

Formal Report on Practical training Con1007X

Prepared for:

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Practical Training, Construction Management, Paving, Brickwork, Earthworks, Costing,
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TERMS OF REFERENCE

The need for this report is due to the requirement for construction studies students enrolled at UCT to gain on site and practical training for the purposes of being ready to enter the industry and understand what to expect once the time comes to leave school based on the theoretical learning we have gained and enter into the real world of construction and or project management. The report details the nature and duration of the experience obtained during vacation work with Feytcon, a building and paving company based in Kuilsrivier, from January 7th to January 28th, 2025.

The steps taken to find employment was key to my success in learning and this was provided to me in the course outline for Con1007x and that networking and finding employment is sourced we, based on this I found employment

This report is based on the following instruction

1. Obtaining employment within the built environment.
2. Produce a comprehensive and reflective written essay within a report which reflects a true account of the duration of the employment at Feytcon from 7 to 28 January 2025.
3. Ensure the report is free from biases, misrepresentation and maintain a high standard of language.
4. Provide employer confirmation, and a gallery of annotated photographs from the practical training period.

The report is expected to be completed and handed in by 30 September 2025.

SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive reflection on the practical training undertaken with Feytcon, a building and paving contractor, from 7 to 28 January 2025. The training was conducted to complete the requirements of the BSc Construction Studies degree, aiming to bridge theoretical knowledge with real-world application.

The employment offered the student a wide range of immersive experience across various residential and commercial sites in the Western Cape, including the northern suburbs Kuils River, Kraaifontein, Stellenbosch, Paardevlei, and Roundhay. The student was under the guidance of owner Mr. Dewald Feyt, where the student underwent practical training far beyond manual labour to gain real critical aspects of the construction industry.

Key technical links were developed throughout the students training. The student was able to recall how the theory learnt in classes was evident in the hands-on Training, such cases was observed in earthworks, paving installation, bricklaying, and grouting, with a strong emphasis on adhering to SANS 1200DA standards. The experience provided practical insight into material management, cement ratio calculations, and the operation of machinery such as compactors and angle grinders.

The student was also significantly exposed to a high degree of project management and business operations. This involved observing in client consultations, understanding cost estimation through "time and motion" principles, and witnessing the challenges of managing multiple concurrent projects. The student had the opportunity to attend a multi-stakeholder meeting at the Paardevlei commercial development. This illustrated the importance of communication, critical path management, and problem-solving in a professional setting.

Furthermore, the report reflects on the importance of the flow between human labour and management. The efficiency of Feytcon was driven by Mr. Feyt's organised leadership and the responsibilities to key artisans. The bonds and knowledge the crew has shared with the student coming from the practises undertaken by the student has given the student a platform for associating with a team and forming a positive site culture.

In conclusion, the practical training successfully achieved its core objective of integrating academic learning with industry exposure. It placed strong foundational technical skills, which provided a realistic understanding of construction management.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Subject of and Motivation for Report

This report documents a detailed overview as a student, Sage Migael Agnew entering a workforce orientated around building and construction under the supervision of Dewald Feyt the owner of Feytcon, essentially this report dives into the multiple learning aspects the student gained while under the supervision of the business owner within the built environment. The motivation for this report is due to the need for Construction Studies students enrolled at UCT to locate employment and complete 480 hours over the three-year period of the degree, the practical training which falls within the built environment, and specifically for Feytcon operations which fall within construction as a privately owned business.

1.2. Background to Report

As a Construction Studies student enrolled at UCT, it is a requirement to complete a practical training reports in accordance with the courses CON1007X, CON2013X and CON3023X. Students are required to complete 480 hours of supervised employment experience within the built environment. The aim of this practical training is to supplement theoretical learning with practical exposure to construction and built environment contexts. Additionally, this report will be submitted to and graded by course convener Karen Le Jeune.

1.3. Objectives of Report

The goals of this report are to:

- Provide a reflective essay where the student evaluates the lessons and skills learnt during practical training and reference it to the UCT BSc Construction Studies degrees outcomes as well as observations made by the student concerned with managerial and technical issues throughout the practical training.
- A formatted and detailed logbook in a Tabular form indicating dates, hours and activities.
- Additionally, a detailed daily diary which logs the employment tasks undertaken during my duty employed at Feytcon paving and construction.

1.4. Limitations and Scope of report

This report outlines the practical training experience gained in the January 2025 vacation period with Feytcon, a construction company based in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. The scope of the report includes:

- The activities on site conducted daily across residential and civil engineering projects
- The various construction techniques I encountered included paving, curb placement, cavity wall construction, screeding, grouting, and compaction.
- The usage of tools and equipment, including builder's gut line, compactors, wheel measurer, and mixing concrete.
- Project exposure across multiple sites (e.g., Paardevlei, Polkadraai, Kraaifontein, Zevenwacht, and Stellenbosch).
- The student developed supervisory and communication skills under the mentorship of the company owner.
- Procedures regarding safety on site, especially while performing as a general labourer and supervisor.

