

EXTERNSHIP LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Distinguishing factors of an externship is the connection between academics and hands-on experience. This is often accomplished through **learning objectives**.

What are they?

Externship learning objectives help the student **identify what will be learned** throughout the externship experience by connecting competencies to specific projects or tasks. Although many externships completed for academic credit require the student to identify key skills that will be gained throughout the experience, all externs should identify key skills. Learning objectives also provide supervisors with concrete examples for evaluation purposes, both midway through the externship as well as at the conclusion of the experience.

How do you write them?

Learning objectives should be **written by the extern in conjunction with their supervisor**. The student should identify **three to five key elements they hope to learn** while completing their externship. These skills can be specific to the student's field, or more general skill sets he/she wants to enhance. It's important to make sure the learning objectives are measurable and achievable.

Once the learning objectives are identified, the supervisor can help the student pinpoint the projects or work assignments that will help achieve the student's objectives. Keep in mind that the learning objectives are not all about the student and should align with goals of the organization/department.

Sample Learning Objectives

Learning Objective #1:

Gain an understanding of how a nonprofit organization operates and identify if this is the industry I would like to enter upon graduation.

Task/Work Assignment #1:

To understand how a nonprofit organization operates, I will be assisting in all areas of the organization such as recruiting volunteers, assisting the executive director with budgeting, contributing to the planning of the Big Apple Fundraiser, and researching grant funding opportunities. Through these activities I will have a better sense of the industry and if it's a good fit for me.

Learning Objective #2:

Enhance my written communication, specifically in regard to effective press releases, public service announcements (PSAs), and media kits.

Task/Work Assignment #2:

One of my main tasks will be advertising for the organization's big event: the Big Apple Fundraiser. To help recruit volunteers and increase the attendance of donors I will be working with my direct supervisor to create press releases, PSAs, and media kits.