

LEARNING CONTRACT: WRITING GOALS

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The Learning Contract is your "syllabus" for your internship. It includes your

- Learning Goals--what you intend to learn through your internship
- Tasks and Strategies--what you will do to reach your learning goals
- Means of Evaluation--how you'll demonstrate to your faculty moderator how you achieved your goals.

The Learning Contract is an agreement between you, your faculty moderator and the academic department, and a site supervisor at your internship site. It is based on your goals, the needs of the organization where you're interning, and the requirements of your faculty moderator. It helps to make sure that the expectations of everyone involved in the internship are clear.

Every student earning academic credits for an internship will complete the online *Registration for Internship – Learning Contract* before beginning the internship. Read the guidelines on the reverse side of the registration form before filling it out.

If you are earning credits from more than one faculty moderator or are interning at more than one site, you will submit a *Registration for Internship - Learning Contract* for each one.

If your internship will take place over two semesters you will need to register for each semester separately.

Completing the Learning Contract

Goals, Tasks and Strategies, and Means of Evaluation are recorded on page 1 of the *Registration for Internship - Learning Contract*, a 5 page form which

- Must be signed by the intern, the intern's site supervisor, the faculty moderator, the department chair (usually), and the internship coordinator.
- Must include the *Student Internship Agreement and Release* (page 4) signed by the student and the *Internship Program Host Agreement* (page 5) signed by the student and the host site supervisor.
- Must be emailed to the Internship Coordinator in advance of the day you begin your internship and received by the Registrar's Office before you will be allowed to begin your internship. Contact the internship office or visit the internship website calendar: csbsju.edu/internship for deadlines.

Learning Contract: Format

The *Registration for Internship - Learning Contract* form has three columns. Use this format.

Learning Goals	Objectives/Responsibilities/Activities	Means of Evaluation (see page 5 for guidelines)
1. To...	1a. 1b. :	1.
2. To...	2a. 2b. :	2.

Writing Learning Goals, Tasks and Strategies

Types of Learning Goals

Your **reasons** for wanting to do the internship can usually be stated as **learning goals**.

A goal is a broad statement of what you want to accomplish during your internship. Students usually include different types of goals. You may find it helpful to organize your goals into two general categories:

1. One type of goal is called a **COGNITIVE GOAL** -- a goal that asks you to apply or reflect on your academic learning. At a minimum, two of your goals should fall into this category. For example, you plan:
 - a. to expand your understanding and knowledge of how your academic learning applies in your company/organization, or by asking how the theories you've learned about in your classes apply in a real-world setting.
 - b. to develop new skills or to refine your existing skills--e.g. technical writing, using new kinds of software, techniques to use with at-risk youth, public speaking, writing or presentation skills.
2. You'll also use your internship to focus on your **PERSONAL GROWTH and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS**. For example:
 - a. to explore and test a possible career choice (a specific career, a type of organization, a particular organization).
 - b. to learn to be more organized, to better manage your time, to be more assertive, to develop more self-confidence, to identify your strengths.

You should include both COGNITIVE GOALS and PERSONAL GROWTH/ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS in your learning contract. The following questions can help you clarify your goals:

1. Is one of my primary aims to gain, expand, apply, or test out a particular body of knowledge?
2. Do I want to acquire or improve upon a skill, such as counseling, training, interviewing, advocacy, public speaking, or administration?
3. Do I want to explore a major or a career interest?
4. Do I want to test my suitability for a particular field?

Sample goals

Note that goals begin with the word "to" (to apply, to develop, to explore, to become, etc.)

- To gain knowledge of the operations and services provided by a community credit union and to gain a sense of how this differs from a commercial bank.
- To better understand the needs of homeless individuals and families and determine whether I want to pursue a career working with the homeless on a full-time basis.
- To gain a clearer understanding of the specific skills and personal characteristics needed to be successful in management in a large hospital.
- To apply my knowledge and understanding of theology from my classes to a concrete setting of parish youth ministry.
- To apply and strengthen my communication skills, particularly those needed when speaking in groups and in writing to co-workers.
- To increase my self-confidence in work situations.
- To identify my strengths and weaknesses as related to the skills and characteristics needed to be successful in the corporate world.
- To learn and become familiar with ethical/legal issues related to a private practice.

Writing Tasks and Strategies

For each goal listed you will indicate the specific activities you will engage in to accomplish that goal. For each task you should strategize on how you will learn or make use of new information, skills, or behavior patterns.