Limitations to the student's workload included both timeframe and exposure constraints. The timeframe constraint refers to the fact that this report only covers the practical training undertaken during the January 2025 vacation period, which amounted to approximately 161.5 hours. As a result, it does not fully reflect construction project timelines or outcomes over an extended period. The exposure constraint relates to the student's experience being limited to a single company during employment, which restricted opportunities to engage with a wider range of construction disciplines. Furthermore, the student was not responsible for design decisions or structural calculations.

1.5. Plan of Development

The report begins with a simple summary and introduction outlining the tasks undertaken during the January 2025 vacation. It then highlights the need for a UCT Construction Studies student to gain practical industry experience and reflects on the knowledge and skills acquired during the period of employment in the form of a reflective essay. Ultimately, the development of this report represents a student's perspective on the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge and integrate it with real-life scenarios.

1.6. Research Approach

The approach adopted in this report is based on the student's practical experience and data captured during the period of employment. This is supported by the applied knowledge gained while pursuing the Construction Studies degree at UCT. The practical experience was recorded through a documented daily diary, logbook, one-on-one conversations with the company owner, direct field observations, photographic documentation, and informal interviews and discussions. By combining these methods, the student was able to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

2. Reflective Essay

2.1. Company Background

Feytcon is an independent contractor that undertakes a variety of small- to medium-scale projects in paving, building, renovation, and general construction. The company is based in Kuils River, located in the northern suburbs of Cape Town in the Western Cape. The owner, Dewald Feyt, prioritises client satisfaction above all else, believing that construction is not only about completing a project but also about delivering it with passion and leaving a lasting impression. He adopts a hands-on approach and demonstrates a strong eagerness to ensure that every client is left with a positive experience.

2.2. Beginning of Practical training

At the beginning of the year, during my vacation break, I set out to find employment within the built environment. To achieve this goal, I conducted a search for “construction companies near me.” After initially being rejected by several companies, I eventually received a phone call requesting to email all the necessary employment information regarding my practical training. I, Sage Agnew, a Construction Studies student enrolled at UCT, subsequently completed 161.5 hours of vacation practical work at Feytcon Construction, gaining real-world exposure to the construction industry that significantly expanded my understanding of the field.

Under the mentorship of Mr. Feyt, I developed a greater appreciation for entrepreneurship within the construction sector. He carefully outlined the steps involved in establishing and managing an independent construction firm successfully. Through his guidance, I had the opportunity to observe the entire construction process, from procurement to the finished product, and to understand how closely this is linked to professionalism. This experience exposed me to hands-on labour, working with heavy materials, and the importance of client satisfaction in achieving successful project outcomes.

2.3. Reflective Essay

During my practical training, I was involved in a range of logistical and operational tasks, including site communications, observing client meetings, and attending callouts for scopes of work. On days when projects were located outside of Kuils River, Dewald Feyt would pick up the labourers at a designated point at 7:30 a.m., whereas on days when work was within the local area, the team would depart from the Kuils River workshop between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. Typical work sites included Stellenbosch, Paardevlei, Somerset West, and several surrounding areas. Dewald consistently informed the team at the end of each working day about the activities that would follow the next day as per transport arrangements, this system enabled him to manage multiple sites efficiently. Throughout my practical training, I was assigned a variety of tasks, ranging from laying pavers, supervising works, facilitating communications, observing client meetings, and attending callouts for scopes of work. Dewald's versatility in running multiple concurrent sites also allowed me to act as a watchful eye on some projects while he attended to other business matters.

My practical training was unique in that I travelled to a diverse range of sites, each presenting a new environment and set of challenges. From residential driveways in Kuils River and Kraaifontein, here I learned the intricacies of domestic paving, starting from setting out, stamping and compressing the soil to lining your pavers with Builders Gut line. This practise became more detailed moving to a larger commercial project in Paardevlei, a site in Somerset West, a long-term civil project that demanded large-scale planning and mass paving techniques, I gained exposure to different project scales and requirements.

At the Kingdom Hall in Roundhay, where removal of existing tar paving, measuring distances for pavers using a wheel, and recording areas for future Brick Delivery provided me with insights of the sequence of Works at Feytcon. Observing client consultations in Airport Industria and a specialized staircase project at Zevenwacht Estate enriched my understanding of high-quality construction solutions and client relations. This rotation between sites was not merely a logistical exercise but an enrichment of my practical education. It taught me to adapt rapidly to new challenges, comprehend multiple project phases from initial quotation and earthworks to final paving and snagging, and appreciate the broad scope of work a single contracting firm can manage.

The varied sites also provided abundant learning opportunities, enabling me to link practical experiences to my academic knowledge. My time at Feytcon exposed me to a wide range of concepts, where I could apply the theoretical application of South African National standards (SANS) to the physical process of site work. Exercises such as wielding a sledgehammer, using a gut line to ensure the bricks border was aligned, Excavating, screeding, or calculating cement mix ratios. What stood out me was bringing construction to life.

As a construction student I never really understood the terms "square meter" and "cube" but working at Feytcon has exposed me to the realities of these terminologies. Although they were always thrown around in class it always went over my head, through Mr Feyt I was able to mentally quantify these terms mentally, he explained to me that seven

wheelbarrows of sand are equivalent to half a cube of sand. Not only was able to visualise but because I was pushing wheelbarrows consistently full of sand it, I can guarantee that the terminology will stick with me for life. Another realistic lesson I have learnt was when the grouting process took place for the pavers, this grout mixture would be closer to half a cube of sand Hand mixed with a spade of roughly 5% cement.

While the cement ratios for paving and bricklaying are different, just revisiting these kinds of construction terminologies reminded me of what I first learned in Construction Technology 1. It gave me a deep sense of motivation and belonging, showing me that learning does not only take place behind a book but also actively through real industry experience. I was also told that Philippi sand was the preferred choice for grouting due to its fine consistency, compared to the coarser Malmesbury sand.

As I began to experience the rhythm of daily site life, I was unknowingly practising a professional and punctual routine, each day I arrived at the Kuils River workshop at 7:30am and clocked off at 5pm. I quickly came to understand not only the value of routine but also the importance of the people who give life to the work. I learnt to appreciate why the labourers enjoy their morning tea-time and well-earned lunch break, often under dusty conditions. I witnessed the complete project lifecycle, from initial client procurement to the final brush of a high-pressure washer on a completed pavement. What truly stood out, however, was not only the work itself but the human energy behind it.

Within my employment at Feytcon, Mr Feyt had multiple Projects Running Concurrently, this meant that his team of 10 labourers would be split up according to what he believed they could handle each day in terms of order of importance. Some days he would get the entire team to work on one project so that it can be completed according to his schedule, the impression I got From Mr Feyt was that he worked very diligently where he remained organised even at times when unexpected obstacles came, he always set goals for each project planning ahead of time by when each project should be complete, he attributes this efficiency to his longstanding knowledge of the construction industry and organisational Skills but I believe it is rooted in his approach to commencing work because he is very organised in how he addresses clients, coming up with solutions and actively trying to understand problems clients are faced with so that he can come up solution, noting it down on paper, taking pictures of scopes and even carrying his laptop which kept him ready for anything, even for meetings or to draft invoices this is why he is consistently on the move as well, his business thrives off of his genuine-ness.

On most days Mr Feyt would instruct who he knows to be very accurate and efficient amongst the team of 11 men, this is Fannie and Joshua two of his most reliable artisans, where if he gives them instruction they follow through and motivate their designated teams. Fannie and Joshua are experienced builders, although they are reluctant to listen at times they make up for it by finding another solution that was not so obvious initially. From my point of view, I believe Mr Feyt appreciates this however they do make mistakes at times, and this is either due to negligence or miscommunication. Regardless of this I have witnessed both men at work pushing their teams, at different sites to work smarter and not harder, this is why Mr

Feyt feels confident when he attends to other business matters leaving them Responsible for works done.

The cheerfulness of the labourers always brought a smile to my face, their camaraderie, and their willingness to teach and guide a student like me kept me excited to learn more, and this is true because I never felt too shy to ask a question at all. On days where the heat seemed to unbearable I was quick to lend a helping hand often picking up the spade to shovel or move a wheel barrow full of bricks around at site, I feel as if they appreciated that because when it came to handling power tools they always let me have a turn, I got the opportunity to use a pick-axe stamper, a double-drum compactor roller and even wielding an angle grinder to cut aluminium strips for an anti-slip nosing on a staircase, I also learnt the hard way that Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves are really important. This really the edges of bricks when they are being packed off from delivery boxes are sharp and those things are thrown at you very quickly once the packing and paving begins. Mr Feyt always made sure to ask if the guys were wearing their PPE and warning them if they lost it, they would have to pay up. I learned as much from these dynamics as from the technical work in books, discovering that successful projects are founded not only on materials and methods but also on genuine team spirit.

One of the highlights of my training was the opportunity to attend meetings with Mr Feyt and interact with clients at the project at Paardevlei in Somerset West it is a large-scale commercial or light-industrial development, I believe it to be a business park or multi-tenant commercial complex. Mr Feyt explained that various consulting agents and law firms have their own offices here, in this meeting between the Subcontractors, the client gathered input from all the specialists including electricians, irrigations and pavers. This exposure allowed me to observe and understand how professional relationships and client satisfaction influence project outcomes, topics such as critical path was also discussed where different contractors discussed their own issues such one issue being that of a downlight in all the building where Instead of just accepting the client's unhappiness, they proposed a practical, cost-effective solution by swapping 25W for 12W bulbs which addressed the core complaint of light intensity and power usage.

