

BENNINGTON

FIELD WORK TERM

REFLECTIVE ESSAY GUIDELINES -*This option is available to all students except FWT Public Action Grant recipients.*

Purpose

FWT provides the opportunity to think about the implications and awarenesses inherent in the transition from student to professional. The reflective essay allows you to compare and contrast theoretical versus applied learning—and to gain insights about your capacities, contributions, inhibitions, and limitations. Your essay is an invitation to unpack your FWT adventure and examine it through a personal and professional lens. In the process, you may find meaning in unexpected corners while discovering the moments that will form the foundation of your academic work or your professional identity.

Logistics

Reflective essays are required to be a minimum of 1200 words in length and typed (but not to exceed 5 pages double-spaced). You only need to write one essay (even if you had multiple primary positions). As you think about how to uniquely address the above purpose in your essay remember that your writing should convey awareness, depth, development, and language befitting your college education.

Upload your reflective essay onto [WorkLink](#) by February 23, 2018 (or August 4, 2017 for FWT 2017 Summer Makeup). Log in to WorkLink, click on “Your FWT: Register and view your FWT Records.” Click “Submit Reflective Project” next to your FWT Site. Written work can be submitted as a Word doc or PDF. Follow the prompts on this page and *make sure to click “Submit” when your work is complete.*

Important details:

- **File Name:** Please name your reflective work file using the following format: “Last Name, First Name_Name of FWT Site_FWT Year.” (For example: “Doe, John_Bennington College_FWT 2018.”)
- **File Format:** Please save all essays as PDF’s. To convert a Word document to a PDF, open the file in Word, click “Save As,” and select file format “PDF.”

Process

In order to provide a clear overview of your work during FWT, all essays should address the following key questions:

- What organization did you work for?
- Why did you choose to work for this particular organization? What aspects of your FWT work were you most curious about and why?
- What is the organization’s mission and work? Who are the constituents or individuals served by this work?
- What did FWT teach you about yourself, your professional work, and your academic work?
- What were your core responsibilities and how did they support the organization’s mission?

In addition to the key questions above, the thematic question sets below are *optional prompts* that can guide your reflection. You might pick and choose across themes, narrow in on one set of questions, or find your own compelling way to explore the above purpose.

Optional question set #1: Consider your work as related to your evolving academic and personal inquiries

- How did the field work experience help expand or re-shape your pursuits and interests?

- What areas of inquiry did FWT help you resolve or push to a new level?
- How will you continue the work you did over FWT once you're back on campus?
- How was your work over FWT connected, if at all, to your work at Bennington to-date? How has FWT influenced your Plan?
- What future positions or classes might you want to explore given this experience?

Optional question set #2: Examine the concept of work and what it means to you

- How do you want to *be* in the world? How do you want to *work* in the world? Do they match?
- What core values guide the work you do? Were you able to work in alignment with those values over FWT? Why/why not?
- What's at stake if you don't work in alignment with your values?
- What environment is conducive to supporting your best self and your best work?
- What does engagement look like for you and what did you discover about how you find it?

Optional question set #3: Evaluate your competencies and developmental progress

- What skills did you most draw on over FWT and what capacities did you notice you were missing?
- What feedback did you get from your colleagues, supervisor, or roommates? How has this feedback shaped your approach to work and to life?
- What new skills/knowledge did you acquire? In what areas did you experience the greatest growth in your personal and professional development? How can you further strengthen or develop in these areas?
- Did you show initiative or take risks? In what ways? Was there reward to this? Or, what stood in your way of being more proactive?
- What were your biggest challenges over FWT? How did you respond to these obstacles? What did this process teach you?

Site Evaluations

Completing a site evaluation allows you to share your thoughts with other students and the FWT Office on topics such as supervision, quality of work, and value of the experience. Please take a few moments to complete a site evaluation for your FWT. Log in to [WorkLink](#), click on "Your FWT: Register and view your FWT Records." Click on "Site Evaluation" next to your current FWT Site (just above "Submit Reflective Project").