

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING AN INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT

Each student enrolled in a School of Business Internship negotiates a learning contract with a faculty sponsor. The learning contract outlines what you intend to accomplish on your internship, and how this will be evaluated. Think of the learning contract as a tool for generating shared expectations between you and your faculty sponsor. It is also a way to help you plan your internship and maximize your benefit from it. Given that an internship is intended to be a self-directed learning experience, *the student is responsible for developing the learning contract.*

Creating a Learning Contract: (to be completed before the internship begins)

- 1) Obtain written job objectives from your employer. Determine your faculty sponsor's expectations for the learning contract. Complete this step before the internship begins.
- 2) Draft a learning contract using the format outlined below. Submit the first draft of your learning contract to your faculty sponsor for approval before beginning the internship. Using feedback from your faculty sponsor revise the learning contract until it is approved. You are encouraged to discuss the development of the contract with your employer and to provide them with a copy of the final version.
- 3) Attach a copy of the Learning Contract to the School of Business Internship Approval Form and register for the course at the School of Business Office. [Note: under extenuating circumstances a student may be granted permission to register before the Learning Contract is finished.]

Learning Contract Format:

The School of Business Internship Approval Form includes a place for the student and faculty sponsor to sign to indicate their acceptance of the contract. It also includes a place for the employer and advisor or director to sign. If the approval form is not attached to these instructions, you may obtain a copy from the School of Business Office. **All applicable signatures must be present to register.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK EXPERIENCE [to be negotiated with employer]

- A. Job Description. Describe your role and responsibilities. Include a description of duties, tasks, and deadlines.
- B. Work Site Supervision Evaluation. Describe the supervision and assistance you will receive at the work site. How and when will your employer evaluate your work performance? Indicate if someone other than the supervisor listed on the internship approval form will evaluate your performance or if a form other than the one sent to the employer by the University is to be used, attach a copy.

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- A. Learning Goals. What do you plan to learn during this experience?
Goals may relate to:
 - * knowledge you hope to acquire about the organization, business practices, or the functioning of organizations in general,
 - * skills you hope to develop or apply, or
 - * insight you hope to gain into your career direction, your strengths and weaknesses, and your ability to operate in professional settings.

B. Learning Activities and Course Requirements. What activities will help you obtain each of your learning goals? Activities may be assigned by the employer as part of the job, required by the faculty sponsor for the course, or included for your own development. All students are **required** to:

- 1) **Meet with faculty sponsors periodically** to:
 - * address student questions,
 - * discuss the student's job performance and internship experience,
 - * discuss career opportunities and the student's career direction, and
 - * demonstrate accomplishment of the goals in the learning contract

- 2) **Prepare a midterm progress report memorandum**. The memo is to be directed and submitted to your employer, and copies given to your faculty sponsor and the internship coordinator. It should address the work accomplished during the period, problems encountered, a self-assessment of performance and the goals for the remainder of the internship. Ask your employer to meet with you to provide verbal feedback as well as written feedback that you can show your faculty sponsor. The latter can be brief, handwritten comments on your memo, or a separate memo, indicating the employer's agreement with your memo. An example memo is appended to this document..

- 3) **Submit a final paper/project and/or keep a journal**. The focus of this might be:
 - * A portfolio of the work you produced on-the-job and a reflective essay on that work.
 - * Reflection on the accomplishment of your learning goals.
 - * What insights did you gain about the field? What are your observations about organizations and professional roles and norms?
 - * How did the internship experience change your view of yourself and contribute to your professional development? What knowledge and skills were developed? What strengths and weaknesses were uncovered by the experience? How did you think, feel, and act in a professional setting, and how did others in that setting think, feel, and act toward you? What insights did you gain into your attitudes, values, and behaviors?
 - * How did the internship affect your academic or career plans?
 - * Reflect on your approach to problem resolution in organizations.
 - * How could you have benefited more from the internship experience?

- 4) **Act professionally on the job as a representative of USM and the School of Business**.

- 5) **Complete an evaluation of the internship experience**.
Students are encouraged to:
 - *Submit to the faculty sponsor an updated resume that includes the internship position.
 - *Consider activities such as job shadowing, informational interviews, conversations, attendance at meetings and workshops, observation, reading, self-assessment, and field trips.