The meeting was a constant, subtle negotiation on timelines, costs, and design changes to reach a consensus that kept the project moving forward which prevented them from continuing with their sequences of works such lighting fixture orders being incorrect and the drain position of manholes not being correctly identified on plan. This meeting at Paardevlei in Somerset west was conducted so professionally at the clients very own Café infamously known as “Lorenzo Marx Coffee Shop”.

Afterwards we made our way back to site with an affiliate civil engineer from Lyners Engineers to address the design and use of a drainage feature that will be paved over. This site visits also pointed out the concept of the “Critical Path,” which I had studied in Construction Management 1, this became a reality at the Paardevlei site. A pile of rubble from a separate construction contractor was obstructing the paving pathway and this demonstrated how a single delay could extend the project timeline by several days.

The four-week period at Feytcon served as a catalyst for integrating theoretical concepts from the BSc Construction Studies curriculum with the realities of a working construction site. Personally being on site and travelling to all the locations we worked at has exposed me to so

much, when I finish my degree as well as honours in Construction Management, I strive to become a project manager and although its not exactly the same as being a training student I can tell you the drive I felt when Mr Feyt entrusted me with supervisory duties, I believe highlighted many key elements in basic project management principles, Mr Feyt trust was not just about my ability to lay bricks but my reliability to manage tasks and people, these tasks included being left to manage trench digging, backfilling, and setting out based on a floor plan at the Polkadraai Site in Stellenbosch while he was away. Additionally, I would Pick up and drop off trailers that were used while the other work bakkie was being repaired, supervising the workers at the Kingdom Hall site to spread curbs 5m apart and prepare for packing, in Dewald's absence.

Early in the training I also I became a form of communication between the workers and Mr Feyt as the labourers would often be too busy to take a call from Mr Feyt, you can also say that I became a vessel to communicate what the workers should do next once the assigned task should be when Mr Feyt was absent I would like to believe that this made production more efficient because I would consistently update Mr Feyt with WhatsApp photos to update the progress at each site I was placed at, therefore giving Mr Feyt the confidence that work will be done regardless of his presence and that he would not have to worry if the workers were active or not. I would also ensure that the workers do not exceed their tea-time and lunch time breaks so that work continued smoothly. This hands-on experience showed me that project management is so much more than a title, but it is real time problem-solving, with clear communication, and management of people all happening simultaneously with physical work. It is more than just bricks too.

Mr Feyt enlightened me with a conversation he called "Time and Motion", he explained it with an analogy where he refers to a man who is less experienced than an expert, "the inexperienced man takes less time to cut the grass than the expert," therefore the expert can charge more, and the man with less experience who takes longer can cost the client overall more. Over the course of my training Mr Feyt would explain the way he runs his businesses model based on an example where Mr Feyt does not just charge for materials and time. Feytcon charges for expertise and efficiency.

The example he used was as follows; he calculated that the team completes 40m²/day (from the 120m² in 3 days) which becomes the baseline for estimating labour costs on future quotes. For him to explain this to me where he turns abstract "work" into a quantifiable, product really opened my eyes to the economic side of construction as a business. We then had a discussion relating to the scale at which Mr Feyt operates, and he mentioned that competition is not really an issue for him because he does not work for the money only, he works to provide a service that is unbeatable, a service that stands out and where the work speaks for itself. He refers to it as "word to mouth" This is true because I have witnessed Mr Feyt receive callouts simply because clients have either seen his work from others or he was referred, I could easily attribute this to a course I completed in my first year called Micro-economics (course code ECO1010F). The reason I am referencing this course is because I have learnt that with a lot of competition it means that prices decrease and with a little competition prices increase, this is not the case with Feytcon because of how professional the model of the business runs. Mr Feyt does however aspire to grow his business by re-investing into it with Assets such as company vehicles, which would ultimately negate expenditure on renting trailers.

2.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this wasn't just about getting my practical hours signed off. It made me realize how genuinely excited I am about construction management. My four-week practical training period with Feytcon was a perfect introduction for diving into the construction industry, it served as a link between academia and the practical world. The experience was not limited to the technical skills of paving and bricklaying because it shed so much light on the underlying principles of success in a contracting business. From the critical professionalism needed to run a successful Contracting company to the legitimate application of SANS standards all the way to the competition a construction company can face. The multi-site management contained a lesson every day, this experience was a rich setting for that. It was fascinating to observe how principles of management, such as the critical path, client interaction, and resource distribution, are applied in real time. This made being in the industry more interesting. This placement was not only an academic practice, but it was also a practice that made construction management exciting.

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