



Business Co-operative Education Program

“Education at Work”

WORK TERM REPORTS

*Faculty of Business Administration
Lakehead University*

Business Co-operative Program — Work Term Reports

WORK TERM REPORTS

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Please ensure that you make two copies of your report (save one . Thank you.

WORK TERM REPORTS

A/ Purpose of Work Term Reports

Writing a work term report is a required component of the Faculty of Business Co-op program at Lakehead University. We hope you find that writing one enriches your co-op experience.

How can writing a work term report benefit you?

- Helps you integrate theoretical concepts with practical experience.
- Increases your understanding of your employer's organization.
- Helps you analyze your progress towards your learning objectives.
- Enhances your report writing skills.
- Encourages you to actively observe and record your experiences over the course of the work term, and causes you to reflect on your experiences.

How can work reports benefit others?

- Helps future Lakehead Co-op students prepare for interviews and work terms.
- Helps co-ordinators assess the suitability of co-op positions.

B/ Six Steps to Success

1. Plan Ahead

If you did not have the opportunity to discuss how to plan ahead with your advisor before the this time, please use the following information as a guide only.)

Planning ahead will help ensure that you collect relevant information, perform a thorough analysis and meet your deadline. Here are some tips on getting started:

1. Review several of the best work reports before leaving campus.
2. Inform your supervisor of your deadline during your first meeting and ask how much time he or she will need to review your report. Negotiate an advance deadline, taking your supervisor's vacations into consideration.
3. From your first day on the job, keep a journal of relevant information, assignments, conversations and accomplishments.
4. Decide whether to choose the descriptive format or the research project or special project format. Your supervisor may be willing to suggest some topics.
5. Set and review your learning objectives for the term.

6. Prepare an outline to ensure that you develop your ideas and arguments in a logical manner.
7. Determine which printed materials, Web sites and staff resources you will consult.

A note to creative types:

If you have an idea for presenting your work report in an innovative way, don't let our guidelines inhibit your creativity. We've seen excellent reports presented as Web sites or short stories. As long as your report incorporates the required content and analysis, we welcome you to try a fresh approach. Please discuss your idea with your co-op co-ordinator and your supervisor before you begin.

2. Choose Your Report Type

You may choose to write either a Descriptive Report or a Research or Special Project Report.

Descriptive Reports

Describe the organization:

- Outline the company's history and structure.
- Identify the company's mission statement, products and services.
- Describe the corporate culture.
- Refer to your use of new technologies.

Describe your department or area:

- Explain the area's activities and structure.

Describe your responsibilities.

- List your responsibilities.
- Show how you have contributed to the organization's productivity.
- Elaborate on your learning.
- Explain how you have met your learning objectives and developed skills.
- Explain what influence your work term has had on your career objectives.
- Relate how your academic program has prepared you for this position.
- Reveal what you have learned about the factors, which contribute, most to your enjoyment of work, such as management styles and degree of autonomy.

Present conclusions:

- Present objective recommendations.
- Present applicable conclusions.

Research or Special Project Reports

As in a Descriptive Report, but in less detail:

- Describe the organization.
- Describe your department or area.
- Describe your learning.
- Present conclusions and recommendations.

In addition:

- Provide a detailed description of research or a special project, prepared specifically for your work term report. Include descriptions of your methodology, observations, conclusions and recommendations.

Please note:

A research or special project you complete for your job may not form the basis of your work term report. You may, however, append to your work term report a copy of a report, which you have prepared for your job, providing you have obtained permission from your supervisor.

3. Collect Content

We suggest you create a file in which to collect documents for the work report. You can add journal notes, records of conversations, relevant articles and other documents. Please ensure that you do not release confidential information.

- Include your learning objectives.
- Consult company brochures, manuals, Web sites and any other resources.
- Arrange interviews with staff members with knowledge of your topic.
- Prepare graphs, charts and diagrams.
- Keep accurate records of your sources so you can credit them in the bibliography and footnotes.
- Make notes of conversations, assignments, accomplishments and interesting facts.

4. Follow the Format

A professional appearance gives your report added credibility. Please use a word processing program and a high quality printer to produce your report. Please use Times New Roman as your default font.

A. Preliminary Pages - 4 pages.

a) Cover

Enclose report in a cover, and state the report's title and your name on the cover page.

b) Title Page

Please see the sample title page in Appendix 2.

c) Table of Contents

Include a list of exhibits and appendices, if applicable.

d) Executive Summary

Write this one-page summary last so you can outline the purpose and scope of the report, along with key conclusions and recommendations.

e) Work Term Release Form

Include the signature of your supervisor or an appropriate employer representative who has reviewed your report for confidentiality and approved its release to the Co-op Office.

B. Main Body - 8 pages minimum, double-spaced.

a) Introduction

Explain your objectives for the report.

b) Main report

Describe either your work term experience or your project.
(See Choose Your Report Type.)

c) Conclusions

Tie together the main ideas of the report.

d) Recommendations

Suggest a course of action or present ideas related to topics discussed in the report.

