

After the completion of each 4-month work experience, students will submit an essay reflecting on the work experience. This essay will describe, examine and articulate learning. Students will utilize their critical thinking skills. Students completing 12 month co-op internship are required to submit a reflective essay every 4 months.

Essays are due on the first day of classes. Please contact the co-op office for specific deadline information. Reflective essays are worth 15% of your COOP 405 grade. Each essay should be 500-700 word length.

Remember: this essay should have no grammar or spelling mistakes. Students should avoid general statements for example, "I learned a lot at my company." (What does "a lot" mean?)

Tips on how to reflect on your co-op work experience

What? So What? Now What?

This is a well-used, successful model to assist you in designing reflection activities. Focusing on all three questions- What happened? So what does it mean to you? Now what are you going to do? -will provide broader insights and keep you from being stuck on just the facts or the feelings.

To help with the reflection process: Think about the following questions before writing your essay.

- How does this co-op experience relate to things I am learning in class (or things I did not learn in class)?
- What did I learn about myself? Strengths? Areas to improve? Interests?
- How does this co-op work term related to my other co-op work terms?
- What did I get out of this experience? What part was challenging? What part did I enjoy? What would I have done differently?
- How did I make a difference? How does that make me feel?
- If I were the boss during this co-op work term, what would I do differently? What type of management style do you enjoy? What management style challenges you?
- Look back to your first day at this placement. How did you feel that day in comparison to today? Has this changed, if so, how? What do you notice about yourself? How you interact with your colleagues? Boss?
- What was the best thing that happened to you to date? Why was it the best?
- Describe two things you've done there in the past month that you are proud of. What makes these things stand out for you?
- What criticisms did you receive and how did you respond to them? How did you implement the feedback?
- What compliments did you receive and how did you respond to them?
- If you could rewrite your learning objectives for this work term, what would you change/not change?
- What do you notice about yourself and your communication style? Or communication styles of your colleagues?
- If you worked in a multigenerational workplace: What did you think about working in this type of workplace? What biases did you have about a multigenerational workplace? How do you interact with coworkers of various ages?
- Describe yourself as a paid employee. Student?
- Did I have the opportunity to see or apply what I have learned in class? Why or Why Not?