Learning Plan Guide

Develop your own field practice learning plan for the semester, using the format shown on the attached file. Together with your field supervisor, define your goals and objectives, activities and set a schedule. Discuss the proposed learning plan with your supervisor and field practice coordinator and get approval to ensure that the learning plan is both feasible and realistic. The learning plan can reflect program, personal, and career development objectives, as well as technical and professional ones. Ask yourself what new skills, capabilities, habits, etc. you wish to develop during this semester.

Stating objectives enables you to translate your plan into action. The objectives should state what you will be able to do by the end of the semester; they should be clearly stated and measurable. Your learning plan will function as a tool, permitting you to focus on what you would like to accomplish and learn, to determine whether you have reached your objectives, and to assess your level of accomplishment.

Directions:

1. Identify learning objectives with the aid of your supervisor; they should be consistent with your program and personal goals. It may be helpful to state these in the order you are likely to work on them. Keep in mind that learning objectives can be renegotiated as necessary during the semester if implementation is impossible or somewhat modified.

2. Design learning activities which facilitate the translation of a learning objective into action. Learning activities are the specific tasks, projects, steps, processes necessary to achieve your objectives.

3. Indicators of achievement specify the means by which you and your supervisor can determine whether or not you met the objectives. Make sure your actions are “measurable.”

4. A completion date will guide your activities over the term and help you to organize and plan your time appropriately.

5. Your level of achievement is your own rating of your performance for each stated objective. Your assessment will be compared with both your field practice supervisor’s and the 492 coordinator’s at the end of the semester.

Guidelines for Developing a Learning Plan

A Learning Plan translates your learning objectives into action. Industry and government employ a management technique known as Management by Objectives. Your plan is a similar tool. It is one way of assuring that the necessary planning to achieve your learning objectives takes place. It also provides a means for you to determine whether you are reaching your objectives at a satisfactory level of achievement. The Plan normally should be completed by the
Prepare a worksheet (tabular form) for the Learning Plan with the following components:

1. Learning objectives that are challenging and consistent with your contract agreement should be identified (see section on Identifying Learning Objectives). They should be clear and specific so that you will know when you have accomplished them. It may be helpful to place these in the order in which you plan to work on them. If planning the implementation reveals weakness or problems with your objectives, they can be renegotiated with your Field Supervisor.

2. Actions planned are the specific activities, steps and processes necessary to achieve your objectives, listed in the order in which they should take place. What will you need to do in order to meet your objectives? What resources will you need? Will you be working with others? You should include only major methods and steps now; as you proceed, you may wish to develop more details.

3. Indicators of achievement specify the evidence that you and your Field Supervisor will use to determine how well you have met the objectives. Potential indicators of achievement might include the following types of evidence:
   a. A product such as a chart, list, poster or pamphlet
   b. A measure of how independently you can perform: with supervision, with minimal supervision, without supervision, or can teach a new person
   c. A standard for how quickly you can perform; i.e. how many minutes it should take you to complete a procedure
   d. A measure of accuracy, e.g. can hit the vein on the first poke 9 times out of 10, or can fill in patient charts without error

4. A completion date will guide your activities over the term and help you to plan the time so that you can accomplish what you wish in the field experience.

5. Your level of achievement (0 - 10) is your own rating of how well you achieved each objective. This will be assessed at the end of your field experience by you and your Field Supervisor.

As you develop your plan, discuss it with your Field Supervisor. Do not ask him or her to do it for you; use your own initiative first, then seek help when you need it. It may not be an easy task, but it is important to the total success of the field experience. You can feel reassured to know that the process is often difficult, and sometimes plans are not as workable as you anticipated. Your contract and Learning Plan are based on what you thought would or could happen. Seldom do we predict with complete accuracy.

Having to adjust your Plan during the semester does not necessarily indicate a weak plan, but is part of controlling the plan in action.
Identifying Learning Objectives

Learning objectives describe what you see as the educational benefits that you wish to gain from your field experience. These may include personal-social-career development objectives as well as technical and professional ones. As you write these objectives, think about the work you will be doing and ask yourself: What new skills, knowledge of insights do I want or need? How can I use skills and knowledge I have in this situation?

The categories below represent broad types of learning goals. Following each are some specific examples of learning outcomes that can be formulated as objectives.

1. Developing specific job competencies: Gaining particular knowledge or work skills, such as demonstrating effective methods of handling animals, describing program management, communicating with animal owners, preparing educational materials, or following safety procedures.

