How to Write Practicum Learning Objectives

Office of Public Health Practice

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• Review elements of the practicum learning contract.

• Describe a step-by-step approach to writing learning objectives.

• Explain the difference between practicum learning objectives and competencies.

• Practice a step-by-step approach to writing learning objectives.
Learning Contract

• Outlines a plan for your practicum
• Must be submitted and approved before you can register for the practicum course
• Documents key components of your practicum
  ✓ Learning objectives
  ✓ Final project
Your learning contract should list 3-5 learning objectives.

Learning objectives establish your practicum goals and provide a framework for your project.
Before You Begin

- Find a preceptor and host site for your practicum.
- Select a faculty mentor.
- Identify a practicum project.
- Discuss specific activities for your practicum with your faculty mentor and preceptor.
How to Write Learning Objectives

STEP 1: Summarize your practicum idea
STEP 2: List activities and key words
STEP 3: Select competencies
STEP 4: Draft learning objectives
Exercise 1

Summarize Your Practicum Idea
Exercise 1: Summarize Your Idea

- Describe your practicum in 3-5 sentences.
- Use your own words.
- Identify a public health need, problem or question.
- Summarize a prewritten opportunity in your own words.
Exercise 1: Summarize Your Idea

• Where will you conduct your practicum?
• What does your preceptor want you to do?
• Whom will your project serve?
• What is the significance of the need, problem, or question you will address?
• What does your host organization hope to gain from your practicum?
• What do you hope to gain from this experience?
Exercise 1

Practice

7 minutes for this exercise
Exercise 2

List Practicum Activities
Brainstorm specific activities, tasks, or key words for your practicum.

Include activities

✓ Identified by your preceptor or faculty mentor, and

✓ Activities important to you.
Exercise 2

Practice

3 minutes for this exercise
Exercise 3

Select Competencies
Competencies Vs. Learning Objectives

**Competencies:** skills or abilities you should attain before completing your degree

**Learning Objectives:** specific goals you will meet by the end of this practicum

Competencies should inform or guide your practicum learning objectives.
Demonstrating Competencies

- Apply Competencies
- Meet Objectives
- Demonstrate Mastery of Competencies
Exercise 3

Practice

5 minutes for this exercise
Exercise 4

Write Learning Objectives
Write 3-5 learning objectives.

Part 1: Describe a goal.

• Refer to the public health need, problem, or question from Exercise 1.

• Refer to competencies you selected to develop a goal.
Part 2: Describe how you will meet the goal identified in Part 1.

• Refer to your summary and list of activities from Exercises 1 & 2.

• Describe major activities or milestones.
Learning Objectives

Each learning objective should be

- Specific
- Measurable
- Realistic
Good Learning Objectives

✓ Specific

• Describe activities specific to your project goals.
  ▪ Begin the second part of each learning objective with an action verb.
  ▪ Consult Bloom’s Taxonomy (next slide).
  ▪ Choose actions from the middle-to-highest levels of learning.
Bloom’s Taxonomy

- **Highest Levels of Learning**
  - **Create**: Produce new or original work
    - Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate
  - **Evaluate**: Justify a stand or decision
    - Appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh
  - **Analyze**: Draw connections among ideas
    - Differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
  - **Apply**: Use information in new situations
    - Execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch
  - **Understand**: Explain ideas or concepts
    - Classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate
  - **Remember**: Recall facts and basic concepts
    - Define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

- **Practicum Learning Objectives**

- **Lowest Levels of Learning**
✓ Measurable

Activities in your learning objectives lead to products that can be assessed by your faculty mentor.
Good Learning Objectives

**Realistic**

Describe activities and final products that you can complete between the project start and end date (about 1 semester).
Other Writing Tips

• Be succinct.

• Short, simple sentences are better than wordy, complicated ones.

• Write for a lay audience.

• Avoid jargon.

• Do not cut-and-paste whole sentences or objectives from a description that someone else has written.
Exercise 4

Practice

7 minutes for this exercise
Examples and Discussion
Fall 2018 Changes

- Write a description or scope of work.
- Identify community engagement components.
- Select 5 competencies.
- Develop 2-5 learning objectives.
- Propose at least 2 final products.

Look for a revised “Competencies and Learning Objectives Guide” on our Training Materials and Orientation webpage.
Questions?

Please e-mail any questions about your practicum to Practicum@uth.tmc.edu.

This mailbox is checked regularly and is the quickest and most reliable way to receive a reply to your question.
Thank You!

Thank you for attending this workshop!

Good luck and have fun with your practicum.

2. Bloom’s Taxonomy pyramid graphic from Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching by Patricia Armstrong.


5. Project 1 examples for exercises 1-3 were adapted from a practicum completed by Tanu Uppal with the Galveston Bay Foundation. For a description of Tanu’s completed project, see “Water Quality Testing in Galveston Bay: Assessing Possible Sources of Bacteria in Galveston Bay.” Stories from the Field: Environmental & Occupational Health. Summer 2014.

6. Project 2 examples for exercises 1-3 were adapted from a practicum completed by Nimish Paripatyadar with Texas Children’s Hospital. For a description of Nimish’s completed project see “Corporate Wellness and Workplace Health: The Value of Worksite Wellness.” Stories from the Field: Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences. Spring 2013.

7. Project 3 practicum opportunity provided by Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children’s Hospital.