

English Language and Literature Graduate Work Report Guidelines

Note: this is an updating of the previous Faculty of Arts document titled “Waterloo Arts Work-Report Guidelines,” which was prepared by the Faculty of Arts undergraduate co-op program. This version has been adapted for the graduate co-op programs in English Language and Literature.

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Overview

Relevance of Work Reports

Work reports give students the opportunity to reflect on the connection between academic studies and work experiences. They should demonstrate evidence of critical analysis, good organization, clarity, and conciseness. In preparing work reports, students are able to use their presentation skills, arguments, and evaluation, and in the process create a permanent record of their work.

If a student is unable to communicate effectively, the knowledge and skills acquired are of little value to others. Effective communication involves assembling information, organizing it, and presenting it in a logical and concise form. The structure and organization of work reports must convey to readers the exact meaning intended by writers. Well-researched, organized, and documented work reports help to connect the work experience with the skills, theories, and methods of graduate study in English.

Selecting a Topic

The topic selected for the work report should be relevant, manageable, and usable. The topic should relate directly to the co-op work placement and, in particular, the line of work undertaken or the type of business practices employed by the organization. For instance, the topic might focus on a company's implementation of research and development in the workplace; or it might describe, analyze, and evaluate the student's work term in terms of theories and methods from the fields of professional writing, technical communication, rhetoric, and so on. As one concrete example, a work term that involved writing and communication to organize a team might draw on relevant research on workplace communication; as another example, a work term that involved web design and content creation might draw on research in the fields of design and user experience. Some students choose to treat their work reports like research essays, and to use their work experiences as case studies. Others work the other way around, by starting with major features of the work terms they wish to explain, analyze, or suggest improvements for; and developing research-based approaches that can help them do so. In any case, the work report topic should be determined in consultation with the employer; if not certain whether the topic is appropriate, students should obtain approval from their academic supervisor or the departmental graduate officer.

The work report does not have to be the equivalent of an advanced graduate seminar paper or constitute an original research project. However, it should contain an identifiable analytic component. A work term report typically does still advance an argument, often by developing an account of how certain theoretical or research-based approaches allow for an understanding and analysis of the work term. A report that compares and evaluates several items or alternatives using various criteria is analytical. Furthermore, a report on a single topic can be analytic if it discusses advantages and disadvantages. An analytic work report contains constructive criticism and incorporates conclusions and recommendations.

The work report must represent the student's own work and is evaluated as a professional document. Evaluation of work reports by the department is based on factual content and accuracy, as well as presentation and clarity.

Confidential or Narrative Reports

The Faculty of Arts does not permit the submission of confidential work reports. Co-op students are encouraged to discuss their work report topics with their employers early in the term to avoid choosing topics that may be restricted by the employer. Any document produced by the student should, in this way, be pre-vetted by the employer for appropriateness of content (i.e., content or data that may be substituted with non-sensitive material may allow work reports previously deemed to be confidential to be submitted for grading).

Similarly, narrative reports (e.g., a simple summary of tasks performed) or artifacts designed on the job (e.g., a user's guide) are not in themselves considered work reports and are not acceptable for this purpose. If the student's primary employment task was, for example, the preparation of a user's guide, and that guide is to be used as the work report, a 500-word (minimum) analysis of the project must be included in the work report.

Format Requirements

The work report must be professional in appearance and not exceed 2,500 words or 10 pages excluding the title page, letter of submittal, table of contents, list of figures and tables, and appendices.) Work report pages should be double-spaced except for the letter of submittal, which is single spaced. Use 12-point font (Times New Roman or Calibri only).

All paragraphs should be separated by adding extra spacing between each new paragraph. Each main section listed in the table of contents should begin on a separate page. The style of headings and subheadings and the number of spaces between headings and subheadings and text should be consistent throughout the work report. The preliminary pages, including table of contents, and list of tables and figures, are numbered using Roman numerals, beginning with "ii" as the table of contents. Although no number appears on the title page or the letter of submittal, the title page is considered page "i." Roman numerals are centered at the bottom of each page. Arabic numerals placed on the top right corner of each page are used for the remaining pages of the report starting with the introduction.

Covering and Preliminary Pages

Overview of Pages

The first part of the report must be organized in the following sequence:

- Front cover
- Title page
- Letter of submittal
- Table of contents

- List of figures and tables (if applicable)

Front cover

The front cover must contain:

- The title of the report
- Student's name and ID number
- Most recent full-time academic term
- Program (e.g., Rhetoric and Communication Design-Co-op)
- Department/School

Keep the report title shorter than 50 characters, including spaces. Photographs or graphic design on the cover are acceptable but not required.

Title page

The title page (**see Appendix 1 for sample**) presents an expanded version of the information contained on the front cover. Beginning at the top of the page list the following:

- University of Waterloo
- Faculty of Arts
- Title of report
- Name and location of the employer
- Student's name, ID number, previous academic term and program, and date when the report was prepared.

Letter of Submittal

The letter of submittal (**see Appendix 2 for sample**) must follow the format of a standard business letter. The letter should be addressed to the chair or director of the major department/school.

The letter must contain:

- report title and number (second, third or fourth) employer
- previous academic term
- supervisor(s)
- department(s)
- main activity of employer and department purpose of report
- acknowledgments and explanation of assistance received and/or information provided
- statement of endorsement shown below
- name, ID number, and signature

The statement of endorsement shall read: "This report was written entirely by me and has not received any previous academic credit at this or any other institution."

Although the letter of submittal is included to introduce the report, it is not a component of the report itself. Consequently, a page number should not be assigned to the letter and should not be included in the table of contents.

Table of Contents

The table of contents (**see Appendix 3 for sample**) lists all main sections in the work report and any subsections with headings. Each entry should be connected to its page number with a dotted line. Align the page numbers on the right side of the page. Do not include the letter of submittal in the table of contents. Note the use of lowercase Roman numerals (e.g., *it*, *ili*, *iv*, etc.) for the table of contents and list of figures and tables.

List of figures and tables

If figures or tables are used in the work report, they are listed in the preliminary pages of the report, immediately after the Table of Contents page (see Appendix 4 - Sample List of figures and tables).

If only tables are used, the report will include a List of Tables; if only figures are used, the report will have a List of Figures. If both Figures and tables are used, the report will include a List of Figures and Tables. However, if the report includes 10 or more figures and/or tables, a List of Tables and a List of Figures should be provided in separate pages.

Each list identifies its components by number, title, and page number. Do not list any tables or figures that appear in the appendices.

Report

Introduction

The introduction is always the first section in the body of the report. It presents the work and defines the problem or project. It should supply enough background information to help the reader understand why the report was written and how it relates to similar work. The objectives should be written clearly and concisely. However, the introduction should deliver a sufficient impact to encourage continued reading. See Appendix 5 - Sample Introduction

Body

The project, issue, or main topic being analyzed is stated in the introduction. The body, which represents the main section of the report, contains the analysis of the issue or issues, as well as an explanation and summary of the findings. The report should be organized into sections; a clear and consistent system of headings should be used.

When employing a numbering system for headings, no more than three levels of numbers should be used: bullets should be used instead of a fourth level. When indenting for a subheading, the entire subsection below must follow the new margin.

The Modern Languages Association's style guide (MLA) should be used when citing sources.

Figures and tables

Figures and tables can serve to clarify the presentation. Any figure or table, however, must serve a specific purpose. Consideration should be given to whether the information is better presented graphically or in a table. Figures and tables must be cited in the text and should be placed as soon as is practical after the reference. In the case of large volumes, figures and tables should be included in an appendix.

Captions may be included above or below the table or figure (employ either convention, but not both). Captions for both figures and tables must be concise but must also be inclusive and comprehensive. It is important to refer in the main body of the report to the data shown in figures and tables.

Tables

Tables should be used to present complex or voluminous data that contain several variables. If the data set is small or has few variables, the information should be placed in the text rather than a table. Large tables should be placed on separate pages; short tables should be placed in the text.

Figures

Figures can include diagrams, histograms, graphs, and photographs. Figures are an excellent way to relate various aspects of the data that are often difficult to present in words. Photographs should be used only if they are exceptionally clear and serve a better purpose than a diagram. Large figures should appear on separate pages; small figures should be placed in the text.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations are a critical component of work reports; these sections sometimes cause confusion. A simple rule is to place any statements derived from the main body's investigation in the conclusions section of your report. In the recommendations section include any comments that might assist in future activities.

Just like the summary, conclusions should be brief (preferably one page), but complete and understandable. Conclusions may only be drawn if they are supported fully by the analyses described in the body of the report.

Recommendations should be organized in the same manner as conclusions and should be placed on a separate page. Recommendations are essentially speculative, but they should follow logically from the conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, measurable, and attainable.

References

This section can also be named Works Cited or Bibliography. All sources referred to in the report must be listed. If personal conversations are used as a source, the participants' positions and the conversation's theme, time, and place need to be listed. As in other aspects of the report, you should follow the Modern Language Association style guide for this list of references.

Glossary

Add a glossary only if the text is heavy with specialized terms, mathematical symbols, or technical jargon. If there is only the occasional term in the report, define it as part of the text; for instance, "gross domestic product (GDP)."

Appendices

Not all reports have or need appendices. Appendices can be considered stand-alone documents, and thus could have their own table of contents if needed. Appendices would contain any information that substantiates the report, but that is not required for a comprehensive understanding of the work. For example, appendices may contain bulky data such as lengthy tables, computer printouts, descriptions of processes or operations, analytical procedures, or maps. Assign consecutive letters or numbers along with names to each, for example: "Appendix A - Detailed Street Calculations," "Appendix B - Bearing Plate Calculations," or "Appendix 1 - Site Maps."

Requirements and Procedures

Number

To graduate with a co-op designation on their degree, co-op students in the English M.A. programs must successfully complete two work terms. Completion of those work terms includes receiving credit for two work reports. A work report must be submitted for each of the work terms.

If both work terms were with the same employer, the Department of English Language and Literature will accept one longer, combined report (15 pages, i.e., 3750 words) that addresses both terms.

Grading

Acceptable work reports are graded Outstanding, Excellent, Very Good, or Satisfactory. A sample grading form to mark work reports is attached.

If your report is graded Unsatisfactory (Resubmit), you may choose to resubmit the report. If you resubmit a report, it must be handed in by the last day of classes of the same term the report was submitted.

Grades awarded for work reports are shown on your Co-operative Student Record. A work report milestone with a grade of CR/NCR will be reflected on your examination report and/or academic transcript.

Due Date

An electronic copy of the completed work term report is to be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by not later than the tenth day of classes in the academic term following the co-op work term for which the work term report was prepared. If a student is unable to submit the work term report by the tenth day of classes, a request for an extension can be made, with reasons provided for such special consideration. Decisions related to such requests will be made by the Graduate Officer, in some cases in consultation with the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies.

In cases of dispute, Policy 70 applies.

Appendix 1: Sample Title Page

University of Waterloo
Faculty of Arts

Report Title

Name of employer
Location of employer

Prepared by
Student's Name
Student ID Number
Level and Program
Department
Report Preparation Date

Appendix 2: Sample Letter of Submittal

491 Birchmount Cres.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R4V 1S5

(current date)

(name of the program department/school chair or director)

(name of program department)

Faculty of Arts

University of Waterloo

Waterloo, Ontario

N2L 3G1

Dear (name of the department/school chair or director):

This report, entitled "Hiring Professional Consultants in the Workplace," was prepared as my second Work Report for Creative Business Consultants Inc. The purpose of this report is to discuss and evaluate the benefits of employing consultants to help ensure a company's growth and productivity.

Creative Business Consultants provide their clients with expertise and proven methods of running a successful business, ranging from organizational structure, strategic planning, and marketing.

The Business section, in which I was employed, is managed by Jennifer Smith, and it is primarily involved in developing marketing initiatives for its clients.

This report was written entirely by me and has not received any previous academic credit at this or any other institution. I would like to thank Ms. Jennifer Smith for providing me with valuable advice and resources, including documentation and leads to informative web sites. I also wish to thank Mr. Bill Jones for proofreading my report and improving its appearance. I received no other assistance.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

(Student's name)

(Student's Waterloo ID)

Appendix 3: Sample Table of Contents

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Appendix 4: Sample List of Figures and Tables

List of Figures and Tables

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