



Being a Self-Advocate When Building Experience

Part of being career ready is knowing how to advocate for yourself. Self-advocacy can be defined as an “action of representing oneself or one’s views or interests.” As you build experience outside of the classroom, it’s important for you to know how to advocate for yourself in order to get the most personal and professional growth out of your experiences.

This guide will help you:

- Knowing what self-advocacy means and the benefits
- Identify strengths and the learning environments beneficial to your personal and professional development
- Develop learning outcomes to get the most growth out of your experiences
- Understand laws and rules regarding compensation and benefits for internships

What Does it Mean to be a Self-Advocate?

- Believe in yourself
- Speak up for yourself
- Ability to communicate your learning goals
- Understand your rights and responsibilities
- Reach out to others when help is needed
- Know your strengths
- Articulate your values

Benefits of Being a Self-Advocate

- Find experiences that allow you to work from your strengths
- Create a sense of ownership during the learning experience
- Build self-confidence
- Advance levels of competency in sense of self, communication and critical thinking
- Create your own learning goals
- Develop independence and self-empowerment
- Develop self-determination skills
- Secure experiences that provide financial benefits
- Find solutions to challenges

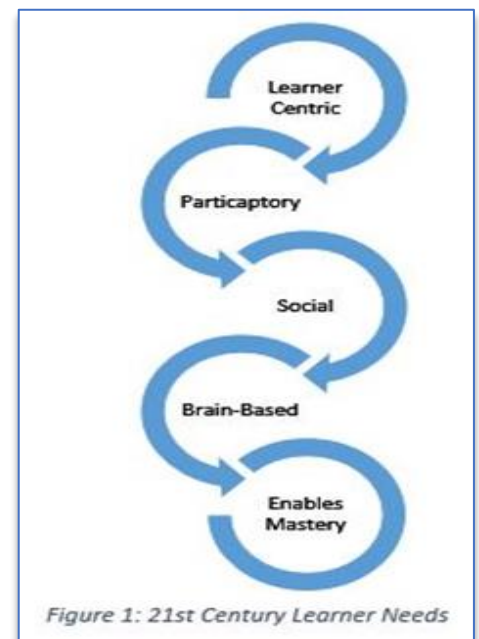
Learning Environment for Today’s Learners

As an individual, you have diverse learning strengths and abilities compared to your peers. Additionally, generational trends in learning may impact an institutions approach to teaching. Today’s learners are seeking more out of the classroom learning opportunities to help connect classroom learning with the real world experiences needed to be career ready.



Focusing on your professional, academic and personal growth, use the five core pillars below to help you find out of classroom learning experiences that will help you prepare for your next steps.

- **Learner Centric** – The learning experience can be personalized and adapted to address your learning needs. Questions to consider:
 - Does the experience allow me to work from my strengths?
 - Will I develop competencies that can be beneficial and transferable to any work environment?
 - Have I considered my interests outside my major when selecting my experiences?
- **Participatory** – The learning experience can be active and enable multi-sensory engagement. Questions to consider:
 - Will I only be responsible for answering phone calls, running errands, entering data, scheduling patients, etc.?
 - Or will I be working with staff on projects, attending meetings, getting a full understanding of what it takes to work daily in the learning environment?
- **Social** – Outside learning environments can foster collaboration and connection with individuals or groups of people where you have the opportunity to engage in:
 - Group projects
 - Meetings
 - Committees
 - Outreach
- **Brain-Based** – The learning experience should develop knowledge and understanding, connecting classroom content with real world application. To ensure the experience incorporates learning you should:
 - Develop learning outcomes with your supervisor to include knowledge, skill, career, and personal development.
 - Include reflection before, during and after the experience (Refer to the “How You Build Experience @ UF” Handout for guiding reflection questions)
- **Enables “Mastery”** – The learning experience should enable you to transfer knowledge and skills by applying them in new contexts. Questions to consider:
 - Are you able to apply the knowledge and skills developed from previous coursework and experiences to a new real world learning environment?





