



## What are learning goals?

In supervised ministry, you have the opportunity to guide and direct your own learning. You are responsible for working with your site to meet the needs of the site while also developing skills, knowledge, and behaviors that are necessary for pastoral ministry. In order to ensure you make progress toward those things you most want to learn, it is essential to write appropriate learning goals.

Learning goals are goals that direct your learning in clear and directive ways. Learning goals specify not only *what* you want to learn, but also *how* you want to go about learning.

Learning goals are different from other kinds of goals you might want to set for your internship because you are the audience for the goal. Below are different types of goals that you might construct for your internship that are **not** learning goals:

- **Production-oriented goal:** I will preach six times this semester.  
This goal is written with a focus on the product, or the thing(s) you will accomplish during your time. It does not focus on what you will learn through practicing your preaching.
- **Site-oriented goal:** I will start a new program that attracts five new participants.  
This goal is written with an outcome for the site as the focus, or the things the site will gain from your time. It does not focus on what you will learn or how you will learn it.
- **Task-oriented goal:** I will workout four times per week at my local gym.  
This goal is written with a specific repetitive task or behavior in mind. It does not focus on your learning, growth, or development over time.

## How to Write Good Learning Goals

First, consider *what* you want to learn. Your site may have some already established needs that you are excited to help meet as an intern, but what do you want to learn for yourself as you meet those needs? For instance, if your site needs someone to preach regularly, what are some specific things you could learn through the practice of preaching? If your site needs someone to participate in visitation, what are you interested in learning that would help you in this area?

Consider the acronym A.S.K.

**Attitudes:** What sorts of ways of thinking or behaving are appropriate to the needs of the site? What behaviors might I want to try or adopt for specific tasks or skills being requested of me?

**Skills:** What particular skills would I like to test or practice during my internship? What skills do I want to improve or enhance for my future ministries?

**Knowledge:** What specific knowledge or kinds/ways of knowing would assist me in completing the necessary tasks of my internship?

Examples of *what* you might want to learn in your internship:

- I want to learn more about active listening. (skill)
- I want to approach conflict more reflectively. (attitude)
- I am interested in trying to preach from an outline. (skill)
- Could I better apply scripture for a particular congregational setting? (knowledge)



Next, consider *how* you want to learn. Learning requires action from the learner. What must you do in order to see a change in behavior or attitude? What must you do in order to develop or grow in a particular skill? What must you do to develop or enhance certain kinds of knowledge or knowing?

Below is a summary chart of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy of Learning. Briefly, Bloom’s learning verbs are commonly used in education to define learning outcomes for courses. Instructors use these verbs to define *how* students will learn particular things in their courses.

**Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy of Learning – Learning Verbs**

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Choose	Classify	Choose	Categorize	Appraise	Combine
Describe	Defend	Dramatize	Classify	Judge	Compose
Define	Demonstrate	Explain	Compare	Criticize	Construct
Label	Distinguish	Generalize	Differentiate	Defend	Design
List	Explain	Judge	Distinguish	Compare	Develop
Locate	Express	Organize	Identify	Assess	Formulate
Match	Extend	Paint	Infer	Conclude	Hypothesize
Memorize	Give Examples	Prepare	Point out	Contrast	Invent
Name	Illustrate	Produce	Select	Critique	Make
Omit	Indicate	Select	Subdivide	Determine	Originate
Recite	Interrelate	Show	Survey	Grade	Organize
Select	Interpret	Sketch	Arrange	Justify	Plan
State	Infer	Solve	Breakdown	Measure	Produce
Count	Match	Use	Combine	Rank	Role Play
Draw	Paraphrase	Add	Detect	Rate	Drive
Outline	Represent	Calculate	Diagram	Support	Devise
Point	Restate	Change	Discriminate	Test	Generate
Quote	Rewrite	Classify	Illustrate		Integrate
Recall	Select	Complete	Outline		Prescribe
Recognize	Show	Compute	Point out		Propose
Repeat	Summarize	Discover	Separate		Reconstruct
Reproduce	Tell	Divide			Revise
	Translate	Examine			Rewrite
	Associate	Graph			Transform
	Compute	Interpolate			
	Convert	Manipulate			
	Discuss	Modify			
	Estimate	Operate			
	Extrapolate	Subtract			
	Generalize				
	Predict				



Examples of adding learning verbs to direct your learning:

- I will *demonstrate* active listening through appropriate body language and eye contact.
- I will *outline* conflict situations and *discuss* changes to my approach with my supervisor.
- I will *prepare* an outline to preach from alongside my script.
- I will *identify* appropriate commentaries and language tools to apply scripture to this congregational setting.

Lastly, consider how you will know that you learned what you set out to learn. What is the benchmark for accomplishment? This does not have to be a firm benchmark. Learning goals should be focused on growth and development through practice rather than rigid achievement.

Examples of adding benchmarks for accomplishment to direct your learning:

- I will demonstrate active listening through appropriate body language and eye contact and journal about any changes I observe after at least three listening opportunities.
- I will outline conflict situations, discuss changes to my approach with my supervisor, and request summative evaluation of my progress from my supervisor.
- I will prepare an outline to preach from alongside my script and preach sections of three sermons using the outline.
- I will identify appropriate commentaries and language tools to apply scripture to this congregational setting and request feedback on the appropriateness from my guidance committee.

### Next Steps - Completing the Learning Covenant

After constructing learning goals that are centered around your learning; focusing on the attitudes, skills, or knowledge you are interested in gaining; and including some sort of benchmark for making progress in learning, your SPM Learning Covenant will dive deeper. You will be asked to add three things:

- A description of the responsibilities or methods for learning – these are the things that you’ll actually be doing in order to make progress in your learning which might include practicing, utilizing resources, reflecting, etc.
- A set of resources to assist in your learning, literary, human, and denominational or site
- The feedback or evaluation tools you will use to document progress in your learning – this includes things like meetings with supervisor and/or guidance committee, surveys, accountability partner sharing, watching a recording of yourself, etc.

These items should lay out a relatively complete action plan for making progress on the things you’ve set out to learn in your internship. They should be clear, detailed, and easily understood by you, your supervisor, and your guidance committee.

### A Note about Accomplishment

Learning is not always a linear process. In fact, some of our best learning can come from missteps and failures along the way. Setting learning goals isn’t meant to be about ensuring your success in accomplishing the goals you set out to accomplish. Setting good learning goals is meant to ensure you are learning. You may try a new habit or skill and learn that it is just not authentic to you. Great! Shift your goal in a meaningful way and keep learning! You may set a goal that was too easy and you accomplish it nearly immediately. Don’t stop there! Dive deeper or set a new goal to continue expanding and developing. Successful supervised ministry is defined, not by the success of the programs you run or the sermons you preach, but by your openness to learning, trying, growing, and developing under the care and direction of mentors, supervisors, guiding committees, peers, and congregations.