

## Developing a Student Learning Plan

### Objective of a Learning Plan

A learning objective identifies an educational outcome related to a student's knowledge, skills and attitudes. A learning plan is a joint agreement (that can evolve over time) between a preceptor/supervisor and student where the objectives of the learning experience, the activities to accomplish the learning objectives, and the means by which the educational effort will be evaluated are identified.

Learning objectives/plans can be used to measure educational outcomes and can serve to:

- Encourage learners to take responsibility for their own education by asking them to design learning experiences that best match their individual learning styles, and by allowing them input into the means of evaluation.
- Foster emergence of strategies for effective performance.
- Increase attention to relevant aspects of the task.
- Encourage persistence in behavior.
- Stimulate effort.

Learning objectives should include a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time Limited) goal statement, and include strategies to attain the objective.

### Preceptors/Supervisors Role

As all learners do not share the same interests or needs, nor do they arrive with the same skill sets, backgrounds and life experiences, therefore deliberate, collaborative development of learning objectives will allow preceptors/supervisors to individualize learning experiences and optimize learner resources and experiences. Objectives need to match the students' needs and the resources available.

Preceptors/Supervisors should help their students develop learning objectives that:

- Target improved student learning
- Target personal, professional and technical skill development
- Target efficient and effective use of available expertise and resources for student learning
- Target collaborative practice skills through interprofessional education experiences

What Factors do Preceptors/Supervisors need to Consider?

- Unique opportunities available at the site and their suitability for student involvement
- Staffing expertise and availability
- Interprofessional Educational opportunities for students
- Facility constraints

## Students Role

Students should develop learning objectives that:

- Target clinical skills specific to a particular site or population (e.g. assessment, intervention methods, etc.)
- Target those skill sets transferable to many clinical settings (e.g. documentation, time management, etc.)
- Target collaborative practice skills

What Factors do Students need to Consider?

- Transferable skills brought to the placement from previous clinical experiences
- Potential site-specific opportunities
- Perceived clinical strengths, weaknesses and challenges
- Previously identified goals for improvement

## Remember...

Developing useful learning objectives will ensure that the preceptor/supervisor is providing the student with the best possible learning experience - one that capitalizes on the opportunities and expertise available in the facility, meets placement requirements, and is consistent with facility requirements and workload challenges.

Developing useful learning objectives, preceptor/supervisor and student in collaboration, will ensure that an achievable plan clearly outlines expectations, specifies processes, and includes an objective evaluation process.