Graduate Co-op Handbook

Summary: Graduate students may combine academic studies with paid work experience through the Department's graduate co-op programs. For MA students, a co-op work term normally occurs in the third and fourth (Spring and Fall) semesters. In the PhD program work terms normally occur after comprehensive exams. While the Department will make every effort to assist students in finding suitable co-op work terms, we cannot guarantee co-op employment. Only full-time Canadian citizens and holders of Permanent Resident status may enroll in graduate co-op programs.

Our programs: The department has co-op programs at the MA and PhD level. At least one work term is required for the MA program. Two work terms are normally required for the PhD program. Students are required to complete one work term report (detailed below). All co-op students must return to academic studies following work term(s) to complete remaining program requirements. Enrolling in co-op does not change the number of academic semesters required or permitted for a graduate degree, though they will be completed over a longer period of time corresponding with the number of work terms that a student completes. MA Co-op is centrally administered through CEE. PhD Co-op is locally administered through the Department of Sociology.

MA sequencing: The default course sequence for the MA co-op program is two semesters of academic study followed by one semester on work term and returning to academic study for the remainder of the program. The sequence for MA students completing one work term is as follows:

1 WT	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
CW	A1	A2	WT1	A3			
MRP	A1	A2	WT1	A3	A4		
Thesis	A1	A2	WT1	A3	A4	A5	A6

Students wishing to complete a second work term must inform Graduate Studies by filing a Request for Academic/Work Term Sequence Change form before beginning the second work term. The sequence for two work terms at the MA level is as follows:

2 WT	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter
CW	A1	A2	WT1	WT2	A3			
MRP	A1	A2	WT1	WT2	A3	A4		
Thesis	A1	A2	WT1	WT2	A3	A4	A5	A6

CW = MA coursework stream; 3 academic semesters
MRP = MA major research paper stream; 4 academic semesters
Thesis = MA thesis stream; 6 academic semesters
A = Academic semester   WT = Work term

PhD sequencing: Work terms for PhD co-op graduate students will normally occur after comprehensive exams, and in some cases may occur after the dissertation proposal has been approved. The number of work terms completed will extend program completion time by the corresponding number of calendar months.

Finding a Co-op Job: MA co-op students may apply for work terms through WaterlooWorks. Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE) coordinates two hiring cycles in the semester prior to work term through WaterlooWorks. For the Spring work term, this means that jobs are advertised from January - March. For the Fall work term, jobs are advertised through Cooperative and Experiential Education from May - August. All MA graduate students are highly encouraged to enroll in PD 601 (listed as COOP 601 in Quest) in the semester prior to a work term. The course is delivered through LEARN and is intended to orient students to WaterlooWorks and the services offered by CEE.

PhD co-op students do not have access to WaterlooWorks at this time. Greater student effort in applying for suitable co-op positions advertised by government agencies and/or non-profit organizations, for example, is therefore necessary. The Graduate Co-op Advisor will support these efforts by curating a list of available jobs. Because the PhD co-op program is run 'in house' (i.e., is independent of CEE), there is greater flexibility in what may constitute a work term, however the existing guidelines for co-op work terms should be taken as the default expectation (see Student-Found Jobs below). For example, a typical RA position consisting of 15 hours of work per week funded through a faculty research grant will not qualify as a work term, but 12 weeks of full-time research funded through the same grant may qualify. The Graduate Co-op Advisor is responsible for bringing prospective PhD-level work terms to the Graduate Committee for approval.

[How to find your co-op job | Co-operative Education | University of Waterloo (uwaterloo.ca)](uwaterloo.ca)

Enrollment Status During Work Term: All graduate students must request a change of enrollment status from Full-Time to Co-op when a work term has been secured in order to ensure that graduate funding is placed on hold for future academic semesters. Students should complete and submit a [Change of Enrolment Status](#) form to Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs to make the request.

CEE Advisor: MA Co-op students will be assigned to Career Advisors in Co-operative and Experiential Education who will provide support during the first co-op job search term. Co-op questions may be directed to advisors through WaterlooWorks, individual appointments or by contacting the Centre for Career Action.

Student-found Jobs: MA students can have jobs found independent of WaterlooWorks approved for co-op credit if they meet CEE requirements. Work terms are evaluated on a case-by-case basis but usually consist of 12-16 weeks of paid full-time work at or above the provincial minimum wage. Exceptions may be made for positions in non-profit organizations, medical settings, or outside of Canada. Research positions funded through faculty research grants may quality if they conform to the requirements above. Student-found jobs should be submitted to CEE for approval using an [Arranged Own Job form](#) as soon as a job has been secured. Students

should review prospective work terms with the Graduate Co-op Advisor as early as possible to ensure that the position meets minimum university requirements.

Work Term Reports: All graduate students must complete one work term report to receive credit for completing a co-op work term. For MA students the report must encompass one work term and may encompass two. For PhD students the work report must encompass two work terms. In general, the work term reports should be a scholarly reflection on some aspect of the work term experience. The report is not a summary of duties performed on the job; it is an analytical examination of sociological phenomenon upon which the work term sheds light.

