

Developing Effective Learning Objectives

Part of the requirement of the University Recognition Program is that a student pursue a planned program of Experiential Learning which includes new or expanded learning opportunities beyond those required as part of regular classroom work. Developing appropriate, measureable learning objectives will provide the vehicle for accomplishing student and supervisor goals.

What is a Learning Objective?

A Learning Objective is a statement which describes a result you are interested in accomplishing on your job. Learning Objectives may be developed for one or more of the following categories:

- 1. Career Orientation and Routine Duties:** The student may have a need for some specific improvement in accomplishing the day-to-day functions of the job.
- 2. Problem-Solving or Skill Acquisition Goals:** There may be a specific problem or challenge in the student's work area to be solved with measurable results.
- 3. Skills Application Goals:** There may be goals in which a student needs to apply or test classroom knowledge in the work environment.
- 4. Personal Goals:** There may be a specific human relations problem that needs to be resolved.
- 5. Job Implementation or New Assignments:** If the student has recently been assigned new duties, there are probably many new learning experiences that can be stated as objectives.
- 6. Increased Knowledge:** There may be areas of particular interest in the work experience wherein the student may be able to develop objectives around gaining specific new knowledge.

Qualities of Good Objectives

1. An objective should be stated in terms of realistic results you intend to achieve.
2. Select language which can communicate to all interested parties, not just a limited technical group.
3. The objective must be specific, reasonable, achievable, and measurable within the available time limit.
4. The objective should relate specifically to the work experience.

Examples

In each case the same objective is stated in two different ways. In the "VAGUE" description, the objective is either too general or not sufficiently measurable. In the "SPECIFIC" example, the same objective has been stated correctly (in a manner that is specific, reasonable, achievable, and measurable).

Objective	Vague	Specific
Objective #1	I will learn how to troubleshoot for my company.	By December 15 th , I will be able to troubleshoot word processing software, including WordPerfect and Microsoft Word over the telephone with less than 3% error rate.
Objective #2	I will evaluate the effectiveness of my company's advertising.	By March 15 th , I will develop, duplicate, distribute, pick-up, evaluate, and report on a customer survey relating to my company's advertising.

Objective #3	I would like to know more about the chemical make-up of common drugs used in the hospital.	By mid-term, I will list the forty common medications I observe being used by referring to patients' charts, then research their chemical composition, and record this data on my list.
Objective #4	I want to learn how to deal with irritable customers.	I will develop four different cheerful conversation techniques and briefly describe each in a notebook. I will record reactions of customers to these techniques and report by May 28.
Objective #5	I want to evaluate the effects of radiation on very small animals.	Within the next week, I will expose an experimental group of five young mice to varying levels of radiation. I will compare growth, exercise habits, and food consumption with a control group of mice who were not exposed. I will record data and report at the end of my University Recognition period.
Objective #6	I want to assist some children to learn a new skill.	By mid-term, I will have taught a group of ten children ball throwing athletic skills. The children will demonstrate their skills by achieving at least a minimum score which I will determine as a proficiency level.

Steps to Writing Learning Objectives

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

Examples:

- a. To increase sales by 10%.
- b. To revise the current office filing system and to achieve a more efficient method of handling, storing, and retrieving records.

2. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ACCOMPLISH IT?

Steps you will take to accomplish your objective. What activities will you do? How will you acquire the learning?

Under what conditions will the learning occur?

Examples:

- a. Experiment with three sales techniques; keep a journal of the results for two weeks to determine the best one to use.
- b. I will research the various methods of filing systems available for implementation.

3. HOW WILL YOU MEASURE YOUR OBJECTIVE?

What evidence will you have to demonstrate that learning has taken place? What criteria will be used to evaluate your evidence? You may indicate a time limit, a minimum number of correct responses, a number of principles, a percentage or proportion, or define the important characteristics of performance accuracy. Who will do the evaluation?

Examples:

- a. My performance will be judged by my sales record and the sales manager.
- b. By acceptance and implementation of a new or revised filing system.

Your objectives should be developed with and approved by your Faculty Liaison and Employment Supervisor. You will need original signatures from each of them on your Learning Objectives Agreement. Submitting incomplete or vague Learning Objectives may slow your approval for the University Recognition Program and, if not corrected, could result in loss of University Recognition for your experience.