



Internship Learning Goals

How to make them and why they matter

Why Goals Matter:

In addition to building skills, internships are valuable because they create a sense of purpose - both personal and professional. These experiences allow you to explore interests and skills, and what you learn about the industry and the roles you're exposed to will inform what type of opportunity you want to pursue next.

At its core, goal setting helps you build the framework for a valuable internship learning experience. Goals assist you in your internship by keeping you:

1. Motivated while moving through the transition of student life to professional life
2. On task so that you have direction and clarity about your day-to-day duties
3. Aware of a standard against which to measure your growth and progress as an intern
4. **Focused on getting what you want out of the internship - not just what the employer wants!**

How Goals Support Interns:

Your supervisor's input will be valuable in determining the feasibility of goals to make sure that you are carrying out agreed upon activities and projects that meet both of your needs for the internship. You have specific goals that you want to accomplish, and your supervisor has specific duties that need to be done.

You may be confronted during your internship with changes in what you are doing from day to day depending on the needs of the organization. If you have solid goals set prior to the internship, you will be better equipped to gear your day-to-day performance towards meeting those goals. Research has shown that the act alone of setting goals can ensure that you meet at least some if not all of what you want to achieve.

How To Set Goals:

Based on the mutually agreed upon job description which outlines your tasks and responsibilities, you can create goals that focus on different areas of development:

- **Knowledge development:** understanding specialized information associated with the industry or profession, and application of discipline-specific theories or concepts ("I will learn, understand, develop, etc.")
- **Professional career development:** exploring different career interests and learning about professions ("I will explore, talk to, etc.")
- **Skill development:** gaining skills and competencies that employers look for; this can be a combination of technical skills and [career competencies](#) ("I will acquire, conduct, create, schedule, build, etc.")

The best goals will be specific, actionable, and measurable. Consider the following as you develop your goals:

- **Specific:** What exactly do you want to achieve or develop? How? When? What is your timeline to achieve this overall goal? Are there milestones needed along the way?
- **Action Steps Needed:** Is your goal realistic and attainable given the available time and resources? What steps are needed? Who will you consult or shadow? What resources will you need?
- **Measurable:** How will you objectively measure your success? How will you know when you have met this goal? What tangible outcomes will you see (metrics) or hear (feedback) when you reach your goal?

Learning Goal Examples:

I will understand the complete development and testing process for an iOS application by writing high quality source code for the beta release of the HealthNET Application at the end of July.

- This is a knowledge and skill-based goal. It is specific in learned outcome, deliverable, and timeline.

I will meet with and shadow managers in different departments of marketing and product development to see which area interests me more.

- This is an exploratory professional development goal. The activity itself is specific and measurable in that it either will happen or not, but open-ended in terms of how and when it will happen.

I will improve my public speaking and presentation skills by delivering a cumulative presentation on my research and findings to key stakeholders at various levels of the company as well as weekly updates to my team for the entirety of the project.

- This skill development goal has a very specific deadline and tangible outcome, as well as weekly milestones outlined along the way.

I will develop an understanding of fundraising event work by helping organize and run the OMSI Fundraising Gala event in August.

- This is another knowledge and skill-based goal. It is focused around one event and has a defined timeline.

I will observe the use of EPIC, a popular medical records system, and be proficient at updating charts in the system myself by the end of my time shadowing the experience.

- This is a skill-based goal that is specific, measurable, and has a timeline.

Why Communication Matters:

Site supervisors and faculty supervisors will see your learning goals as they approve your Internship Learning Agreement, but it is also recommended you discuss these goals with them throughout your internship so they can give meaningful assignments to you and incorporate relevant learning experiences throughout your experience. When you communicate these goals to your supervisors, it creates transparency about what you are hoping to gain from the experience. Together you can evaluate your goals and create a roadmap towards achieving them. They cannot help you meet your goals if you have not communicated them.

It is recommended that you have regular check-ins with your site and faculty supervisors. One topic you should periodically check in about is progress regarding your learning goals.

If You Need Help:

Don't hesitate to reach out for support. In addition to your faculty supervisor, the Career Education Center (CEC) is also a resource available to you. You can find resources on the [CEC website](#), stop by drop-in hours, set up a 1:1 appointment, or email the Internship & Experiential Learning Coordinator.

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Create your own Learning Goals

Intern name:

Intern Title:

Organization:

Learning Goal #1:

Action Steps – What, when, where and how will you accomplish your goal?

Measurement of Goal – How will you objectively measure your success? What are the metrics?

Learning Goal #2:

Action Steps – What, when, where and how will you accomplish your goal?

Measurement of Goal – How will you objectively measure your success? What are the metrics?

Learning Goal #3:

Action Steps – What, when, where and how will you accomplish your goal?

Measurement of Goal – How will you objectively measure your success? What are the metrics?

Learning Goal #4:

Action Steps – What, when, where and how will you accomplish your goal?

Measurement of Goal – How will you objectively measure your success? What are the metrics?