

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT INTERNSHIP & CO-OP GUIDE

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DEFINITIONS & GETTING STARTED

Both internships & co-ops are work/learning experiences that provide a hands-on way for students to confirm their choice of major and/or career while gaining practical work experience. Both types of experiences include professional development and opportunities for learning.

INTERNSHIPS: Part-time, paid or unpaid positions that may last one semester or longer, and may be for academic credit, during which students also take classes.

CO-OPS: Full-time, paid positions that last approximately 6 months, over the course of a semester, during which students do not typically take classes.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR SEARCH:

- PLANNING:** Finding the right position requires a great deal of time and commitment to self-reflection. It also requires research about industries, organizations, and positions.
- EXPECTATIONS:** Be realistic with your expectations prior to applying for a position and accepting an interview. Research company details to ensure that they are a good fit with your expectations.
- APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:** An updated and tailored résumé, cover letter, and references page must be created. Remember that these documents take time to put together. The Center for Career Development (CCD) staff is available to help you in creating and customizing these items.
- PROFESSIONAL MATURITY:** Are you ready to devote up to 40 hours per week, work with a variety of individuals who are different from you, and to be off-line during business hours?
- COST:** Consider costs; such as new clothing, course credit, commuting expenditures, and living expenses.

WHERE OR WHEN TO START?

Typically, to allow for maximum options, your search should begin about six months before you plan to work. Here is a quick list of steps to help you search for an internship or co-op opportunity regardless of your start date. More on each step will be provided throughout this guide.

- Prepare for Your Search
- Gather and Create Application Materials
- Identify Opportunities
- Apply for Positions
- Prepare for the Internship or Co-op Experience

**PREPARE FOR
YOUR SEARCH**

REFLECT AND EXPLORE

The first step in preparing for your search is to gain a better understanding of who you are and what you hope to obtain from your experience. As you will need to confidently articulate your values, skills, interests, and personality, self-reflection/exploration is an extremely important aspect to the search.

BRAINSTORM WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU

Start with the basics. Your first step is to think carefully about the career-related values, industries/professions, and geographic locations that interest you most. This will help narrow your search and determine your preferences.

- 1 The career-related values that are important to me include:**
- 2 The industries and professional areas that interest me most:**
- 3 The geographic locations I am most interested in:**

DETERMINE WHAT TYPE OF POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING

As part of your co-op or internship search process, brainstorm the types of positions and companies that seem most appealing. For example, within your industry, what job titles interest you most? Are you hoping to work for a large organization or within a small team?

- 1 The position types and titles that interest me most:**
- 2 The company cultures and organization sizes that seem most appealing:**

SET GOALS FOR YOURSELF

Setting goals is necessary in the internship and co-op process, as you want to find an opportunity that will teach you skills you want to obtain. When setting goals, think about what is truly important to you. For example, you may want to be near family or friends or have other personal commitments to consider.

- 1 The skills I am seeking to develop through an internship:**
- 2 My ideal timeline for an internship:**

A PART-TIME JOB VS. AN INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP

A crucial part of an internship or co-op student's experience is contributing to the organization through meaningful work, such as career-related tasks that encourage and allow the student to learn professionalism and obtain skills they do not yet possess. While part-time jobs can contribute to an individual's personal and professional growth, they do not generally contribute to their academic growth. Here are some distinctions:

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A PART-TIME JOB, INTERNSHIP, AND CO-OP

