Work Report Guidelines

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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 practice presentation skills, arguments, evaluation, and calculations, and in the process, create a permanent record of their work.

If a student is not able to communicate effectively, the knowledge and skills he or she has acquired are of little value to others. Effective communication involves assembling information, organizing it, and presenting it logically and concisely. The structure and organization of work reports must convey to readers the intended meaning. Well-researched, organized, and documented work reports have a positive impact on students’ careers.

Requirements and Procedures

Number

To graduate with a co-op designation on their degree, co-op students in the Faculty of Arts must successfully complete four work terms, and submit four satisfactory work reports. A work report must be submitted for each of the four work terms. The first work report, which is to be completed during the student’s first work term, will be satisfied by successful completion of PD2: Critical Reflection and Report Writing, the second professional development course (i.e., successful completion of PD2 equals credit for work report one).

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, you must hand it in by the last day of classes of the term the report was first 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 appear on your examination report and/or academic transcript.

Due Date

Electronic copies of completed work term reports are to be submitted to the undergraduate advisor or, in the case of some departments/schools, the person responsible for co-op, by not later than the last day of the second week of classes in the academic term following the co-op work term for which the work term report has been prepared. If you are unable to submit your work term report by the last day of the second week of class, you must request an extension with reasons. Decisions related to such requests will be made by the undergraduate advisor or, in the case of some
departments/schools, the person responsible for co-op.

In cases of dispute, Policy 70 applies.

**Selecting a Topic**

The topic of 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 could consist of an evaluation of the way the company implements research and development or wage incentives. The work report topic should be determined in consultation with the employer; in addition, students should consult with their undergraduate advisor or, in the case of some departments/schools, the person responsible for co-op, as these individuals will have valuable advice and insights to offer regarding appropriate topics or methodologies that can draw directly on the student’s major.

While the work report is not the equivalent of an honours essay or research project, nor must it relate to a new technical discovery or original research, it should contain an identifiable analytic component. An analytical report is one that compares and evaluates several items or alternatives using various criteria; or if focused on a single topic, discusses advantages and disadvantages. An analytic work report contains constructive criticism and incorporates conclusions and recommendations.

The work report is evaluated as a professional document and must represent the student’s own work. Evaluation of work reports by departments/schools 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 be vetted by the employer for appropriateness of content prior to submission; in some cases, content or data may be substituted with non-sensitive material, and so allow a work report previously deemed to be confidential to be submitted for grading.

Similarly, narrative work reports (e.g., a user’s guide, other non-analytical documentation or summaries of tasks performed during the work term) are not acceptable. If the student’s primary employment task was, for example, the preparation of a user’s guide, and that guide is to be included in the work report, a minimum 500-word analysis of the project must also be included.
Format

Requirements

The work report must look professional and excluding the title page, letter of submittal, table of contents, list of figures and tables, and appendices, not exceed 2,500 words or ten pages. Work reports should use 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri or Century Schoolbook only) and pages should be double-spaced except for the letter of submittal, which is single spaced. In accordance with MLA, APA and other accepted editing guidelines, paragraphs should be indented, and not separated by an additional space. 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 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.

Preliminary 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

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
  - Honours Major Co-op program, or
  - Honours Major/Arts and Business Co-op program
- Department/School

Keep the report title shorter than 50 characters, including spaces. You can use photographs or graphic design to improve the appearance of the cover.
Title page

The title page 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
- Your name, ID number, previous academic term and program, and date when the report was prepared.

Sample title page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Waterloo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Report Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location of employer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by

Student Name
Student ID Number
Level and Program
Department/School
Report Preparation Date
Letter of Submittal

The letter of submittal must follow the format of a standard business letter. Address letter to the chair or director of your department/school.

Your letter must contain:

- report title and work report 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.”

