

THMT 2299/3399 Lessons Learned: A Reflective Report

The work experience report is required upon completion of each work term. The report is **due on the date indicated in Tourism Work Experience Terms and Conditions document (often the last Friday in August)**. Late reports will not be accepted unless permission has been given by the Tourism & Hospitality Management Work Experience Faculty Advisor or the Co-operative Education Office in advance of the due date. As per the Terms and Conditions document, work experience students may request a four month extension to complete the required work experience hours, but “four month extensions will not be approved for the purpose of completing the work experience report”. A student who does not submit a report, or who submits the report late, will be given a failing grade (F) for the work term and you will have to complete the work experience term again.

Now that you have completed at least one work experience term, it is time to reflect on your personal growth as both a student and a tourism & hospitality management professional using concrete examples to explain and support your way of thinking. This report will encourage you to look at your work experience term 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 work experience 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"> • application of classroom theory to workplace practice during the work experience term • academic goals achieved throughout the work experience term • academic motivation 	Students will describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether career goals were met through the work experience term • the workplace culture experienced throughout work experience term • the skills and knowledge attained during the work experience program thus far 	Students will explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your confidence developed throughout the work experience term • how strengths improved and weaknesses were overcome • how interpersonal skills were developed or refined • how lifelong learning skills progressed throughout the work experience process

Evaluation & Deadlines

Your work term report will be evaluated by your Tourism & Hospitality Management Work Experience Faculty Advisor. Work term 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 work experience 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 Tourism & Hospitality Management Work Experience 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 work experience term and you will have to complete the work term again.

Format

The work term 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 work term report should be organized into sensible sections. To help you structure this report, we suggest that you explore the following sections (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 work term 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 she/he/they has some background information on the organization(s), company(ies) or department(s) where you spent your work experience term(s), thus allowing the reader to better understand the context of your work term report.

5. Reflection of Work Experience

Reflecting back on your most recent work 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 having been the biggest benefit of the work experience program for you? What would you say to prospective work experience students about the entire work experience program and how you think it would benefit them? One student mentioned that he had a more rewarding and confidence-inspiring experience during his second work term compared to his first, *“What I really liked about this work experience was that I had a chance to be more hands-on in what I did vs. my first work experience. 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 work term(s)? What does that mean to you? How did your experience influence your concept of yourself as a tourism & hospitality management student? For example, one student reflected that her study habits changed considerably after her first work experience. 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 work experience student, I became more focused on my schoolwork... spending a lot more time on projects and assignments.”*

Another student notes that her work 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 & 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 schoolwork and was starting projects and assignments weeks before the due date.”*

7. Developing as a Professional

How did your work experience term influence your development as a tourism & 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 their work experience program taught him a great deal about the nature of work. *“Certainly, these lessons will be incredibly valuable as I leave the tourism & 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 work term(s)? Reflecting on yourself as a professional prior to entering the work experience 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 work experience program, but after completing her second work term, she had changed immensely. *“The work terms have undoubtedly increased my confidence as a tourism & hospitality management professional in the workplace. During my first 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 work experience term 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 program, she assumed she would create personal ties with everyone in the workplace. Through her 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 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 work experience program I found talking to supervisors and co-workers was often stressful, therefore it was hard to communicate effectively. Today, after having completed two 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 work experience term influence your views about tourism & hospitality management? Is your concept of the professional tourism & hospitality management environment the same as it was when you entered the program? Did your work experience term contribute to a new understanding of the role of tourism & hospitality management professionals as well as the opportunities for and expectations of these professionals? What are the differences and similarities of tourism & hospitality management theories learned in the classroom compared to that in the workplace? Reflecting on your experience gained from the work experience 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 & hospitality management environment was and now I 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 work experience term influence your career goals? Does it influence your understanding of what you need in terms of a professional and personal life? Based on your work experience term, what are your goals for your upcoming work term? After his first 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 work experience program. It allows the student to try different things to see if it’s for them or not. I look forward to my next work experience 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 work experience 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 work term, and to graduating and beginning my career. I know the experience that the program has given me will be a huge advantage when I finally graduate and am looking for a job. My experience with the 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 Tourism & Hospitality Management Work Experience 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 work term(s) influence those goals? Why or why not? Explain.

Sample Title Page

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EMPLOYER: ABC Company
Halifax, Nova Scotia

August 26, 2022

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
WORK EXPERIENCE REPORT
SUMMER 2022

TITLE OF WORK EXPERIENCE REPORT

Work Experience Faculty Advisor: Dr. Peter Mombourquette

Work Experience Employer: Ms. G. Goodboss

Department: Guest Services

Work Experience Position: Front Desk Agent