

# GUIDELINES

# HOW TO CREATE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR DIGITAL INTERNSHIPS

is what distinguishes internships from jobs. As an intern, you should consider yourself a learner first and a contributor second, regardless of whether you are earning credit associated with your internship. To get the most out of your internship, consider setting a few learning or performance objectives and reviewing them with your supervisor before, during, and at the end of your internship.

## IMPORTANCE

### Creating learning objectives:

- Signals that you are **invested** in the experience
- Helps ensure everybody is on the **same page**, resulting in a better experience for all
- Helps you **develop** and demonstrate important professional **skills** such as prioritizing, action-planning, and accountability
- Most importantly, helps set the stage for maximum intern **learning**

## FOCUS AREAS

### Objectives can focus on different areas:

- **Skill** development
- **Knowledge** acquisition
- **Personal/professional** development

## SMART OBJECTIVES

### Effective objectives share some commonalities:

- **S** – Specific
- **M** – Measurable
- **A** – Action-oriented
- **R** – Relevant
- **T** – Time-oriented

### Examples of SMART objectives:

- > By the middle of my internship, I will be able to **write a one-page long press release** using AP style.
- > By July 30th, I will be able to **troubleshoot Microsoft Excel questions** with 95% accuracy.
- > By week 5, I will be able to identify **3 career paths** in this field & **1 way to learn about each**.

### Smart objective's prompts:

- What do you **specifically** hope to accomplish?
- How will you **measure** your progress towards this objective?
- What **actions** will you take to achieve this objective?
- How is this objective **relevant** to your internship, academic interests, and/or career aspirations?
- What is your **timeline** for meeting this objective?

## TIPS

### Objective-setting caveats:

- Try to **avoid** broad objective like “understand” or “learn” because they cannot be easily measured.
- **Three** objectives is typically sufficient for a quarter-long internship.
- Writing SMART objectives may require several feedback and revision loops.

## PROCESS

### Objective-setting is a process:

- **Before an intern starts**, encourage them to think of a few potential learning objectives
- During the **first week**, schedule an hour with your intern to flesh out their objectives in writing
- Set up a **weekly** or **biweekly** time to check in
- **After a few weeks**, meet with your intern about how they are progressing towards their objectives, what action plan they have in place to achieve them, and how they might want to modify their original objectives
- At the **end of the internship**, review progress towards stated learning objectives as part of a formal performance evaluation meeting

### Advice from interns:

- “Setting very **specific** objectives is important; when objectives are vague, they can seem daunting.”
- “It is okay to **modify** your objectives.”
- “**Share** your objectives with someone who can keep you accountable to it.”

### Specific learning objectives may be included in digital internship:

*Example:*

- Acquire hands-on experience and demonstrate skills of working in a virtual team.
- Explore and recognize the different information acquisition styles and preferred information handling strategies of virtual team members.
- Use the diverse working styles and traits of virtual team members to successfully collaborate in virtual environments.
- Explore effective general learning strategies and those applicable specifically to virtual learning environments.
- Carry out self-directed learning and learning in an online environment.
- Recognize how various learning approaches and strategies have direct workplace application.

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Digital Internship Model