

Developing Effective Learning Objectives

Cooperative Education and Internships are academic programs. They recognize that learning which occurs as a result of experience can be worthy of academic credit. Learning objectives refer to a set of statements which clearly and precisely describe what it is that you intend to accomplish during your work period. Learning objectives are the most effective method devised to assess the extent and value of this learning.

Learning objectives should contain the following information:

- A statement of what you expect to achieve through your work experience
- An indication of how you expect to achieve the goal
- The time frame involved in completing the task
- Identification of the method of evaluation to be used

Key to Completing Your Learning Objectives

There are many different types of objectives you can set for yourself during your work experience. To help you, we have provided lists of possible objectives as well as the following categories as suggested general areas.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT- learning a new skill or improving an existing one

KNOWLEDGE ATTAINMENT- learning new facts and concepts

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT- learning about yourself

INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT-improving your ability to work in a team

PROBLEM SOLVING- developing a solution to a problem

You will be expected to **identify four (4) learning objectives** this semester related to your experience. Meet with your work supervisor first to establish appropriate learning objectives. Then schedule an appointment with your Faculty Advisor to discuss and review them. **This assignment must be completed during the first two weeks of the placement.**

Preparation of Learning Objectives

Walk around your place of employment and observe everything that is happening, all the employees, the physical nature of things, the attitude of people, and the employment situation in general. Also, consider your college classroom work, studies, labs, and career goals.

List some potential interests which may include items such as:

- Things of a general nature (career orientation and routine duties)
- Things that are new to you, but apply to your present or future interests (skill acquisition or problem solving)
- Things about which you know, but with which you need more practice to be more comfortable (skills application)
- People, things, attitudes and general feelings you hear, see, feel, or observe (human relations)
- A specific activity or duty on which your immediate supervisor wants you to work (job implementation or new assignment)
- Things you just cannot quite put into a category, but with which you would like to work (increased knowledge)

Once you have selected the interests you wish to develop, you are ready to formulate your learning objectives. As you create each objective think about what you want to accomplish; what knowledge, skill, attitude, understanding, or value are you seeking.

What Do You Want To Accomplish?

- Examples:**
- a. To increase sales by 10%
 - b. To revise the current office filing system, to achieve a more efficient method of handling, storing and retrieving records

How Are You Going To Accomplish It?

Steps you will take to accomplish your objective. Which activities will you do? How will you acquire the learning? Under what conditions will the learning occur?

- Examples:**
- a. Experiment with three sales techniques; keep a journal of the results for two weeks to determine the best one to use
 - b. I will research the various methods of filing systems available for implementation

How Will You Measure Your Objective?

What evidence will you have to demonstrate that learning has taken place? What criteria will be used to evaluate your evidence? You may indicate a time limit, a minimum number of correct responses, a number of principles, a percentage or proportion, or define the important characteristics of performance accuracy. Then identify who will do the evaluation

- Examples:
- a. My performance will be judged by my sales record and the sales manager
 - b. By acceptance and implementation of a new or revised filing system

NOW write a complete objective:

Example A

By December 1, I will increase sales by 10%. For the first two weeks of the semester I will experiment with three sales techniques and keep a journal of the results to determine the best one to use. My performance will be judged by my sales record and the sales manager.

Example B

By December 1, I will revise the current office filing system, to achieve a more efficient method of handling, storing and retrieving records. I will research various methods of filing systems available for implementation, for the first three weeks of the semester. I will review the various methods with my supervisor and together we will select a method to try. After one month we will evaluate the success of the method chosen by reviewing the new method with co-workers and staff.

Follow these steps to create your own objectives. Discuss and review them with your immediate work supervisor and then present them to your Faculty Advisor for comment and possible revision. When finalized, you, your faculty and work supervisor will sign the Learning Contract.

Some Qualities of Good Objectives

Please keep these characteristics in mind when developing objectives.

- Objectives should be stated in terms of the realistic results you intend to achieve.
- Select language which can communicate to all interested parties, not just a limited technical group.
- Objectives must be specific, reasonable, achievable, and measurable within the available time limit.
- Objectives should relate specifically to the work experience.

Below are examples of several good objectives. In each case the same objective is stated in two different ways. In the "wrong" column the objective is either too general or not sufficiently measurable. In the "right" column the same objective has been stated correctly (i.e.: In a manner that is specific, reasonable, achievable, and measurable).

WRONG	RIGHT
a. I will learn how to use my company's computer	a. By December 15th, I will be able to program and operate my company's computer with less than a 3% error rate.
b. I will evaluate the effectiveness of my company's advertising.	b. By March 15th, I will make-up, duplicate, distribute, pick-up, evaluate, and report on a customer survey relating to my company's advertising.
c. I want to learn how to deal with irritable people who are customers.	c. I will develop four different, cheerful conversation techniques and briefly describe each in a notebook. I will record reactions of customers to these techniques and report by May 28th.
d. I want to improve my sanding, priming, color matching, and spot painting techniques.	d. By November 1st, I will successfully sand, prime, color match, and spot paint a repair on a customer's car to his/her satisfaction.
e. I want to assist some children to learn a new skill.	e. By mid-term, I will have taught a group of ten children ball throwing athletic skills. The children will demonstrate their skills by achieving at least a minimum score which I will determine as a proficiency level.

Possible Learning Objectives- General

1. Produce high quality work
2. Learn how to compile and analyze quantitative or statistical data
3. Develop a systematic approach to problem solving
4. Work effectively with a wide variety of people
5. Develop techniques to handle conflict
6. Relate effectively to management and co-workers
7. Develop ability to accept criticism constructively
8. Learn techniques of self-reflection
9. Improve oral and written communication skills
10. Learn how to compile and organize information effectively
11. Understand company's business and competition
12. Learn professional procedures and attitudes
13. Develop leadership skills
14. Develop a professional vocabulary
15. Demonstrate technical competence
16. Develop the ability to work independently
17. Develop the ability to listen and follow instructions
18. Learn how to take the initiative
19. Improve time management skills
20. Improve organizational skills
21. Learn decision making abilities
22. Develop good phone techniques
23. Increase understanding of the professional work environment
24. Learn how to delegate responsibilities
25. Learn how to complete work tasks in relevant time frames
26. Learn how to achieve results through team efforts
27. Understand the operation of a small business/department
28. Understand how to achieve results
29. Learn how to motivate others
30. Develop research skills.
31. Learn how to plan and prioritize completion of tasks
32. Assume responsibility for completion of assigned job responsibilities
33. Learn to coordinate events or people