2. Exploring careers: Describing the daily work of professionals in an area of interest, identifying job opportunities that might be available, or summarizing occupational literature and organizations.

3. Broadening horizons: Acquiring some particular knowledge related to your field, e.g. describing how the legislative process works, navigating the bureaucracy of public agencies, clarifying the role commodity organizations play, or describing how a business contributes to community welfare or the economy.

4. Learning about work: Making your way through a complex hiring process, listing the fringe benefits and personnel policies that affect your welfare, describing how such practices are related to laws concerning employment.

5. Practicing interpersonal skills: Dealing with pressure, tension, and stress in work relations; communicating what you know to strangers; recognizing when to speak and when to listen in work relationships; handling criticism; or convincing a supervisor to try out an idea of yours.

6. Learning from the local environment: Describing the unique history, character, and philosophy of an area, an institution, a community, or workplace; using the special resources of an area to further your own knowledge of a particular interest such as social organizations, systems analysis, or the rural economy.

7. Taking responsibility: Organizing a complicated job, monitoring your own time and effort so that a tight schedule can be met, getting a piece of work done so that it fits in with the work of others, taking initiative in getting something difficult accomplished.

8. Learning skills: Seeking new information, organizing facts into a persuasive argument or course of action, relating academic knowledge to the demands of a particular job.
As you identify your learning objectives, each should include only one learning outcome rather than a combination of several outcomes. Use action verbs to describe the outcomes you desire, for example:

- interpret
- translate
- perform
- integrate
- analyze
- write
- obtain
- synthesize
- communicate
- improve
- observe
- describe
- practice
- demonstrate
- organize
- list
- examine
- differentiate
- evaluate
- relate
- explain
- develop
- articulate
- operate
- work
- identify
- conduct
- apply
- show
- prepare

Examples:

- To demonstrate problem-solving skills.
- To work effectively as part of a team.
- To improve interpersonal communication skills.
- To prepare accurate records.
- To evaluate feeding programs.
- To obtain histories from owners or clients.
- To translate research findings into educational materials.
- To practice and improve skills in...
- To prepare a report on the impact of government regulation on...

For each objective you specify, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is it observable? Will I know for sure when I have completed the objective? Will others know for sure?
2. Is the objective relevant to the goal? Is it really necessary to do the objective to get to the goal?
3. Is it challenging? Is it a big enough step?
4. Is it understandable? Will I remember what I meant six weeks from now? Or longer? Will others understand what I intend to do?

Examples of Vague and Concrete Learning Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vague</th>
<th>Concrete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn about...</td>
<td>To describe or list...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand...</td>
<td>To demonstrate...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain experience working with patients.</td>
<td>To counsel a patient.</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To examine a patient.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To collect/file patient data.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To learn about working in a vet clinic.</th>
<th>To describe the duties of ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To use correct veterinary terms for common conditions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To assist the veterinarian in performing ...</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To understand how to work with patients and people needing to go on diets</th>
<th>To compile a list of common foods high in fiber</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To develop two lessons for teaching nutrition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To give two demonstrations about low-impact exercises</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To know about working in a fitness center</th>
<th>To demonstrate correct use of equipment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To use correct terminology when communicating with fitness staff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To work with at least two clients on...</td>
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**Learning Objectives and Actions Planned**

Objective: What you are going to learn  
Actions: How you are going to learn it.  
Achievement: How well have you learned it  
Completion: When you are done with that objective  
Each objective should have matching actions, evaluation of achievement, and completion time.

Objective: To learn a particular skill, eg sterilization

Example Actions:
- Watch it demonstrated or get instructions
- Learn what preparation needs to be done, eg wrapping the instruments
- Ask or read about why it is done this way, read the instruction manual, learn the gauges
- Practice until you can do it right
- Find out what problems may arise, how to recognize them, and how to deal with them, eg what if there is a leak?
Make notes as needed, keep records
Keep practicing until you are fast and efficient
Demonstrate your skill or be able to teach a new person

Objective: To describe the facility

Example Actions:
Find out:
   When it was established
   How it is organized
   Who the clients are
   Who the competitors are
   What the goals are
   How it is funded
   How many staff there are and what they do
Write a summary for the final report

Objective: To improve communication skills

Example Actions:
   Be sure to ask questions if unclear/active listening
   Ask client to repeat what you told them
   Phone skills: take messages, make appointments
   Take histories
   Learn co-worker/client names
   Check client files before they come in so you are ready to help