**THE LEARNING CONTRACT**

The Learning Contract (LC) details the UWW student's individualized degree program. It is developed by the student in consultation with the UWW Advisor and the student's academic and community advisors. The LC demands thoughtful and deliberate educational planning, implementation and evaluation by all parties involved. It should be a comprehensive document: a blueprint of the student's UWW program, describing in detail the prior learning competencies and the proposed learning competencies the student will develop during UWW participation.

**Learning Contract Guidelines**

The Learning Contract should:

* adequately address UWW's programmatic requirements of depth, breadth, and effective communication;
  + **Depth** is defined as substantial knowledge and understanding in a specific area of academic expertise.
  + **Breadth** refers to subjects other than the depth area: comparable to general education. Learning in breadth must include competencies in five academic disciplines: Fine Arts, Humanities, Behavioral/Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Interdisciplinary/Professional Studies.
  + **Effective Communication** refers to both written and spoken English skills, and may include other languages, forms and media as well.
* Provide evidence that the student's program is an integration of experiential and theoretical knowledge of **practice and theory** in the depth area;
* insure that the student addresses questions of values and ethics through exploring ideological perspectives other than his/her own;
* describe prior learning competencies and proposed learning competencies;
* clearly state the learning goals, what resources and activities will be necessary to meet the goals, and how the learning will be documented.

The e Learning Contract is the **formal** statement of your UWW program. Use your UWW application to help you create the first draft of your Learning Contract.

The Learning Contract must have six sections:

* PRIOR LEARNING IN DEPTH
* UWW LEARNING IN DEPTH
* PRIOR LEARNING IN BREADTH (organized by 5 academic disciplines)
* UWW LEARNING IN BREADTH (organized by 5 academic disciplines)
* PRIOR LEARNING IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
* UWW LEARNING IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

The Learning Contract should not exceed 30 pages.

**More information about BREADTH:**

The UWW requirement of breadth refers to those subject areas usually referred to as the "liberal arts" or general education requirements. Breadth refers to exposure to a variety of subjects other than the student's depth area and is similar to the University's general education distribution areas. UWW students must include competencies in Fine Arts, Humanities, Behavioral/Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Interdisciplinary/Professional Studies in their Learning Contract. UWW students are required to demonstrate competencies in a minimum of two subjects in **each** of these five areas:

**FINE ARTS**: Art, Media and Theatre, Music (including Dance)

**HUMANITIES**: Communication, English, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Linguistics, Philosophy

**BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL SCIENCES**: Anthropology, Economics, Geography and Environmental Studies, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology

**NATURAL SCIENCES**: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physics

**INTERDISCIPLINARY/PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**: Computer Science, Justice Studies, Mathematics, Social Work, all academic disciplines offered in the College of Business and Management and the College of Education.

NOTE: These subject areas may fit into social science or humanities breadth areas, depending on the characteristics of the course or other activity:

* Women’s Studies
* Latino and Latin American Studies
* African American Studies
* Computer Science

Consult your advisors to determine specific activities’ fit with breadth areas.

**Getting Started on the Learning Contract**

A systematic strategy is the best approach to take in formulating your LC. As you begin to develop your LC, carefully consider the following:

**Prior Learning** -- What competencies (college-level knowledge and skills) do you possess? Through what experiences and activities did you acquire these competencies? Which programmatic area does each competency relate?

Indicate all the post-secondary learning experiences that you have had in relationship to UWW requirements. Be sure to consider competencies acquired through a variety of means: formal education, job experience, community work, CLEP or other proficiency examinations or tests, seminars, and workshops attended or conducted, teaching experiences, research projects, structured reading programs, etc. During your UWW participation, you must document each competency that has been acquired. You may restate the prior learning sections of your application in the LC format. Be as thorough as you can.

**UWW (Proposed/New) Learning** -- Determine what knowledge and skills in the areas of depth, breadth, and effective communication, you seek to acquire during UWW participation. In consultation with each of your advisors, assess the available learning resources--both on and off-campus--and determine what activities, books, workshops, projects, and other learning experiences you will incorporated into your UWW program. Include formal course work and other structured learning activities in your program. Also include how you will fulfill those University graduation requirements you have not yet fulfilled.

* Identify and describe new learning and competencies planned for each programmatic
* Identify resources and activities needed to achieve the new learning
* Describe the evidence that will be used to demonstrate the learning achievement.