	PART-TIME JOB	INTERNSHIP	CO-OP
PURPOSE	Completed primarily for monetary purposes	Completed for several possible reasons, which may include gaining experience, academic credit, and/or compensation	Completed for experience and compensation
LEARNING	Tasks of job must be learned in order for the work to be adequately completed	Learning reflects the goals of the student, the outcomes expected by the employer, and the requirements of a faculty member/internship coordinator (if for academic credit)	Learning reflects the goals of the student and the outcomes expected by the employer
TYPE OF WORK	Work is assigned which needs to be completed; may or may not be directly related to an academic pursuit	Involves projects or ongoing work that is purposeful and of a professional nature, often related to an academic pursuit	Completes assigned work and projects that are purposeful and of a professional nature
SUPERVISOR	Supervisor serves as an authority figure to whom the employee reports	Supervisor serves as the main point of contact for assignments and projects; supervisor is also expected to ensure that mentoring occurs, either by doing it him/herself, or by arranging for another appropriate member of the organization to take on the role	Supervisor serves as the main point of contact for assignments and projects; supervisor is also expected to ensure that mentoring occurs, either by doing it him/herself, or by arranging for another appropriate member of the organization to take on the role
DURATION	It is anticipated that the employee will stay through their graduation or until terminated, depending on the position	A set period of time, either a semester, year or summer; can be extended if the role continues to evolve	Lasts approximately 6 months; can be extended one additional cycle
HOURS	May range anywhere from 3 – 20+ hours per week, depending on employer need and student availability	May be 8-15 hours per week during the semester; up to 40 hours per week during the summer	May range depending on employer need and student availability Minimum: 35 hours per week Maximum: 50 hours per week
ELIGIBILITY	Undergraduate & graduate students	Undergraduate & graduate students	Undergraduate students

**IDENTIFY, CREATE
& APPLY**

GATHER & CREATE APPLICATION MATERIALS

Before applying to an internship or co-op opportunity, you will need to prepare your application materials. This includes creating résumés and cover letters, collecting writing samples, requesting transcripts, and building your online portfolio. Make sure all materials are customized and tailored to each position, as well as “employer appropriate.”

DO:

- Review the internship or co-op posting several times before creating and gathering your documents. This will help you determine if you are a qualified applicant and the position is a potential match.
- Tailor parts of your résumé and cover letter to include elements of the internship or co-op posting. Look for words used multiple times or clearly highlighted in the position description.
- Use strong and varied action words (such as “develop” or “coordinate”) to describe your experience and how it connects to the specific internship or co-op you are applying for.
- Have someone whose writing skills you trust proofread your documents; have your documents and your LinkedIn profile critiqued at the CCD.

DON'T:

- Simply list duties associated with a position, such as “filing” and “making copies,” without sharing results, learning moments, and elements that may connect to the position you are applying for.
- Use résumé and cover letter templates found online or in word processing software, as these are often difficult to customize and look generic.
- Submit the exact same résumé and cover letter to every position you are applying for.
- Exaggerate the truth – all elements should be easily verifiable.
- Submit a document without proofreading it first.

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

There are multiple ways to identify and secure opportunities, such as: online job boards and postings, career fairs, individual networking, and more. Meet with a career consultant at the Center for Career Development for guidance with creating your unique search plan.

The Center for Career Development maintains HuskyCareerLink, where thousands of employers post full- and part-time, on- and off-campus jobs and internships in a variety of fields and locations. Employers who utilize HuskyCareerLink are specifically interested in recruiting UConn students. Access opportunities at huskycareerlink.uconn.edu. Job boards are websites where employers post positions they are considering hiring for; these websites may be very general or industry specific. Connect with a career consultant to discuss other job boards to utilize in your search.

TARGET EMPLOYERS

As you begin your search, create a list of employers that sound interesting or exciting to you. This could be due to an individual position/role or the company culture as a whole. Start with a list of 25-30, and narrow it based on location, company values, individual opportunities, and other factors that connect with your personality and professional preferences.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

ON-CAMPUS INTERNSHIPS & CO-OPS

On-campus internships and co-ops provide exposure similar to off-campus opportunities. Though not all industries will be represented, past internships have included: arts, media, and A/V technology; business, management, and administration; education and training; government and public administration; marketing, sales, and communication; and technology. To review examples of possible on-campus experiences, visit interncoop.uconn.edu.

To see if any offices are actively accepting applications, visit HuskyCareerLink and studentjobs.uconn.edu. Upon searching, if you do not see a department hiring, but have a strong interest in working with them, consider approaching them directly. Think about a skill you have that can be applied to a project or task that department oversees. Meet with a career consultant at the Center for Career Development prior to connecting with the department for guidance on how to professionally engage with them.

Departments I might want to intern or co-op for:

CREATE YOUR OWN INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP

Many organizations have well-established internship programs – while some others do not. What if you cannot find the specific type of position you are looking for? The answer might be to research and develop your own internship or co-op!

TIPS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED:

- Form a basic idea of the type of position you would like, including the skills and experiences you hope to obtain. Meet with a career consultant in the Center for Career Development to brainstorm possibilities. You may also want to connect with professors and mentors to brainstorm additional possibilities.
- Research the industry by reviewing online or print resources – or by reaching out to individuals in your network. Determine who hires interns and who decision-makers are and develop a list of contacts for each organization that interests you.
- Reach out to your contacts at the organizations and ask about their internship policy. Depending on the company culture, an email or phone call would suffice. Ask if they hire or have hired interns in the past, or if they might be considering hiring one. If they have never utilized interns or are unfamiliar with co-ops, your thoughtful and professional inquiry could plant the idea in their minds. Keep in mind that not all organizations will be interested or able to hire you – do not get discouraged.
- Based on the information you gathered, prepare a written proposal for the work you hope to do as an intern or through a co-op at the organization. This proposal should include a specific project you know the organization wants or needs done, or a particular role within the organization. Be as specific and professional as you can.
- After asking their permission, share your proposal with the contact you have developed at the organization. Consider that this may take time; even if your contact is interested in offering you an internship or co-op experience, they may need to connect with various other departments (such as Human Resources) first. Be patient with the employer, allow yourself plenty of time, and apply to other opportunities as well – just in case an opportunity does not come to fruition.

Skills I hope to obtain:

NETWORK & UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

BUILD PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

Build a network in your desired field and location, as many internship or co-op opportunities are not advertised. You will be more likely to find a great position if you advertise yourself within your network.

BRAINSTORM A LIST OF YOUR CURRENT NETWORK	
Friends	
Family	
Current and past classmates	
Current and past professors	
Volunteer/prior or current supervisors	
Coaches, neighbors, family connections	

CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviews are opportunities to gain contacts at potential future employer sites and learn more about a specific industry, company structure, or to determine your fit within an organization. Once a list of potential connections has been created, the next step is to reach out and request an informational interview.

- Stop by the Center for Career Development for information on how to reach out, questions to ask, and following up.
- Stay in touch with network connections. If applying at their company, ask if you can use their name in a cover letter. Send them a copy of application materials in addition to applying through the traditional method.
- Join professional associations, attend employer information sessions, alumni programs, and Center for Career Development networking events to broaden your network even further.

UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

Connect with employers, research industries, and build your network through social media. Here are some tips for engaging with social media professionally:

- Follow “unwritten” rules of each network site. Before posting any content, consider if the site is intended for sharing personal or professional information.
- Think of everything you post to be a mini-writing sample – no typos, no text-speak, and proofread all content from an employer’s point of view. Never post negative information about a job or a company you work for (or have worked for in the past).
- Convey your personality through posts about hobbies or interests. This is what makes social media different from your résumé. However, show restraint with the information you post. This is not the forum for arguments or rants.
- Use LinkedIn to find professionals (in your network, alumni networking groups, alumni search) who are connected to target companies.

If you are still unsure or have additional questions about how to create your professional social media presence or how to utilize social media in your internship or co-op search, come in to the Center for Career Development for a consultation.

APPLY FOR POSITIONS

Applying for positions can be exciting and overwhelming at the same time. You will need to be prepared and follow protocol. Below are some tips and strategies for the application process:

STAY ORGANIZED

- Keep a spreadsheet with application deadlines and requirements – establish your own timeline for each position. Ensure you are giving yourself plenty of time by researching your industry and becoming aware of common hiring practices and schedules.
- Submit application materials exactly as instructions state; not following instructions will put you at risk of not being considered.
- Tailor and customize your application documents, including your résumé and cover letter, specifically to each position.
- Follow-up with organizations via email or telephone 1-2 weeks after applying to confirm they received your materials, inquire about the timeline, and ask about any other steps you should take.
 - Keep track of communication so you can respond promptly. Contacting an individual at an organization every day is intrusive.

