



American University European Union Program Fall 2015

INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT

At the beginning of the internship, you will develop a Internship Learning Contract and use it to monitor your progress throughout the semester. The exact assignment for the Learning Contract follows this syllabus. The learning contract itself is due on the Monday before the third week of your internship. During the semester, two internship practicum meetings will be held in which you and your fellow students will share your internship experiences in order to seek ways to improve what you are learning from the internship. You will take an oral final examination by appointment from Monday 7 December to Wednesday 9 December. The process is explained in detail below in five steps.

The internship is an experiential learning course. Unlike normal college lecture courses that you are accustomed to, no one will tell you what you should be learning at your internship. Indeed, the lessons that each student will learn will differ, depending upon each student's interests. Thus, the objectives of this learning contract are as follows:

- To make your learning process more active, conscious and productive.
- To make you decide what you intend to learn and accomplish from the experience.
- To develop an understanding between you and your internship supervisor about your mutual intentions and expectations of the internship.
- To develop a set of criteria and techniques for evaluating your internship experience.

The following are your instructions for developing and implementing your internship learning contract:

Step I: The Interview Weeks

During your interview weeks, think about why you want an internship. Write down on a sheet of paper what you want to learn or achieve. Be as specific and detailed as possible. For example, "I want to learn about EU politics" is not as clear and focused as "I want to learn how businesses lobby the EU: which individuals they target and how they can influence those individuals." Prioritize these learning goals, and think about how you will be able to measure your progress in achieving them. Keep these written goals. You will bring them to the final oral exam.

ARTIFACT: Draft Goals

Step II: The First Week at the Internship

Use your first week on the job to get to learn more about the organization, its activities, and the role that you as an intern will play in the organization. With this background, think about how well (or not) your current internship responsibilities will fulfill your objectives. You should also think about what additional internship activities you think you could do that would help you meet your learning objectives. Make sure to arrange an appointment with your supervisor for next week to review the proposed learning contract. At the end of this week, create a first draft of the learning contract, according to the format provided. Again, keep this first draft of the learning contract. You will bring it to the final oral exam.

ARTIFACT: First draft of learning contract

Step III: Finalizing the Learning Contract

Meet with your supervisor to discuss your learning contract. Show your supervisor your draft of the learning contract. Discuss how realistic your objectives are and the possibilities of creating other activities to meet your objectives, if needed. In light of this discussion, prepare a formal final version of your learning contract and sign the learning contract. Submit the contract to Professor Thomas on the Monday before you begin your third week at the internship.

ARTIFACT: Formal final version of your learning contract.

Step IV: Internship Practicums

Twice during the semester, on Wednesday 7 October and on Thursday 5 November, you and your fellow students will meet in an internship practicum to share your internship experience and learn from each other about ways to enhance what you are learning from the internship. To prepare for these meetings, look at your Internship Learning Contract again and review your goals. Prepare a written reflection to bring to the practicum that addresses questions like these:

- Are you making progress toward your learning objectives? If so, why? If not, why not?
- What efforts are you making to achieve your learning objectives?
- Do you need to change your activities to meet more objectives?
- Do you still want to learn those objectives?
- Have you developed new objectives or decided to delete other objectives?
- Have you discussed your progress toward learning objectives with your supervisor?

ARTIFACTS: Written reflections for practicums

Step V: Final Evaluation

From Monday 7 December to Wednesday 9 December, you will take an individual oral examination with Professor Thomas. This examination will cover the following topics:

- Your Initial Objectives: Did you meet your initial objectives? If so, why? If not, why not? What efforts did you make to fulfill your learning objectives? What could you have done differently? Were your initial objectives realistic?
- Your New Objectives: Did your learning objectives change over the course of the internship? If so, why? Did you develop new objectives that you did not consider

at the beginning of the internship? Did you achieve these new objectives and why?

- **Your Learning:** What did you learn from this internship experience? After you leave Brussels, how do you intend to use what you learned at the internship?

This is an examination. Prepare answers to these questions in advance, anticipate follow-up questions from Professor Thomas, and remember that you are graded according to your performance.

ARTIFACTS: In addition to initial goals and learning contracts, prepare a range of evidence for your learning to bring to the oral examination. These artifacts do not necessarily have to be work you've done, but should tell the story of your learning experience or support your learning claims. Artifacts could be video, photos, articles, emails, diagrams, etc.

**FORMAT FOR THE
INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT**

INTERN: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

List in order of priority your goals for your internship and what you wish to accomplish.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Describe in as much detail as possible your role and responsibilities in the organization in order of priority. List your duties, projects, deadlines, etc.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Discuss what you will learn from your responsibilities that were originally not part of your learning objectives.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Describe how you intend to meet your learning objectives. In doing so, discuss how the activities you will be doing both on and off the job that will enhance your learning on the job.

SUPERVISION

Describe the supervision you will be provided on the job. What kind of instruction, assistance, consultation, etc. you will receive and from whom?

EVALUATION

Describe how you will evaluate whether or not you have met your learning objectives. Describe the criteria you think the supervisor should use to evaluate you.

PLEDGE

I promise that I will make every effort to meet the learning objectives that I have set for myself at this internship.

Your Signature

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP LEARNING CONTRACT

INTERN: Jane Louise Doe

ORGANIZATION: My Association (MA)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) To learn how a professional office environment functions.
- 2) To improve my communications skills, especially my ability to write and to conduct business telephone conversations.
- 3) To learn more about how my major in international affairs can be used in the world of business.
- 4) To make contacts with people who will help me get a job later on.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Assist in the overall smooth functioning of office operations by answering the telephone, writing correspondence, filing, acting as the receptionist when needed, taking notes in meetings, and other such duties.
- 2) Perform background research on legislative issues affecting MA under consideration in Parliament. Research involves consulting libraries, telephone inquiries, and field visits. Will report findings in a briefing paper to the supervisor by a pre-determined date.
- 3) Assist with maintaining library and database records on an as need basis. Tasks include clipping articles and filing in appropriate folders, entering cataloged information into a database, and locating resource materials as needed.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- 1) I can learn new office skills like library management and how to manipulate an Access Database.
- 2) My supervisor will take me to business luncheons and meetings with clients.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1) By assisting in the smooth functioning of the office, I will learn how a professional office environment functions.
- 2) By writing correspondence and making telephone calls I will improve my business communication skills.
- 3) By performing research on European Parliament legislative initiatives I will see how my Brussels Semester courses and SIS major are relevant to the business world.
- 4) By putting forward a professional face at the office, attending business luncheons and other functions, I will make contacts which should help me for the future.

SUPERVISION

My supervisor, Mr. Smith, will meet with me weekly to monitor the progress of my research and learn about the implications of my findings. I will receive instruction on what to do around the office from Ms. Jones, who will also give me a general orientation and assist me as needed in performing general office tasks.

EVALUATION

I will have met my learning objectives if:

- 1) I see improvement in my writing skills.
- 2) I gain greater self-confidence on the telephone and in business meetings.
- 3) I see one issue that I learned about in class have an impact on the business.
- 4) my supervisor offers to serve as a reference for me in the future.

My supervisor will give me an excellent evaluation if I arrive at the office when I am scheduled to arrive, do all assigned tasks punctually and cheerfully, show initiative and act professionally.

PLEDGE

I promise that I will make every effort to meet the learning objectives that I have set for myself at MA his semester.

Jane Louise Doe