References - 1 page minimum, plus appendices if included.

a) References or Footnotes

Cite the sources of your quotes. For advice on citing electronic sources, see:
<http://library.lakeheadu.ca/?pg=350>

b) Bibliography

List the books and electronic sources you consulted during your research.

c) Glossary

Explain technical terms or jargon specific to your field, company or industry.

d) Appendices

Add any charts, reports or exhibits that are not included in the body of the report.

5. Check it Out

Your report is an example of the quality of your work and should appear suitably professional for presentation to your organization's Chief Executive Officer. We encourage you to consult, but not rely on your software's spelling and grammar checkers.

Review the following qualities:

- Is your report free from errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar?
- Have you presented the information clearly?
- Have you analyzed the topics thoroughly?
- Have you checked the facts?
- Have you ensured that you followed the evaluation criteria outlined in Section C?
- Has your supervisor signed the report?

6. Don't Miss the Deadline

Your work report must be received by the deadline given for your Co-op program. The deadlines are final. If you submit a late report we may review your co-op status, unless you have received approval from your co-ordinator for an extension due to extenuating circumstances such as serious illness.

All Business Co-op Work Reports are Due by the end of the first 2 weeks of classes when you return to school or if you are continuing in a work term, the first 2 weeks after the completion of the term. Your co-op officer will provide you with the deadline dates via your Lakehead email.

C/ Explanation of Evaluation Criteria

- Your Faculty Co-op advisor will evaluate your work report.
- Your report will be judged on the following criteria. For more information, please see the Work Term Report Evaluation in Appendix 3.

1. Format

Have you:

- Included all the required sections, as outlined in Follow the Format?
- ensured that your report looks professional?

2. Quality of Content

Have you:

- outlined your learning objectives?

- provided descriptions of the department and the organization?
- described your responsibilities?
- included relevant charts, tables or graphics?
- explained your research topic or special project thoroughly and completely?

3. Literary Quality

Have you:

- used correct spelling and grammar?
- written clearly and concisely?
- provided a reasoned development of arguments?

4. Quality of Analysis

Have you:

- shown how you met your learning objectives?
- analyzed the subject matter thoroughly?
- provided suitable conclusions and recommendations?
- demonstrated a clear understanding of the topic?

Your report must meet our standards. If your work report is judged unsatisfactory, you will be required to submit a revised report within two weeks of your exit (back-to-campus) interview.

Appendix 1

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What are learning objectives?

- Goals you set for your learning during the work term. Some of your learning will occur formally, through training or research, and some will occur informally, through experience. You may set goals for learning about topics like professional ethics or computer software, and you may set goals for developing work habits, employment skills or technical expertise.

Why do I need to write learning objectives?

- The goal of co-operative education is to combine academic and practical learning. Setting objectives for your learning is an integral part of your co-op experience. In addition, learning objectives are a required component of your work term report.

When do I write my learning objectives, and who reads them?

- You can set your learning objectives as soon as you are fairly certain what your job entails. Most co-op students reach this point within a couple of weeks of starting their

job. We recommend that you discuss your objectives with your supervisor early in the work term and include the criteria your supervisor will use to evaluate you.

Please give your co-ordinator a copy of your learning objectives during your work term follow-up. After reviewing your objectives with you, your co-ordinator will sign them and take a copy for our files. (Please send your objectives by fax or e-mail before your scheduled phone follow-up.)

How do I write learning objectives?

- Set goals that are **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ruthful.
- Ask your supervisor for suggestions.
- Explain how you will reach each goal.
- Most co-op students set five or six learning objectives.
- You are unique, so your learning objectives should be different from those of other students.

To get you started, we have provided several questions to ask yourself, but we encourage you to create objectives that are relevant and meaningful for you:

- Which theoretical concepts can I apply to my work?
- What technical skills will I develop? (Will I learn new programs, equipment or procedures?)
- What work habits do I hope to develop?
- Which personal skills, such as communication, teamwork, organizational and analytical skills, will I improve?
- What research can I conduct into the field or industry?
- What can I learn about corporate culture?
 - ...professional ethics?
 - ...the ethical standards that apply to this industry?
 - ...career opportunities in this field?

What if I can't meet all my objectives?

- We recommend that you review your objectives regularly to monitor your progress. Even if you are unable to meet certain objectives, you can still demonstrate learning. In your work report, explain why you couldn't meet those objectives and discuss you have learned from the experience.

Lakehead Faculty of Business Co-op
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reviewing the attached discussion of learning objectives, please record your objectives and explain the steps you will take to attain each one. You may record information on this form or create your own form.

| OBJECTIVE (Skill, Knowledge, Work Habits) | HOW I PLAN TO REACH OBJECTIVE (Steps I will take) |
|---|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |
| 6. | |

Date: _____ Student's Name: _____

Appendix 2
Sample Cover Page

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

CO-OP WORK REPORT

Descriptive Report

(dates)

Prepared by: John Doe (Student Number)

Employer: ABC Ltd.

Date:

Approved by: Jane Smith

Title: Marketing Manager

Signature: Jane Smith

Date: