

## THMT 2299/3399 Lessons Learned: A Reflective Report

### Introduction

The practica report is required upon completion of each practica work term. The report is **due on the date indicated in Tourism Practica Terms and Conditions document (often the last Friday in August)**. Late reports will not be accepted unless permission has been given by the Practica Faculty Advisor or the Co-operative Education Office in advance of the due date. As per the Terms and Conditions document, practica students may request a four month extension to complete the required practica hours, but “four month extensions will not be approved for the purpose of completing the practica report”.

A student who does not submit a report, or who submits the report late, will be given a failing grade (F) for the practica work term and you will have to complete the practica work term again.

### Purpose

Now that you have completed at least one practica work term, it is time to reflect on your personal growth as both a student and a tourism and hospitality management professional using concrete examples to explain and support your way of thinking. This report will encourage you to look at your practica experience as a whole and what that experience has meant to you. What have you learned about the professional workplace? What have you learned about yourself? How has the experience influenced your career goals? How has the experience informed your academic studies?

### Reflect on Learning Outcomes

This will be a personal paper based on your individual learning throughout your academic program. Listed below are the general outcomes for the practica program that might help to prompt your reflective process.

Academic Outcomes	Professional Outcomes	Personal Outcomes
Students will reflect upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• application of classroom theory to workplace practice during practica experience</li> <li>• academic goals achieved throughout practica experience</li> <li>• academic motivation</li> </ul>	Students will describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether career goals were met through practica experience</li> <li>• the workplace culture experienced throughout practica work term(s)</li> <li>• the skills and knowledge attained during practica program thus far</li> </ul>	Students will explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how your confidence developed throughout the practica work term(s)</li> <li>• how strengths improved and weaknesses were overcome</li> <li>• how interpersonal skills were developed or refined</li> <li>• how lifelong learning skills progressed throughout practica process</li> </ul>

## Evaluation & Deadlines

Your practica report will be evaluated by your Practica Faculty Advisor. Practica reports are given either a pass or fail grade.

The report will be returned for revisions if:

- It is poorly organized
- It is not well written
- It has grammar, spelling or punctuation errors
- The report is simply descriptive and lacks reflection

A practica report which is deemed unsatisfactory for any reason will be returned for correction and re-submission. You have one opportunity to re-write the report within 7 days after receiving it back from your Practica Faculty Advisor. If the re-written report is still considered unsatisfactory or if it is not submitted on time, you will be given a failing (F) grade for the practica work term and you will have to complete the practica work term again.

## Format

The practica report should be 10 pages in length. This does not include the title page, table of contents, executive summary, or appendices. The report should be double-spaced on 8 ½ "by 11" paper with margins of 1" to 1 ½ " and size 12 font.

Your practica report should be organized into sensible sections. To help you structure this report, we suggest that you explore some of the following themes (note that many of these sections will be intertwined with one another):

**1. Title Page** (See example below).

**2. Table of Contents**

This should be a list of sections in your report and appropriate page numbers.

**3. Executive Summary**

The executive summary is a one to two page summary of the practica report. It is intended to serve as a synopsis for the busy executive who doesn't have time to read the entire report.

**4. Background Information or Introduction**

This section is intended for the benefit of the reader so that s/he has some background information on the organizations, companies or departments where you spent your practica term(s), thus allowing the reader to better understand the context of your practica report.

**5. Reflection of Practica Experience**

Reflecting back on your most recent practica experience, what did you like or dislike about this particular position and its related duties and responsibilities? What did you learn? What

do you think your colleagues learned from you? What would you have done differently? Do you have any regrets with regards to decisions you did or did not make? Did this experience challenge you with respect to your abilities? What do you consider to have been the biggest benefit of the practica program for you? What would you say to prospective practica students about the entire practica experience and how you think it would benefit them? One student mentioned that he had a more rewarding and confidence-inspiring experience during his second practica work term compared to his first, *“What I really liked about this practica work term was that I had a chance to be more hands-on in what I did vs. my first practica work term. Being more responsible for my own work allowed me to take more time and more pride in what I did, instead of just doing it and forgetting about it. Being able to solve problems and find solutions was really rewarding.”*

## **6. Developing as a Student**

Have you developed greater clarity about your academic goals throughout your practica work term(s)? What does that mean to you? How did your practica experience influence your concept of yourself as a tourism and hospitality management student? For example, one student reflected that her study habits changed considerably after her first practica term. She noted when she first came to university that she approached her work in much the same way as her friends in other programs. However, she stated *“Working in tourism prepares you for this profession as you will be working long and hard hours. As a practica student, I became more focussed on my school work... spending a lot more time on projects and assignments.”*

Another student notes that her practica experience opened her eyes *“to the real living, breathing definitions of corporate culture, organizational behaviour and politics... all of which play an important role in tourism and hospitality management.”* Another commented that his academic performance improved considerably, *“My marks improved considerably and my study habits and organizational skills were a big help with that. I became more focused on my school work and was starting projects and assignments weeks before the due date.”*

