

How to Develop Learning Objectives

In collaboration with your supervisor, discuss the organization's and your goals for your internship and develop at least 3 learning objectives. Here are some tips and suggestions for this conversation.

Understand why you need to write learning objectives?

- To provide direction—serves as your personalized curriculum for your internship.
- To apply classroom learning, concepts from your academic discipline, and career competencies to your internship and projects.
- To promote good communication with your supervisor and establish agreed upon expectations.
- Practice writing accomplishment statements that can be used on a resume.

Learning objectives should:

- Be specific and actionable.
- Reflect specific skills and career competencies.
- Be related to your academic discipline and/or your career goals.
- Be discussed with your supervisor.

What are career competencies? [Career competencies](#) are skills employers in most industries have reported are most in demand and valued. Here are the top competencies:

- **Oral & Written communication:** Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
- **Critical thinking/problem solving:** Gather, analyze, and summarize information from a diverse set of sources and people to solve problems, anticipate needs and prioritize action steps.
- **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Collaborate with others to accomplish shared goals while managing conflict, respecting diverse experiences, employing personal strengths, and remaining agile.
- **Technology:** Adapt to new technology and use technology to achieve strategic goals.
- **Leadership:** Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others by innovating, planning, initiating, managing, completing and evaluating projects of importance to the organization.
- **Professionalism/Work ethic:** Maintain a positive personal brand in alignment with organization and personal career values while demonstrating dependability by prioritizing and completing tasks and goals.
- **Equity & Inclusion:** Solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives, advocate for inclusion & equitable practices and demonstrate flexibility by adapting to diverse environments.
- **Career & Self-Development:** Display curiosity and seek out opportunities to learn. Show an awareness of strengths and areas for development while pursuing and applying feedback.

Students, ask yourself:

- What action steps do I hope to accomplish over the course of this semester?
- Which technical skills, personal skills, networking skills and career competencies do I want to develop?

Ask your supervisor:

- “What problems or unmet needs are you currently experiencing within this organization or in this field?”
- “What would I need to know in order to be marketable in this field and a successful candidate for an opening with this organization/department?”
- “What skills/achievements/accomplishments could make me stand out among other graduating college students in this field?”

Examples of great learning objectives:

(Learning Objective writing formula: Action word + skill + action plan to develop skill)

- Increase my knowledge of digital technology and specifically Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools to see how analytics are used by organizations to improve user experiences by **(Action Plan)** using Google analytics daily to inform new website and social media content.
- Improve my written communication skills by learning how to write Memos of Understanding (MOUs) and white papers after **(Action Plan)** researching the industry and topic thoroughly, reading related documents, and revising drafts based on supervisor’s critique.
- Practice intercultural fluency and learn to effectively counsel clients through the application process by **(Action Plan)** observing mentors, reading client background charts, experimenting with the application site, and communicating with clients.
- Expand my professional network and career development within this industry **(Action Plan)** by conducting 5 informational interviews with top leaders to learn about their career stories, their vision of the industry future, and gain advice for pursuing a career in this industry upon graduation resulting in a report to share with new interns.
- Gain problem solving experience **(Action Plan)** by conducting data analysis on previous 3 years of client-staff interaction using Excel to uncover patterns of client engagement and potential ways to improve efficiency.