To help come up with tasks and strategies, ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I best learn what I want to learn from this organization or position?
- In what activities would I like to observe or take part?
- With whom would I like to talk or work?
- Where can I best learn what I would like to learn?

You may want to read over the questions you've asked to address in your final paper and include any research or reflections in your Learning Contract which will be necessary to complete your paper.

Work-related learning tasks and strategies usually fall into one of the following categories:

- **Information-gathering:** reading organizational and professional materials, conducting informational interviews
- **Observations:** observing and analyzing (in contrast to mastering) specific skills, personal characteristics, and work behaviors of individuals and groups within a work setting
- **Performing routine duties:** learning to perform specific actions or procedures which are within the day-to-day responsibilities of a particular position
- **Performing new assignments:** working on projects or skills which are new to you
- **Performing activities in a creative manner:** finding new ways to do something
- **Problem-solving:** working on a solution to a specific problem that exists within the workplace
- **Developing personal characteristics:** developing or refining specific personal habits or social skills which allow you to deal most effectively with work situations

A learning task or strategy describes the learning experience in very specific terms. A good learning task will be:

1. Understandable—clear and simple to all
2. Challenging—difficult enough to stimulate interest
3. Specific—describe in detail what you will do to achieve a general learning goal (who, what, when, where, and how)
4. Measurable—capable of being seen and evaluated
5. Achievable—realistic enough that it can be done during your internship

Whenever possible include the time frame in which you expect to complete a specific learning task. Be careful not to use the phrase “by the end of the internship” too often and without any intermediate completion dates. You may find that your expectations of what you will be able to accomplish are unrealistic, or that you could actually accomplish more than you planned. The average number of learning tasks and strategies for each goal is two to three.

Examples of Goals with Tasks and Strategies

Goal #1. To apply the skills that I have developed as an English major to the practical situations of an advertising firm.

Tasks, Strategies: (*List each activity with a brief statement about how you will show you accomplished it*).

- 1a. Assist designers and writers in the step-by-step procedures involved in at least one project from start to finish. Keep copies of all my work for portfolio.
- 1b. List five skills I possess as an English major that I want to apply during my internship. Review my list of skills every week and discuss in my journal how they are being used in the workplace.
- 1c. Discuss the projects I am working on with my supervisors at our weekly meetings and ask for feedback on ways I might improve my work. Reflect on these discussions in my journal.

Goal #2. To gain knowledge of the operations of a commercial bank.

Tasks, Strategies:

- 2a. Observe the functions of the various departments of the bank—loans, trust, accounting, marketing, operations—and write a brief description of each.
- 2b. Conduct informational interviews with officers of two other commercial banks; prepare a written analysis comparing and contrasting the services offered by the three banks.
- 2c. Perform the functions of a bank teller, bookkeeper, customer service representative, and marketing manager for a one week each; receive a verbal evaluation on my performance and my understanding of each banking procedure from my supervisor in each area. Content of evaluation sessions will be recorded in my journal.

Goal #3. To become familiar with the zoo's policies, procedures, and methods of operating.

Tasks, Strategies:

- 3a. Analyze interdepartmental relationships by reading zoo's written materials and readings assigned by my faculty moderator, studying organizational charts, talking with staff members from various departments, and observing interactions between departments. Write in my final paper how my observations correspond or contrast with what is on paper.
- 3b. Participate in all in-service workshops and note in my journal a summary of what I learn.
- 3c. Reflect on workplace problems that I and others encounter and analyze and reflect on the problem-solving processes used in my journal.

Goal #4. To learn to manage my time better.

Tasks, Strategies:

- 4a. Read a book or article on time management.
- 4b. Select five new time management techniques to use during my internship and reflect on my use of those techniques each week in my journal.
- 4c. Make time for leisure, physical activity, personal recollection and spiritual growth.

Means of Evaluation

You are receiving credits for what you learn through your internship experience, not for the experience itself. You must, therefore, be able to demonstrate what you have learned to your faculty moderator. Your faculty moderator evaluates your learning, gives you a grade for the internship, and will tell you what means of evaluation will be required. This may include any of the forms of evaluation listed under means of evaluation on the *Registration for Internship – Learning Contract*.

Weekly Reflective Journal
Internship Reports
Required Readings
Annotated Bibliography

Site Visit
Site Supervisor Evaluation
Presentation
Final Paper

When filling out column 3 (Means of Evaluation) on the *Registration for Internship – Learning Contract*, indicate an approximate due date for each of your requirements listed.