

Internship Learning Contract Tips

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Learning Contract Defined

The learning contract serves as an outline for you and your supervisor of what you intend to learn and accomplish while you are at your internship. It includes your planned activities and projects, your shared intentions and expectations, and the roles you and your supervisor will have working together.

Suggested Guidelines

Begin with a perspective that you are making a contract with yourself. You are identifying what knowledge, behavior, competencies, attitudes, and values YOU wish to develop. These learning objectives are YOUR plan (not your site supervisor's, nor your internship advisor, nor your parent's) that outlines how you will attempt to reach your goals. The following is a step-by-step guide to successfully starting and completing your learning contract. *Adapted from Messiah College Internship Center Materials

Step One: Identify learning objectives most relevant to you.

- Reflect upon your prior educational and life experiences.
- Consider your future aspirations. What will move you from where you are currently to where you desire to be?

Step Two: Brainstorm responses to a few key questions.

- “What do I most want to explore, understand or learn during my internship?”
- “How would I like to change or be different by the end of my internship?”
- “What will make me more marketable to an employer or graduate school?”

Step Three: Decide which goals are most related to this internship.

- You have a role to fulfill at the organization you are interning. You want to be sure to meet their needs and expectations.
- Be clear with your supervisor about what you are looking for from this experience as well. It should be a give and take. If a stated aspiration of yours is not necessarily going to be possible, talk with your supervisor about experiences related to your desired goal that might be possible.

Step Four: Prioritize the list of goals.

- Which ones are most important to you?
- Do the objectives support academic, professional and personal concerns?

Step Five: Prepare the first draft of your learning objectives.

- Utilize the above brainstorming to write a formal list of your learning objective that address your intended goals and outcomes.

Step Six: Identify activities that will help you reach your objectives.

- What work activities and assignments will help you reach our objectives?
 - What resources outside of the work site may help you reach your objectives?
 - Consult with your internship advisor, internship site supervisor, co-workers, departmental faculty, peers, and the “Learning Objectives Tip Sheet” for ideas.
 - Attempt to quantify where possible (e.g. Read 2-3 journal articles).
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Sample Learning Objectives

Learning Goal 1: To observe and better understand youth development and the development, implementation, and evaluation of leadership, community service, and recreational activities for youth.

To be met through the following tasks:

1. Observe and interview staff members who directly are a part of youth development
2. Observe, firsthand and through documents, the marketing of youth programs and activities
3. Observe and participate in building relationships with community partners that provide youth programs
4. Find/read three current articles on youth development in academic journals

Learning Goal 2: To apply and further develop skill in the teaching of ecology and conservation of aquatic habitats pursued through class work.

To be met through the following tasks:

1. Receive training in developing lesson plans, scheduling programs, and evaluation
2. Give programs during the summer to school age youth, preschool children, seniors, and people with disabilities and diverse cultural backgrounds
3. Keep program records and enter them into a computer database
4. Spend 2-3 days assisting a Fisheries Biologist in the field

Learning Goal 3: To possess a clear understanding of online merchandising, ultimately assisting in the development and execution of online strategies across various dot com merchandising departments.

To be met through the following tasks:

- Conduct research and analysis of the company’s online retailing and other successful online retailers
 - Work with merchants, marketing teams, and other critical team members to improve departmental planning and reporting around online marketing initiatives
 - Conduct analysis of cross-departmental product lifecycles and seasonal sales
 - Keep a running journal recording the information obtained as well as skills or tasks yet understood fully
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