## **7. Developing as a Professional**

How did your practica experience influence your development as a tourism and hospitality management professional? What did you observe and learn about workplace language, etiquette, issues, work ethic, management styles and organizational policies and procedures? One student noted that practica taught him a great deal about the nature of work. *“Certainly these lessons will be incredibly valuable as I leave the tourism and hospitality management program to enter the world of work. I am more confident about what that world wants of me as well as what I can offer it.”*

How did your overall work ethic and on-the-job performance progress throughout your practica work term(s)? Reflecting on yourself as a professional prior to entering the practica program, do you approach work differently now than you did then? If so, describe the changes. For example, this student explained that she was very shy and lacked confidence prior to entering the practica program, but after completing her second practica work term,

she had changed immensely. *“The practica work terms have undoubtedly increased my confidence as a tourism and hospitality management professional in the workplace. During my first practica work term I was very reserved, hesitant and found myself constantly asking for new tasks to complete. I now find myself asking for more responsibility and finding things to do to improve the flow of activities during down time.”*

## **8. Personal Development**

How did your practica experience influence your personal development? Many students identify that self-confidence increased, judgement matured, interpersonal communication skills improved, and that they learned to set high standards for themselves. One student noted that when she began the practica program, she assumed she would create personal ties with everyone in the workplace. Through her practica work term she learned how to deal effectively with difficult personalities. *“These situations have taught me that you don’t have to be friends with everyone... as long as you continue to work in a professional manner”*. In many cases, students reflect that they learned the most about themselves in situations that were less than ideal. Another student reflects that working away from home for a practica work term was surprisingly enjoyable. *“It gave me the opportunity to re-invent myself.”*

Other areas which you could explore are: an understanding of what you want from a career, how you view yourself, and the perceptions others have of you. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on the changes you have undergone and experienced as an individual. As this student commented, her communications skills greatly improved, *“As a shy individual, I feel that my communication skills have greatly improved, partly because of my increased confidence. When I began the practica program I found talking to supervisors and co-workers was often stressful, therefore it was hard to communicate effectively. Today, after having completed two practica work terms, I find myself much more confident and outgoing. I realize that managers and supervisors are not meant to be intimidating; they are there to guide you as best possible.”*

## **9. Tourism and Hospitality Management in Practice**

How did your practica experience influence your views about tourism and hospitality management? Is your concept of the professional tourism and hospitality management environment the same as it was when you entered the program? Did your practica experience contribute to a new understanding of the role of tourism and hospitality management professionals as well as the opportunities for and expectations of these professionals? What are the differences and similarities of tourism and hospitality management theories learned in the classroom compared to that in the workplace? Reflecting on your experience gained from the practica program, what has the practical application of classroom knowledge in the workplace done to your evolution as a student? What elements learned in the classroom will you carry with you into the work world? One student explains that his understanding of the tourism industry has improved greatly. *“When entering the tourism program, I had little understanding on what a professional tourism and hospitality management environment was and now I completely understand that it’s so much more than wearing a server outfit each day. It is more about the presentation of*

*yourself, respecting your superiors, learning from mistakes, taking training when it is offered, and always being willing to learn and become a much more successful person.”*

## **10. What the Future Holds**

How did your practica experience influence your career goals? Does it influence your understanding of what you need in terms of a professional and personal life? Based on your practica experience, what are your goals for your upcoming work term? After his first practica work term, one student reflected that he was still looking for what it was he wanted to do for a career. *“I’m still not entirely sure what area I would like my career to focus on, but I’m sure I will find it. However, that is the great thing about being enrolled in the practica program. It allows the student to try different things to see if it’s for them or not. I look forward to my remaining practica term because it will allow me to try a different thing and see if I like it or not. It’s sort of like a process of elimination in a way for the student.”*

Another student explained how the practica program has made him feel more comfortable and confident about what the future holds, *“I’m looking forward to the future. I’m looking forward to my final practica work term, and to graduating and beginning my career. I know the experience that the practica program has given me will be a huge advantage when I finally graduate and am looking for a job. My experience with the practica program will be invaluable when that day finally comes, as I will understand how to conduct myself in the workplace and possess the necessary confidence to carry out the responsibilities of that position.”*

When you first began the practica program, you probably had very different goals than you do now. Maybe they weren’t that different at all. Looking back at those career goals and comparing them to now, how did your practica work terms influence those goals? Why or why not? Explain.

# Sample Title Page

Ima Keener  
Your personal e-mail address

EMPLOYER: ABC Company

City, Province

August 28, 2020

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT  
PRACTICA REPORT  
SUMMER 2020

## TITLE OF PRACTICA REPORT

Practica Faculty Advisor: Dr. Peter Mombourquette

Practica Employer: Ms. G. Goodboss

Department: Guest Services

Practica Position: Front Desk Agent