is more important than quantity, your co-op work term report should be no less than 8-10 pages of text. Reports are assessed on presentation (clearly organized, 12pt font), quality of writing, and depth of analysis. Reports deemed weak (Poor grammar, spelling mistakes, point form, missing sections, and lack of analysis) will not result in a passing grade and will be returned to you for editing.

A) STEPS TO CREATING A WORK TERM REPORT

1. **Choose a topic** after talking with your employer and coordinator by the start of your second month on the job.
2. Complete a **first draft** of your report by the end of the third month of your work term.
3. Put together a **final version** and submit it to your employer and the co-op office by the end of your work term (name the document "your name_term").
   The deadlines are:
   - Sept 1, if your work term ended in August
   - Jan 1, if your work term ended in December
   - May 1, if your work term ended in April
4. Your work term will be marked “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” Unsatisfactory reports need to be rewritten within two weeks and awarded a “satisfactory” grade.

B) WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT

Your Co-operative Education work term is an opportunity in which you, as a student, are able to use your classroom knowledge to engage in a direct “hands-on” experience. One of the key components to understanding how your Co-op work term has transformed your learning is through reflection. Reflection can focus on one, two, or all three of the following aspects of your work term experience:

1. **Academic Learning** (hands-on, meaningful and substantial work with linkages to your academic program) – applying theories and concepts learned in the classroom into a workplace setting;
2. **Skill Development** (learning outcomes and competency development including assessment, mastery of skills, and reconnecting the work experience to your academic program); and/or
3. **Self-Knowledge** (building an understanding of ones’ personal attributes, developing a capacity to contribute and effect change within your community, and gaining a broader world view).

As a self-directed and process-oriented learning tool, reflection has many benefits. It is something that you can do on an on-going basis and at anytime. It brings tacit knowledge about practice and experience to the surface, which promotes further consideration of assumptions and perceptions, and builds key skills such as critical thinking – a skill that employers are on the lookout for. Reflection can focus on many different aspects of your work term experience such as:

- Application of academic theories and concepts
- Professional growth and development and/or Personal motivation and insight
- Understanding organizational structures and their processes and effectiveness
- Handling situations outside one’s comfort zone or perceived level of ability or further development of the expertise you already have
- Engaging in experiments or technical processes or opportunities
- And many more experiences ...
Consider how reflection is taking place and it may occur:

- **In-Action** (during the work term);
- **On-Action** (after the work term or the particular project/experience is complete); and/or
- **For-Action** (how the experience applies elsewhere as you move forward in your learning).

**Reflective Cycle:** Based on Gibb’s Reflective Cycle in *Learning by Doing* (1998)

What to include in your work term report (format)

- **Title page:** include your name, program, year of study, organization name and term date

- **Executive summary:** one-page overview of the background and significance, key responsibilities, concepts, learning and conclusions of your work experience – see below for further details.

- **Table of contents:** identify the major sections of your report with titles and page numbers. (Insert a 'section break' at the end of this page so that you can change the type of page numbers from i, ii, iii, etc. to 1, 2, 3, etc.).

- **Introduction:** (1-2 pages) include your background, the role you engaged in, and the main objectives of your work and learning. Give the reader a sense of where your work fit into the organization, your studies and career path.
• **Description of work term and/or project** including (briefly):
  ◦ The employer mandate and goals including the product or service provided
  ◦ Your department and how it fits into the organization
  ◦ Projects, responsibilities and activities you did

• **Body - Professional Development:**
  Reflection can revolve aspects of your work term such as academic theory, competency development, personal motivation and interests, understanding organizational & society structures, and much more. Consider the following questions that are meant to prompt your thinking – this is not an exclusive list.
  ◦ Discuss the outcomes and learning that occurred during your work term (you may want to use your learning outcomes as a guide. Put a copy of these into your appendices)
  ◦ What goals did you set for yourself that have been reached? What would you still like to work on?
  ◦ Beyond “feeling” that things are going well or not well, what actions, behaviours and activities indicate that your work strategies are professional or could use some attention?
  ◦ Have you tried anything you were unfamiliar with? Did some strategies work better or less well?
  ◦ Describe how the skills you've outlined can transfer to other work situations? Did keeping a “learning journal” provide “evidence” showcasing your strengths and challenges?
  ◦ What duties caused you the most problems or struggles? Why? Are there ways you could have changed your actions to better manage these problems?
  ◦ What were your most positive experiences? How did your actions contribute to these successes?

• **Body - School/Academic:**
  Have you applied any of the principles/concepts that you’ve learned in the class in the workplace (leadership, program planning, physiology, anatomy, motor skill acquisition, exercise prescription, administration, community and population health, motor learning, etc.)? To what end?
  • Relationship of physical activity, kinesiology, health, recreation and leisure to learning in the workplace
  • Program planning/curriculum development - vision, goals, objectives, implementation plans, evaluation strategies, reporting
  • Leadership - teaching, learning, communication and decision making skills
  • Outdoor Recreation - health benefits of unstructured play, time outside, being away from electronics
  • Motor Learning - developing abilities and retention of movement skills in oneself and others, ergonomics, physiology, development and maturation, growth and aging
  • Psychology of movement - interest in and willingness to engage in activity, role of music, dance, art, culture in social development
  • Community and Population Health/Social determinants of health - income, support networks, education and literacy (physical, educational), working conditions, social or physical environment, personal health practices, healthy child development, biology/genetics, gender, culture, enhancing the health of others
  • Exercise and movements skills - ergonomics, functional motor movement, physical literacy, exercise prescription, measurement and evaluation
  • Risk management/budgeting - financial systems, goal setting, managing risk in the workplace, legal liability
  • Administration - problem solving, design and control of facilities, accessibility, human resource development, change management, strategic planning, marketing social change
  • Research - the role of research in workplace practices, analysis and interpretation of information
  • Adapting physical activity - accessibility, program techniques, opportunities, aging
8. **Conclusions:** A brief statement of the major conclusions of your work and learning:
   - What did you learn about yourself during the experience (positive and/or negative)? How did your competencies develop? Have your beliefs been acknowledged, changed or confirmed through this experience?
   - How has this co-op influenced your career direction/path/plans?

9. **Action Plan** – This is the ‘now what?’ Describe actions designed to improve knowledge, ability, experience etc. Think about specific things you could do (e.g. state specific training you may need to undergo, books or policy guidelines you will need to read, resources you may need to use and become proficient in etc.) and why you might plan to do these. Consider these questions when reviewing your plans:
   - What are the competencies that you still need to develop? In what priority?
   - What do you need to do in order to be better prepared to face this kind of experience in future? What specific steps do you need to take in order to achieve these improvements?
   - If you pursue work in this field, what further technical/academic knowledge would you need? What else will you need? (e.g. professional development, experiences, professional accreditation, specific/expanded network of contacts)
   - What advice would you give to someone else embarking on a similar project or starting a similar role?
   - Are there any courses or specialization areas that you will pursue because of this experience?

10. **Recommendations:**
    - How successful do you feel you were in accomplishing your overall objectives? "If it matters, measure!" How did you do this? Is there any way you can suggest improving how you measure success in meeting your objectives?
    - Is there anything about the organization or procedures of your work term setting that could be changed to make it more successful in its objectives or rewarding to its employees?
    - Do you have any further observations, recommendations or comments on this work term experience?
    - As a professional, what knowledge, skills, attributes would you see as your strengths/challenges/ideas for further development?

11. **Appendices / references** (include copies of your learning outcomes, job description, work you have completed)

**D) FURTHER HELP: WHAT’S AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY?**
An executive summary is an overview of your entire document directed at the “executive” - a reader who may or may not be familiar with your work term. This person may not read the rest of the document but they have to be able to understand the outcome of your experience based on the overview.

An executive summary:
   - is usually 1-2 pages or less
   - could be separated from the rest of the document
   - appears BEFORE the Table of Contents and the List of Tables and Figures and before the main proposal or report begins
   - is double spaced
   - has no reference citations
   - rarely has graphics
   - summarizes background and significance, key responsibilities /concepts / learning, and concluding recommendations and/or proposals (the overall report in miniature)
   - has language meant for the general reader, not for an expert.
**Suggestion:** Write your executive summary last. It is not an introduction. It summarizes your entire report. The executive summary should stand alone, almost as a kind of mini-report within your report. It should be logical, clear and interesting. A reader should be able to read through it in 2 or 3 minutes and understand what makes your report one they want to read. After reading your executive summary, a reader should be prompted to say, "So that's what that student has been up to and what they have learned."

**Table of Contents / Page numbering:**

OF NOTE: Title pages do NOT have a page number on the title itself, only in the Table of Contents

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(insert a section break and then “restart” your numbering)

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