EARN ACADEMIC CREDIT

Determine whether academic credit is a requirement for your internship. There are several factors to consider when thinking about pursuing academic credit for an experience:

DEADLINES: Internship credit must be approved by UConn before the start of the semester/summer session for which you hope to earn credit.

COST: If you earn credit during the academic year, as a full-time student, there is typically no additional tuition cost. If you earn credit during the summer or are a part-time student, you will be charged tuition based on the number of credits you earn.

NOTE: Academic credit does not equal compensation. Only the University can determine if your internship opportunity is eligible for credit, not the employer. Your employer will decide if you will be paid.

If you find that credit is a good choice for you, options include:

- Many academic departments offer credit (varies from 1-15 credits depending on the department and how many hours you work) – visit the “Earn Credit for Your Internship” page at interncoop.uconn.edu for more detailed information.
- The Center for Career Development offers two internship courses: UNIV 1991 (Supervised Internship Experience one-credit course) and UNIV 1981 (Documented Internship Experience zero-credit transcript notation). For more information, visit interncoop.uconn.edu or email internships@uconn.edu.

DID YOU KNOW

The Center for Career Development can help you with preparing for interviews. Consider scheduling a Practice Interview with a staff member and reviewing resources found on career.uconn.edu.

**PREPARE FOR YOUR
INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP**

MAXIMIZE YOUR INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP SUCCESS

Congratulations! Now that you have accepted an offer for an internship or co-op experience, there are a few strategies to ensure success and a good first impression.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST DAY

- Communicate with your supervisor ahead of time about what to expect on your first day. Plan ahead and bring the following with you:
 - A padfolio or professional-looking notebook and several pens. You are likely to receive paperwork on your first day, and a padfolio provides a professional place to store it. A notebook or notepad is usually found inside a padfolio, and many employers do like new hires to take notes.
 - Government-issued identification (such as a driver's license or social security card); connect with your supervisor to ensure you come prepared to complete any onboarding or orientation paperwork.
 - Cash or other method of purchasing items, if possible. If a fellow intern or professional staff member invites you to lunch or coffee, it is strongly recommended you attend. This is a great opportunity for networking!
 - Comfortable shoes for your commute, snacks for appropriate down time, or other items you need to ensure you are focused for the entire day.
- Research the company and office protocol (big projects, office locations, etc.). Make sure you confirm the office location at least one week before starting your experience, particularly if your interview took place on campus or in a different location.
- Acquire a professional wardrobe that matches the company and industry standards.
- Search for housing and transportation options, if necessary. Practice your commute and check on parking protocol.
- Contact all organizations whose offers you are declining and inform them of your decision over the phone. Be sure to follow-up in writing, most commonly via email. Accept only one offer from one employer. Cease from searching for and applying to other positions once you have accepted an offer.

YOUR FIRST DAY TO-DO LIST

DURING YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Develop clear communication with your supervisor. On day one, have a meeting to discuss the best ways of communication with your supervisor and be sure to communicate clearly throughout the entire experience. Also talk about office expectations and any questions you might have about the office or role.
 - Consider: What are regular business hours and should you expect to work outside those hours? What are the office policies regarding weather or other emergencies? What is the office sick policy? How will you be evaluated? Will you be expected to work during academic breaks (i.e., Thanksgiving and Spring Break)?
- Create a Learning Agreement outlining and establishing objectives for yourself. You will find a sample learning agreement on the last page of this guide. Involve your supervisor when completing the agreement.
- Document your experience through journals or reflections, informal evaluations, and formal evaluations. If your employer agrees, you may be able to take a copy of your work with you for a portfolio or as examples to share with potential future employers.

DEVELOP TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) rates the most desirable transferable skills in potential employees each year. Think about which skills you want to gain during your experience and speak with your supervisor about how you can obtain those during your internship or co-op experience.

