

## Internship/Externship Learning Objectives

### Why set learning objectives?

In a classroom environment, professors outline the learning objectives to achieve during the semester. For an internship, learning objectives are set by the student. The primary purpose is that the student, supervisor and faculty sponsor understand what the student wants to get out of the experience.

The learning objectives should be clear. This allows for all parties to evaluate the internship/experience by comparing what you wanted to learn with what you did learn. Not attaining your initial objectives is not necessarily bad, since internships often provide opportunities to explore new, unexpected dimensions.

### How do I set objectives?

Internship learning objectives should be developed along **four dimensions**. The following provides you some guidance and examples of actual objectives taken from past interns.

1. **Skill development:** Learning and improving skills such as writing, verbal communication, research, technology, teamwork, and leadership (view [Career Competencies](#)). It is the development of these skills that often represent the major benefits of an internship.

***Example (Marketing intern):** Improve my communication skills, especially when dealing with people I do not know. Also, I would like to improve my formal writing skills when dealing with reports or communications with superiors. Finally, I would like to improve my research skills to be more effective and efficient in obtaining information.*

2. **Understanding Real-World Application:** Understanding the workplace, operating procedures, the department/company and its products, and other organizational concepts. In addition, this would include knowledge added to existing classroom knowledge, such as new applications or new skills.

***Example (Legal environment intern):** I plan to explore the operating procedures required by the state and federal court system through daily interaction with cases currently in the system. Our company is in the process of streamlining their human resource management policies and I hope to learn correct handling of issues involved.*

3. **Career Awareness:** Internships often provide the opportunity to take a peek at what working for a company or in an industry would be like. Objectives could include learning about career positions and occupations along with the qualities and training required to obtain those positions.

***Example (Accounting intern):** I want to learn how CPA firms work and what it takes to be successful in public accounting. This includes finding out what happens on a day-to-day basis in the office. Also, I want to know what it is like to work in a professional environment, since all my experience so far has been in small offices. Finally, I would like to find out if my CPA license is the way to go regardless of the area of accounting I choose (public, private, government).*

4. **Personal Development:** One of the major benefits of an internship is how it helps you to develop self-confidence, assertiveness, and basic work habits.

***Example (Marketing intern):** I am not very confident in my ability to function in a business. A major objective I have for this internship is to gain confidence that I have something to offer a company. In addition, I would like to improve my ability to talk with others professionally.*