**SAMPLE LEARNING CONTRACT**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Learning Objective/  Accomplishment | When, Where | Learning Resources, Experiences, Activities | Documentation |
| 1. Developed skills in supervising employees (both counseling and clerical) | 2007 – 2008  Haymarket Center | In-services and workshops; on-the-job training | In-service handouts; performance reviews |
| 1. To learn effective management skills for cash flow and to operate a facility within budget parameters | 2008 – present  Gateway Foundation | In-services; seminars, on-the-job training | In-service handouts; performance reviews |
| C. Demonstrate the ability to teach reading, writing, math, pre-vocational training and self-help skills to students with cognitive impairment | 2008 – present  Molloy Education Center | Work as a classroom aide at Molloy and participate in ongoing evaluation of my work with supervisor | Meeting agenda;  Performance evaluations; |

Be sure to state your learning goals and objectives in active terms. Some action words that may be helpful as you determine what knowledge and skills you will develop are:

administer construct supervise direct

establish implement guide create

maintain teach evaluate analyze

develop plan manage improve

learn design organize negotiate

write produce exhibit train

prepare coordinate edit research

**Documentation**

Activity is not automatically evidence that one is skilled or knowledgeable. Documented evidence of competence is the key to your UWW program. You are required to provide adequate and appropriate documentation for all of the prior and proposed new learning included in your program. You must submit documentation of your UWW learning with your Semester Reports.

Documentation may include transcripts, letters of evaluation from supervisors, case studies, written papers, audio or video tapes, journals, work-related reports, special projects, publications, work samples, exhibits, annotated bibliographies, certificates, etc. How you document your competencies should be discussed with your advisors and the UWW advisor.

**Stages in the Learning Contract (LC) Approval Process**

* Attend a UWW New Student Orientation.
* Develop the LC in consultation with the, community advisor, UWW advisor, and academic advisor if one has been assigned; students without an academic advisor develops a LC draft in consultation with the community advisor and UWW advisor; student revises as required.
* A potential academic advisor is found for the student. Student arranges to meet with potential advisor. An Academic Advisor Confirmation Form is completed by both parties and forwarded to UWW Office.
* Revise draft in concert with the advisors' feedback.
* Submit the original LC that has been signed by the student, the academic advisor and the community advisor, along with LC Analysis/Approval Forms completed by both advisors to UWW for final approval.
* Student and the advisors receive notification of approval or request for revision from the UWW advisor.

THE LEARNING CONTRACT SHOULD BE DEVELOPED DURING THE STUDENT'S FIRST SEMESTER BECAUSE PROGRESS IN FUTURE SEMESTERS WILL BE MEASURED BY COMPLETION OF GOALS LISTED IN THE LC**.**

* Minor changes in the LC may be made during UWW participation by noting the changes in the Semester Report.
* Major alterations of the LC should be submitted to UWW as a revised LC signed by both advisors and accompanied by new LC Analysis/Approval forms

**IMPORTANT: Final academic requirements of a student's UWW program are determined by the Graduation Review Board.**

**Developing the Learning Contract**

The Learning Contract (LC) provides a vehicle for making the planning of learning experiences a mutual undertaking between a student and his/her academic advisor, community advisor, and other resource people such as teachers, mentors, supervisors, etc. This collaboration and partnership will:

* support diagnosing learning needs
* identify past learning accomplishments
* formulate new learning objectives
* identify learning resources
* choose learning strategies/experiences and activities
* identify means of documenting the learning and how the learning will be

evaluated,

* will help the student develop a sense of ownership and commitment to the LC.

It is recommended that students take the following steps when developing their LC:

**Step 1:** Identify your past college/university level learning accomplishments. What knowledge and skills do you already possess? When, where, and how did you gain each competency? How will you document or demonstrate what you have learned? Who has or could evaluate the quality of your documentation?

**Step 2:** Diagnose your learning needs. A learning need is the gap between where you are now and where you want to be in regard to a specific set of competencies. What competencies do you think ought to be required for someone acquiring a bachelor's degree in your proposed depth area? You may wish to consult a university catalog that offers a degree in your depth area, or discuss required competencies with a professional (perhaps one or more of your human resources) in the field.

**Step 3:** Specify your learning objectives. Each of the learning needs you diagnosed in step 2 should be translated into a learning objective. **Be sure your objectives describe what you will learn, not what you will do to learn.**

**Step 4:** Specify learning resources and activities. How do you propose accomplishing each objective? Identify the resources (human and material) you plan to use.

**Step 5:** Specify the documentation or evidence of accomplishment. Describe what documentation you will collect to demonstrate that you have met each objective.

**Step 6:** Specify how the documentation will be evaluated. Evaluation involves making judgements about the quality of the learning accomplished. Your advisors or experts in specific fields can review and attest to the quality of the documented learning.

**Step 7:** Review the draft of your LC with your advisors: send a copy to them and arrange a time to meet with them to review the LC draft. Be open to their reactions and suggestions.

**Step 8:** Revise the LC in accordance with your advisors' recommendations. When advisors find your LC to be fully acceptable, they each must sign the LC and complete a LC Analysis/Approval Form. Your LC, forms and documentation are then submitted to UWW for final approval.

**Prior Learning**

Prior learning refers to college-level competencies you acquired after high school until the date you were admitted to UWW. When preparing the prior learning section of your LC, you will write in the past tense, and indicate what competencies you have already acquired and accomplished.

**UWW (Proposed/New) Learning**

New learning refers to college-level competencies you acquired or will acquire after your admission to UWW. When preparing this section of your LC, write in future tense about what learning is to be acquired.

*Note: Sample Learning Contracts are available for your review in B-147.*