

Co-operative Education

Work Term

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

- The goal of co-operative education is to provide experiential learning opportunities.
- Your learning objectives will help you determine the direction for your job search and what you want to learn on the job.

It is important to identify GOALS and OBJECTIVES in order for you to know where you are heading in your career.

Having well defined objectives will enable you to know exactly when you have reached them and when it is time for you to set new ones.

Written objectives will help differentiate real priorities from activities that tend to divert you.

Setting objectives facilitates personal growth, self improvement and success.

Learning Objectives

- Create a climate for motivation
- Enable you to plan and gain greater control over your future
- Add challenge to your life and a sense of achievement
- Provide a means of self evaluation
- Make you results oriented, so you work smarter
- Add a new dimension of meaning to your life
- Enable you to manage your time more effectively
- Reduce the stress related to the feeling of “not getting anywhere”
- Increase your chances of success
- Allow you to determine if your job is compatible with what you really want

As you prepare your learning objectives, keep the following in mind:

1. Review your personal and career plans
2. Research workplace requirements
3. Do not prepare too many objectives (3 max.) A small number of good objectives will be more satisfying than a long list, many of which you may not achieve. “Quality” is better than quantity!
4. Your objectives should be realistic and achievable within your co-op work term. You should have a reasonable chance of accomplishing these performance objectives on-the-job.
5. Your objectives should be as specific as possible so that they can be evaluated or measured. Avoid generalities.
6. Each objective should define a specific result.
7. Use quantitative terms to make your objectives specific.
8. The objective must be within your control.
9. Determine where you are now and what you want to be able to do by the end of your work term.
10. Your objectives should be related to your work experience and job description.
11. Match your objectives to the employer’s needs.
12. Before you begin working on your objectives, have them approved by your supervisor.
13. Continuously evaluate and revise your objectives as your needs and situations change.

Guidelines for Writing Learning Objectives

- **Specific**
A learning objective should say exactly what you hope to accomplish. For example, "I want to be able to design an inventory control system using MS access" is more specific than, "I want to design a database."
- **Measurable**
You need to be able to assess your progress so you know when you have achieved your objective. For example you can run reports from your database to determine if it is doing what you require.
- **Challenging**
Your learning objective should have you do something positive. It should increase your abilities. For example, your database should help develop your knowledge of database design techniques.
- **Realistic**
Your objective must be attainable. For example, the design of your database should not be overly complex that it cannot be develop within your allotted time frame.
- **Time limited**
You should chose a reasonable period of time to achieve your objective. For example, your 4 month work term may not be adequate to meet your objective, you may require an additional work term to complete your database
- **Action oriented**
Your learning objective statements should be complete sentences with action verbs. They should be phrased in terms of positives steps. They should not be written in terms of what you will not do
- **Useful**
Your objective should help you close the GAP between where you are and where you want to be in both your educational and career goals.

Setting Learning Objectives

A learning objective states an observable, measurable activity to be learned, a level of performance of that activity, and a given set of conditions under which that activity takes place.

- Each learning objective statement should contain four components:
- The activity should be a desired outcome related to your objective. It may be a result, skill, knowledge or behaviour.
- The level of performance needs to be specified to ensure that it is challenging but attainable. The performance should be observable and measurable
- The conditions or constraints will determine how to evaluate whether the objective has been achieved
- The time period will specify a deadline for accomplishing the objective

Your series of learning objectives will be used to describe what you intend to accomplish during your work terms

Types of classifications that should be considered when developing your work term learning objectives.

▶ Career exploration/confirmation.

- This is aimed at exploring a new career field or confirming the suitability of a career option.
- EXAMPLE: determine if programming is a suitable career based on your work term experience and discussion with at least three people in the field.

▶ Skill development

- This is aimed at practicing or improving a technical or interpersonal skill.
- EXAMPLE: improving public speaking skills by making verbal reports/presentations at monthly production meetings.

▶ Personal improvement

- This involves developing or improving interpersonal, communication or other social skills that enable you to work more effectively. They will be specific to each individual and will be based on personal background, experience and goals.
- EXAMPLE: develop better listening skills when taking instruction at work by taking notes, paraphrasing or summarizing key points