Develop Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes help you and the host organization focus on specific areas of learning. These outcomes help you maximize your time spent in a learning experience to ensure learning that enables mastery. Learning outcomes are precise statements that focus on four areas of development:

- Knowledge Development
- Skill Development
- Career Development
- Personal Development

Compensation and Benefits

Compensation

As a student there will be opportunities, especially during internships, where you will learn and work in real world settings that will either be credit bearing or non-credit bearing, paid or unpaid. As a self-advocate, familiarizing yourself with the rules and laws governing financial compensation for interns can assist you in identifying the experiences most beneficial to you both developmentally and financially.

During the interview you will have an opportunity to ask questions. Take this time to ask questions related to the criteria for unpaid internships on the following page. Remember this is not the time to negotiate a salary. At this point all you are doing is gathering information to assist you when evaluating the position. Topics related to compensation for unpaid internships to consider are:

- The training opportunities for the internship
- The beneficiary of your work
- Employment opportunities at the conclusion of the internship
- Costs incurred as a result of the internship (i.e. parking)

Learning Outcomes Quick Tips:

Learning outcomes should:

- Be **SMART** – Specific, Measureable Attainable, Results-focused, & Time-focused
- Use action verbs to illustrate you are doing something
- Describe your roles & responsibilities
- Serve as the basis for the evaluation and validation of learning gained from the experience

Tips for Negotiating a Paid Internship

1. *Do your research* – Know the market value for paid internships with similar positions. [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) is a great tool to research intern pay
2. *Ask open-ended questions* – Find out how you and your skills can be best put to use
3. *Play up your skills and experiences* – Everyone granted an interview is “qualified” use your skills and experiences to set you apart from the other candidates
4. *Have a number in mind* - Start negotiating with a higher wage than what you intend to end at. Remember to be realistic in your negotiation. Do not price yourself out of the experience.

Remember that the Career Connections Center is here to help you evaluate learning experiences and assist you in preparing for the negotiation process if needed.



If further discussions need to take place once an offer has been made please schedule a Career Planning Appointment with a CRC staff member in Gator CareerLink (GCL), Topic # 5 – Finding an Internship, Externship or Co-op or Topic #7 – Interviewing Preparation.

The seven criteria listed were developed from the Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA) Fact Sheet #71 and updated by the US Department of Labor in January 2018.

Remember to be mindful that internship host organizations do not have to meet all seven of the criteria listed in order to classify your position as an intern. Accordingly, as an intern or student your classification as an employee under the FLSA necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of your case.

Criteria	Unpaid	Paid
The intern and employer clearly understand there is no expectation of compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You and the organization understand prior to the internship that you are not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is any promise of compensation, expressed or implied, suggests you are an employee
The internship training environment is similar to the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The training is similar to training you would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The training is similar to what would be provided to any new employee of the internship host organization
The internship is tied to a formal education program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internship integrates coursework with the out-of-classroom experience You receive academic credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internship does not integrate coursework You do not receive academic credit
The internship aligns with UF's academic calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internship host organization accommodates your academic commitments, giving you the time needed to satisfy all academic requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internship host organization <u>does not</u> provide accommodation for your academic commitments
The duration of the internship is limited to the period in which the internship provides beneficial learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time you spend at the host organization should be focused on the knowledge and skill development tied to your academic program and listed in the internship learning objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time you spend at the host organization is spent focusing on tasks and responsibilities do not promote learning the knowledge
The interns work should not displace an employee and should provide you with significant educational benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work as the intern should not displace regular employees You work under close supervision of supervisor and existing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You as the intern do work that a regular employee could complete or be hired to do
The intern is not entitled to a paid job at the completion of the internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You and the employer understand that you are not entitled to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You understand that you may have the opportunity for paid job at the conclusion of the internship

For more detailed and up-to-date information please review the Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA) Fact Sheet #71

Benefits

If financial compensation is not offered you can request alternated forms of compensation.

These may include:

- Parking/Decal Assistance
- Transportation Stipend
- Relocation Stipend (i.e., transportation and housing)
- Being paired with a mentor