

# COOPERATIVE ENGINEERING EDUCATION

## WORK REPORT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. Why do I have to do a work report?

The Cooperative Engineering Education Program is designed to provide students the opportunity to integrate their studies at Michigan State with educationally-related work experiences in a variety of employment settings. As such, cooperative education becomes a part of the overall academic experience and an integral part of a student's engineering education. The required work report is one way that the faculty can monitor and evaluate this experience. Therefore, the work report is used as the primary means of determining a student's grade (and the award of credit) for EGR 393.

The work report should be considered as a formal academic assignment. It will be evaluated by a faculty member of your department in this manner. It should be prepared with the same level of serious attention and scholarship that would be given to any other academic assignment. Inadequate or late reports will result in inferior or incomplete grades.

### 2. How long does it have to be?

The paper should be neatly prepared, generally about 5-7 pages in length, and written in the formal style expected of a professional report. Be as specific and complete as possible. The reader should be able to determine what type and amount of technically related learning has been accomplished. The emphasis should be on the engineering and technical aspects of your position and how it relates to the organization, its products, and services.

### 3. When is the report due?

Co-op reports are always due no later than the Friday before Final Exam Week.

### 4. How do I turn the report in?

Reports should be sent by E-Mail (neatly formatted) or in Rich Text Format or MS-Word to [coop@egr.msu.edu](mailto:coop@egr.msu.edu). The file name should include your last name.

REPORTS SUBMITTED BY FAX ARE NOT ACCEPTED

### 5. What if I have been working on a "confidential" project?

Due to the confidential nature of many co-op assignments, many employers will require you to discuss this assignment with them before you begin to write your report. You should know of any specific guidelines established by your employer. The co-op office has accepted and processed many reports on confidential projects.

## **6. How should I begin to organize?**

Review all materials and documents that relate to your assignment; including job descriptions, written reports, organizational charts, and any evaluative comments you may have received. You may also wish to consider keeping a journal or log of your activities to help you recall things you wish to address in your report.

## **7. What else should I keep in mind?**

You may also wish to have someone such as your coordinator, supervisor, mentor, or other individual review your report. They may be able to provide meaningful comments and suggestions to improve your effort. In addition, a well-developed written report can be an excellent way to promote your interests and abilities within the organization. However, REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE! Your co-op report is going to be evaluated by an MSU faculty member, not your supervisor.

## **8. Any other helpful hints?**

You should keep a copy of the final version of your work report. We have had a few cases where reports have been misplaced, and it is helpful to have quick access to another copy.

Students should pick up their graded report and review faculty comments after returning to campus. You may find this to be helpful in other courses or when interviewing for permanent positions or graduate school.

For further information concerning the work report and assistance with your writing questions, please consult the publication: **WRITE ON TARGET...Survival Strategies for Writing in the Technical Workplace**

The attached guidelines are intended to serve as a broad outline to develop your thoughts and are not designed to be limiting or all-inclusive.

## **WORK REPORT GUIDELINES**

### **COVER PAGE: Should be included with all reports**

I. LEVEL OF REPORT (I, II, or III)

II. Your complete name

Student ID

List what # work term this is for you

Semester/Year

Major; How far along in the major?

Address in city of employment, if applicable

III. Complete position title and salary

IV. Complete name of employing organization

Mailing address

Phone numbers

V. Name of organization's co-op coordinator

Name and title of your unit or department's chief officer

Name and title of your immediate supervisor

**ABSTRACT PAGE: Should be included with all reports**

Provide a one-paragraph summary of your work report. Try to inform the reader of the scope of your assignment. Indicate the nature of your assignment and a statement of your responsibilities. This will help the reader focus on the direction of your comments.

**TYPES OF REPORTS**

**LEVEL I REPORT** Required for all first time work reports. May also be used to satisfy the report requirement for any co-op assignment term.) The following questions are designed to get you to think about your position. You do not necessarily have to address each and every item in your report.

**i. Cover Page**

**ii. Abstract Page**

**I. Nature of the Work Setting** What are the functions, products or services of your employing organization? What is the organizational structure of your employer? What is the relationship of your unit or department to the overall structure? What are the objectives of your position? Why does it exist? How does your position fit with other operations, both intra- and inter-departmental? Does your position utilize your technical background?

**II. Duties and Responsibilities** (This section should comprise at least 50% of your total report). It should be written in the formal style expected of a technical report. Be specific and complete as possible (see D in cover memo).

Provide a detailed account of your major activities to date, with an emphasis on the specific technical functions of your position. Indicate any additional responsibilities you anticipate before the completion of your co-op assignment. Discuss your assignments and their relationship to your field of study. What have you learned this term? What have you accomplished that will make you a better engineer?

Have you and your supervisor discussed future assignments and their relationship to your overall training? What types of work assignments would be beneficial to your career development?

### **III. Relationship to Career Goals and College Study**

In what ways have your career goals been reinforced or modified during your co-op experience? Have you changed your plans for future coursework? Has the experience enabled you to better focus on potential career options?

### **IV. Overall Evaluation**

Has your employment experience met your expectations? In what ways has it differed from your objectives? In what ways could your assignment be improved by your employer? by you? Have your assignments provided a broad, developmental experience? and/or Has your co-op assignment given you a progressive, in-depth learning experience? Have you been satisfied with the level and nature of the supervision you have received? What would you want your professors to know about your assignment, your educational enrichment, your technical accomplishments and your overall development as an engineer?

**LEVEL II REPORT TECHNICAL PAPER** (May be used to substitute for the Level I Report for any co-op assignment, except for the first term)

**I. Cover Sheet** (as outlined above in Level I report)

**II. Abstract Page** (as outlined above)

**III. Technical Paper Discussion** (This should be the major focus of your report)

Should contain: Abstract; Introduction; Analysis of Results; Discussion; and Conclusion

Provide an in-depth technical discussion of your co-op assignment. This should include an outline of your assignment, the relationship to the organization's product or services, and your accomplishments. You may include charts, graphs, printouts, designs, calculations, internal reports, and personal memos. However, REMEMBER YOUR

AUDIENCE! Your co-op report is going to be evaluated by an MSU faculty member, not your supervisor. But, if you are working with classified or sensitive material, please make sure you have clearance from your supervisor.

#### **IV. Qualitative Result of Co-op Experience**

Has your employment experience met your expectations? In what ways has it differed from your objectives? In what ways could your assignment be improved by your employer? by you? Have your assignments provided a broad, developmental experience? and/or Has your co-op given you a progressive, in-depth learning experience? Have you been satisfied with the level and nature of the supervision you have received? What would you want your professors to know about your assignment, your educational enrichment, and your overall development as an engineer?

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**LEVEL III REPORT** (May be used to substitute for any Level I Report, except for the first term.

ALL LEVEL III REPORTS MUST BE APPROVED AT LEAST ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE BY THE CO-OP OFFICE)

**I. Cover Sheet** (as outlined above)

**II. Brief Abstract.** Overview of your assignment, accomplishments, and learning gained by this experience.

**III. Project**

Examples could include:

-Oral presentation to department faculty in major field of study

-Video presentation

-Tour of your work site and an on-site presentation to a co-op member or a faculty member of any MSU

College of Engineering department.

-Group report

**\*\*ALL LEVEL III REPORTS MUST INCLUDE A COVER SHEET AND ABSTRACT (I & II ABOVE)**