In the following sample, required items are shown in bold face for convenience. However, these items should NOT be in bold face in your letter of submittal. Although the letter of submittal is included in the report, it is not a component of the report. Consequently, a page number should not be assigned to the letter, and the letter should not be included in the table of contents.
Sample Letter of Submittal

491 Birchmount Cres.
Winnipeg, MB
R4V 1S5

(current date)

(name of the major department/school chair or director)
(name of major 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 for Creative Business Consultants Inc. as my second work report. Its purpose 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 Ms. 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. 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)
**Table of Contents**

The table of contents 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., ii, iii, iv, etc.) for the table of contents and list of figures and tables.

*Sample Table of Contents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures and Tables</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Product</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of product</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Launch Campaign</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing the product</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success of Marketing Campaign</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product availability and awareness</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer feedback</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A–Competitive Analysis Report</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B–Promotional Material</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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 on 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.

Sample List of Figures and Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Figures and Tables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1. Population Growth by Province .................................................. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2. Income Growth by Province .............................................................. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3. Employment Growth by Province .......................................................... 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1. Labour Force by Province ................................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2. Unemployment by Province ................................................................. 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 be powerful enough to encourage continued reading.
1.0 Introduction

Texts regarding politics and administration guide one’s attention to the actions of leaders who specialize in decision-making: presidents, senators, generals, and managers. The study of participation, on the other hand, concerns the general public, who is actively seeking to be more than pawns for others to direct and manipulate, striving instead to shape policies and organizations according to their own desires (Nagel, 1987).

Toffer (1970) predicted an increasing emphasis on temporary groups brought together for a specific task and a decreasing emphasis on permanent states in bureaucratic administration. This prediction has proven true, and we now envision a world with greater opportunities for people to play a role in decisions affecting their lives, a greater diffusion of relevant and useful information and a profound need for all citizens within a democracy to be effective decision makers.

Although the most common form of participation known to man is voting and campaigning, it does, in fact, include much more. In recent decades, the democratic ideal has intensified, inspiring a search for richer and less perfunctory forms of self-government.

The focus of this report is how effectively a citizen participation program can be applied to the case of the Corporation of the Town of XYZ. The study includes an evaluation of what participation is and why it should be promoted, the principles involved in creating a trusting relationship with the public, and an application of these principles in the aforementioned case.

Body

The problem (or project) being analyzed is stated in the introduction. The body, which represents the main section of the report, contains the analysis of the problem 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, use no more than three levels of numbers; use bullets instead of a fourth level. When indenting for a subheading, make the entire subsection follow the new margin.

Use MLA or APA when citing sources.

**Figures and tables**

Figures and tables can clarify your presentation. Any figure or table, however, must serve a specific purpose, so consider whether you present the information better graphically or in a table. Refer to figures and tables in the text, and place them as soon as practical after the reference. In the case of large volumes, include figures and tables in an appendix.

Include captions above or below the table or figure (employ either convention, not both). Captions for both figures and tables must be concise, but must also be inclusive and comprehensive. In the main body of the report, it is important to refer to the data you show in figures and tables.

**Tables**

Tables present complex or voluminous data containing several variables. If the data set is small or has few variables, place the information in the text rather than in a table. Place large tables on separate pages; place short tables in the text.

*Sample table*

**Table 3: Population by Province**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures

Figures (which diagrams, histograms, graphs, and photographs) effectively convey data that is difficult to present in words. Use photographs 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.

Sample Figure

![Figure 4: Population in Canada](image)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although conclusions and recommendations are a critical component of work reports, they sometimes cause confusion. A simple rule is to place evaluative or analytical statements derived from the main investigation in the conclusions section of your report. As recommendations, include any comments that might assist the employer or employee with similar activities in the future.

Conclusions

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

Recommendations

Recommendations should be organized in the same manner as conclusions and 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.

Here is a link to help with the creation of a bibliography/reference list.

- University of Waterloo compiled list of style citation and style guides

If one or more references are taken from the Internet, email, online newspapers, etc., refer to the style guides available from the following:

- Library of Congress – How to Cite Electronic Sources

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
Appendices can be considered stand-alone documents, with possibly their own table of contents. Appendices include any information that supports the report, but is not necessary for an overall understanding of the work. Appendices present 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.” Not all reports have or need appendices however.