Reports should be 8-10 pages in length excluding references, with an appendix of reflection memos (approximately 3-4 pages for 1 work term, 6-7 for 2 work terms). See appendix for more details. Reports should be submitted to the Graduate Co-op Advisor by email no later than the 15th working day of the academic semester following work term. Students should discuss the content of the work term report with the Graduate Co-op Advisor as early as possible. Completion of co-op requirements is recorded as a Milestone in Quest.

Co-op Fees: A co-op fee of approximately $750 per work term is applied to a student's Quest account during the first weeks of a work term for MA students. PhD co-op students do not pay co-op fees.

Other coursework: Graduate students are permitted to take one course during a co-op work term and may be permitted to take two with permission of the employer and the Graduate Coordinator and Advisor. However, students are encouraged to complete course requirements during regular academic semesters.

Forms: Links to all forms needed for graduate co-op are below.

From GSO: https://uwaterloo.ca/forms/graduate-studies

The Program/Plan Change form should be used to 'switch in' and 'switch out' of co-op programs. MA students switching in to co-op need to file a Program/Plan Change form in the first week of the semester prior to a work term in order to have access to WaterlooWorks.

The Change of Enrolment Status form is used to inform GSPA that a student is going on co-op work term instead of continuing with academic study. Graduate funding allotted to the student will be put on hold for future academic semesters with this form. A change of status form is required for each work term and should be filed as soon as a work term is confirmed.

Both forms should be submitted to the Department's Graduate Coordinator and Advisor. The Graduate Coordinator and Advisor will assist the student in obtaining signatures that may be required.

From CEE: https://uwaterloo.ca/co-operative-education/supports-and-resources

The Request for Academic/Work Term Sequence Change form is used when MA students depart from the default sequence defined in their WaterlooWorks account. The default sequence for MA students is normally two semesters of academic study followed by one semester on work term (Spring). Students who have obtained an offer for a second work term should complete the sequence change form and submit it directly to CEE. Please note that students would also need to submit a Change of Enrolment Status form (above) to notify GSPA of the second work term.

The Arranged Own Job form is used to have student-found jobs approved for co-op credit. The form should be completed within the first week of work.

For more information about graduate co-op in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies, contact the Department Co-op Advisor or Graduate Coordinator.

Department Graduate Co-op Advisor

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Department Graduate Coordinator

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Appendix: Work reports

(Note: adapted from here.)

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 may want to consult with the Department Graduate Co-op Advisor who has valuable advice and insight to offer regarding appropriate topics or methodologies that can draw directly on the student's degree.

While the work report is not the equivalent of a course paper 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 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.

Reflection memos

It is recommended that students submit an appendix of reflection memos (approximately 3-4 pages for 1 work term, 6-7 for 2 work terms). The reflection memos are intended to serve as the 'data' for the paper, and will help make the link from concrete work experiences to the more theoretically informed discussion in the report.

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 centred 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:

1. Front cover
2. Title page
3. Letter of submittal
4. Table of contents
5. 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
    - MA Co-op program, or
    - PhD 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

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
- 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."

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.

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.

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.

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.

Toward a sociological analysis

Because sociology is the study of social life, its organization, patterns and relationships, any work situation lends itself to sociological analysis.

A variety of approaches to developing a work report topic are available. For one thing, if you think of sociology as a means of addressing "the what and how of community life," you may quickly appreciate that your own work role lends itself to a "participant observer" account of one aspect of the work setting. Because your experiences in the field constitute a point of entry into the organizational life-world, the work-term report can provide an opportunity to examine, analyse and describe the social relations and patterns occurring in the workplace.

If you choose to assume such a participant-observer approach, it will be productive to focus on a fairly defined aspect of the work setting. The following are a few examples of the types of topics which could lend themselves to good sociological analysis from the point of view of being a participant observer:

- Learning the Ropes/Acquiring Perspectives on the Job.
- Fitting in with Co-Worker /Developing Relations.
- Dealing with Ambiguity/Coming to Terms with Uncertainty.
- Coordinating Activities with Others: The Problematics and Processes of Team-Work.
- Representing the Organization to Others: Dealing with Clients/Outsiders.

In addition, there are various other forms of sociological analysis, other than participant observation that you may choose to employ.

For one thing, the sociology of work, professions and industry are all important fields of interest in sociology. Hence any work setting lends itself to analyses along lines of the following:

- bureaucratic organization
- job socialization
- work roles
- gender in the workplace
- management theory
- problems of alienation
- stress and conflict
- employment changes
- organizational restructuring
- use of technology

- discrimination in the workplace
- occupational health and safety
- worker's autonomy
- workers' collective action
- harassment and bullying in the workplace

Or, alternatively, if someone has taken several courses in criminology and finds themselves working for a law enforcement agency or the Ministry of the Attorney General, applying the theoretical understanding of criminology and the legal system acquired as a student to real-world situations in these settings can result in a good work report.

It is also the case that sociology students learn about surveys and experimentation, archival research and statistical analysis which can be utilized in relation to their workplace tasks in order to produce a work report. Indeed, sociology co-op students are often hired by firms to help assess personnel and customer needs, involving focus groups, interviews, surveys or analyses of databases, and reports drawing on such work can easily qualify as acceptable work reports. However, students should also be mindful that sociology co-op term-reports are intended as sociological analyses of work situations as opposed to reports required by employers as part of the student's assigned work role. Therefore, such in-house reports should not be handed in as sociology work-term reports.