Use this table to keep track of concrete examples where you feel you have utilized each competency:

COMPETENCY	EXAMPLE
Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving	
Oral/Written Communication	
Teamwork/Collaboration	
Information Technology/ Application	
Leadership	
Professionalism/ Work Ethic	
Career Management	

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

It is helpful to meet as many people as possible during your internship or co-op experience so you have access to resources, fresh perspectives, and mentors for the future.

NETWORKING TIPS

- Keep a list of names, contact information, and conversation contacts, then maintain regular contact with these individuals after your experience is over. Reach out to them 2-4 times per year with holiday greetings and professional updates.
- Identify someone as a mentor who you believe would offer you guidance and support, even if you have been assigned a formal mentor. Sometimes the best mentors are those who we happen to stumble across randomly. It is possible to have more than one mentor, as some will provide day-to-day support, while others you may connect with more sporadically.
- If possible, participate in a job shadowing experience or informational interviews with those who have jobs you would like to learn more about.
- Find and connect with UConn alumni who you can speak with to increase your network within the organization. Talk to Human Resources, visit uconnalumni.com, or use LinkedIn to find alumni at your organization.

DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION

Think of an internship or a co-op as a very long job interview; you will be observed each day for your professionalism. Even if the organization is unable to offer you another internship or full-time job, they may serve as references for you.

MAKE AN EXCELLENT IMPRESSION EACH DAY:

- Wear professional attire based on the company and industry culture.
- Understand and respect company policies.
- At times, an employer's way of evaluating your competence and building trust in you is to provide work that may feel "too easy." Don't get discouraged and remember that all assignments and projects are an opportunity to showcase your skill and work ethic.
- Define your role by asking good questions and reviewing all materials provided by your supervisor.
- Ask questions and request feedback, but be sure to compile multiple questions to ask at once to minimize how often you are interrupting workflow.
- Attend company-sponsored events, and be sure to use discretion and common sense. Networking events are a fantastic way to connect with professionals you might not see on a daily basis.
- Be punctual and dependable by being conscious of time. This includes following all deadlines and arriving to work at least 5 minutes early each day. Your supervisor will take note if you are tardy to work, and will likely expect that you are ready to begin your day the moment your shift starts.
- Do quality work and take initiative. Do not wait for a supervisor or colleague to notice if you are free. If you finish a project early, connect with a supervisor and ask for more.
- Accept feedback with grace and gratitude.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and smile – everyone likes this quality in a colleague.

END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

MAKE A POSITIVE LASTING IMPRESSION:

- Be sure to finish your work completely and promptly. If you are absolutely unable to complete a project or task, communicate this clearly to your supervisor far in advance of your last day.
- Connect with your colleagues on LinkedIn. It is strongly recommended that you not connect on other social networking sites, as LinkedIn is the most professional in terms of content. If appropriate, ask a supervisor for an endorsement or recommendation to strengthen your LinkedIn profile.
- List your accomplishments and update your résumé with this most recent experience. Have the Center for Career Development critique your documents.
- If you had a great experience with certain people, you could ask them for a positive reference prior to leaving.
- Ask for feedback, as it is an opportunity to learn more about potential areas for improvement.
- Express your interest in returning to the organization, if this applies. Do not assume your supervisor will know this automatically.
- Thank those with whom you have worked with during your experience; an email will suffice for some, while you may want to connect with others in person or via a hand-written 'thank you' note. Do not rush out of the office on your last day; make an effort to visit colleagues' offices for one final goodbye.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS & THE LAW

You have rights as an intern, whether the experience is paid or unpaid. The state of Connecticut (and various other states) has passed legislation related to unpaid internships, discrimination, and harassment. In addition, the United States Department of Labor (DOL) has issued federal guidelines and regulations regarding unpaid internships. Such internships in the US are subject to scrutiny by the Department of Labor and the Courts. If the employer is a not-for-profit organization, educational institution, or a government agency, the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding unpaid internships does not apply.

If an employer from a for-profit organization wants to offer an unpaid internship, it needs to prove that the position meets specific criteria. For example, sometimes employers will not pay a salary or stipend and instead indicate that an intern is to earn credit.

