

**School of Integrative Studies  
George Mason University  
GUIDELINES FOR WRITING LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND  
STRATEGIES**

You need one learning objective for each credit you wish to take. For example, a 3-credit internship requires 3 learning objectives; a 4-credit internship requires 4 learning objectives.

Objectives should describe **what you will learn, not what you will do**. As you prepare your objectives, think about the reasons why you are doing the internship and what you want to gain from it intellectually and personally. Some tips to keep in mind for writing effective learning objectives:

- Try to use **concise, measurable words** to describe these goals, e.g. identify, improve, define, compare, understand, apply solve, write, contrast, initiate, develop etc.
- Be creative in thinking about your own learning objectives for the internship. Think about **theories or texts you have covered in courses, specific career or professional information you have been wanting to acquire**, or ask during your preliminary site interviews about what learning opportunities the organization can provide.
- It may be helpful to think about the Integrative Studies Competencies and how they relate to your area of concentration.

Strategies should describe the specific processes or tasks that will help you meet your objectives.

- Will you undergo orientation or training of any kind?
- Will you have responsibility for a specific task or project?
- Will you attend any meetings? Can you interview professionals at the internship site?
- What kinds of daily tasks will you undertake?
- Will you do any professional reading at the site?

Sample Objectives	Proposed Strategies
To describe how public policy is developed and enacted in the state legislature.	By following legislation, researching legislative histories, reviewing public policy texts, interviewing Assembly staff and lobbyists, observation in daily/weekly meetings.
To develop a preliminary network with public relations professionals.	Develop a data file of new contacts; conduct informational interviews with agency professionals and clients; attend professional conferences; write follow-up thank you letters.
To improve my theoretical and practical understanding of group communication.	Observe interaction in project meetings for leadership styles, roles, critical and creative thinking techniques, decision-making techniques, non-verbal communication, and kinds of group tasks.

You may want to prepare a draft to take with you when discussing the Internship Contract with your supervisor. Asking for her or his assistance in finalizing your objectives gives you the opportunity to clarify what your goals are the internship and to receive feedback from the site supervisor about how realistic you are being. Such a discussion may help you supervisor think of additional possibilities for you in terms of projects, meetings, conferences, training, etc.