The University, and not the employer, determines whether an internship meets educational objectives and is eligible for credit. This point of clarification is significant, as many employers believe credit and compensation are synonymous. In reality, they are independent of one another. Consider all aspects of an internship to assess its quality, including mentoring, educationally-related work, quality of work projects, number of hours, and training. Remember, credit does not equal compensation.

The University does not police employers who do not follow the guidelines. Students may find, however, that academic departments are hesitant to award credit for work that violates these standards as clear learning objectives have not been stated and educators want to ensure that students are not being exploited. Questions about the legalities of unpaid internships may be directed to the internship and co-op staff via email at internships@uconn.edu. A trained staff member will assist you in understanding these policies and procedures.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- CONFIDENTIALITY** Maintain confidentiality regarding your employer, customers, clients, and co-workers. Disclose information only on a “need-to-know” basis for the purpose of completing work assignments. You may be asked by your employer to sign a confidentiality agreement. Read this form carefully before signing.
- DISCRIMINATION** Act professionally and respectfully when interacting with all people you meet on the job. Unequal treatment or harassment is typically against company policy and/or illegal. Review the company’s discrimination policy, which can often be obtained from Human Resources or in an employee handbook, and notify your supervisor if you are subjected to such behavior.
- HARASSMENT** Treat all co-workers – including fellow interns, clients, vendors, and others encountered on the job – politely and professionally. Unwelcome, uninvited behavior with sexual overtones occurring in the workplace is sexual harassment and is illegal. Alert the Center for Career Development and your supervisor if you are subjected to such behavior.
- LIABILITY** Understand legal liability issues related to your work site and activities. The University does not insure students during periods of temporary employment through internships or co-ops. It is recommended that you do not sign any waiver without speaking to the Center for Career Development’s internship and co-op staff or legal counsel.
- ACCOMMODATIONS** Inform your employer of the accommodations you might need to successfully complete your work assignments. Employers must provide reasonable, but not the exact, accommodation requested.

SAMPLE LEARNING AGREEMENT

NAME: Student Name

INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP DATES: Month/Year to Month/Year

INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP POSITION: Position Title

INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP SITE: Organization's Name

DIRECTIONS: Complete all three columns for each section and discuss with your supervisor when you start. Review this agreement with your supervisor half-way through and at the end point of your experience.

WHAT ARE YOUR LEARNING GOALS?	HOW WILL YOU WORK TOWARD MEETING YOUR GOALS?	HOW WILL YOU PROVE YOU HAVE MET YOUR GOALS?
<p>TRANSFERABLE SKILL OBJECTIVES: List transferable skills you hope to gain through your experience. These can be soft skills, personal skills, or specific professional skills.</p>		
Skill objectives, ex: writing, computer, public speaking, etc.	Activities to support learning or enhancing the identified skill set in the first column	Anticipated manner of evaluation, could involve your supervisor's participation
<p>EXAMPLE: Improve my technological skills Microsoft Excel and other computer programs used by my internship team</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Participate in office trainings, set meeting times with my mentor to learn Excel tricks and formulas</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Will regularly use at least three new Excel formulas and can easily navigate specific programs for my job</p>
<p>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES: Think about goals that will further your personal growth. These could be work-related or academic, but should relate to your professional aspirations.</p>		
Goal to help personally, but in the context of work	Techniques to achieve the objective in the timeframe	Set a method of demonstrating competence
<p>EXAMPLE: Become more comfortable working with confrontational clients</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Seek resources regarding conflict resolution, and practice techniques through role plays with a supervisor</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Be able to successfully address client problems without having to forward them to supervisors</p>
<p>CAREER DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES: It is important to learn more about the field you are potentially interested in pursuing. Think about what you need to improve to be successful in that field in the future.</p>		
Career related ideas beyond tasks in the position	Specific ideas and steps that support the idea/objective	Ways to verify that the ideas and steps are occurring
<p>EXAMPLE: Keep track of current important business issues every day</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Read the Wall Street Journal, or other news source, each day and synthesize topics or articles for myself</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Discuss regularly with classmates, co-workers or other professionals while incorporating own thoughts</p>