

## Learning Contract

Each course in the OSR program curriculum will identify learning goals for that particular session. This assures a common foundation of theory and application skills is delivered in the program. Beyond this foundation, you will have the opportunity to tailor your individual learning goals through the creation of a Learning Contract.

Your Learning Contract is an agreement between you and your Degree Committee that identifies your general Area of Focus, specific learning goals and supporting competencies you wish to develop during the program. It provides a structure for you to go beyond the basic curriculum in areas of your choice within the framework of the program. It will also help you focus your inquiry, project work, and reflective learning. Your Learning Contract will be developed during the first two quarters.

### Why Does OSR Use a Learning Contract?

Learning contracts often are used in self-directed study and other independent learning situations. This process allows students to be active participants, rather than passive recipients, in the creation of their knowledge. The design of the OSR program is based on adult learning theory which stems from Malcom Knowles' theory of andragogy. Knowles emphasized that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions about their learning. The Learning Contract is the vehicle OSR uses to tap into this fundamental desire.



*Your Learning Contract drives your Consultation Project. The project is one strategy for learning what you set out to learn, and one way to demonstrate that you learned it.*

*“80% of what you do is who you are”.*

*– Don Swartz*

*“We grow in the direction of our learning contracts.”*

*– Students in OSR XI*

## What to Include

While each student's Learning Contract may be designed a bit differently to reflect differences in personal and learning styles, your contract should include the following components:

- **Introduction:** Set the context for the general topic you want to explore while in the OSR program. This can be very short.
- **Area of Focus:** Identify the topic you want to explore during your time in OSR (e.g., leadership, multicultural conflict, visioning, trust, etc.)
- **Learning Goals:** Determine what you intend to accomplish through your Learning Contract in the areas of:
  - **Theory Development:** What seminal works/theorists are connected to your Area of Focus? What is new in the field?
  - **Skill Development:** What personal skill development is related to your Area of Focus (e.g., managing conflict, listening, inquiry, facilitation, design, giving/receiving feedback, etc.)
  - **Personal Development:** What “inner capacities” do you wish to develop (e.g., creativity, self-awareness, spiritual, physical, emotional, etc.)?
  - **Note:** All three areas must be addressed in your Learning Contract.
- **Strategies:** What activities will you engage in to support each Learning Goal? [Note: Many “activities” will already be a part of the OSR program. You can simply tailor them to connect with your particular learning goals.]
- **Demonstration:** How will you show that you achieved each goal? What is the evidence that you accomplished what you set out to do? Good demonstration statements are based on outcomes, not activities.
- **Evaluation/Evaluators:** How will your work be evaluated? Who will review your work, approve completion of strategies, and verify your demonstration of learning?

## **Milestones For the Creation and Implementation of Your Learning Contract**

### **Fall 2005: (Sept – Dec)**

- Life/work goals exercise
- Write your entry statement (includes a statement of the general academic and professional areas you hope to explore during OSR; statement of professional intentions as you best know them now) – share with your Degree Committee at first meeting
- Identify your Area of Focus and create a first draft Learning Contract
- Select Degree Committee Field Advisors

### **Winter 2005: (Jan – Mar)**

- Select Degree Committee Peer Advisor
- Create second draft of Learning Contract
- Schedule and conduct first Degree Committee meeting
- Finalize Learning Contract based on Degree Committee input

### **Spring 2006 through Winter 2007: (Apr '06 – Jun '07)**

- Implement your strategies
- Keep your Degree Committee informed on your progress
- Modify/refine Learning Contract as needed

### **Spring 2007: (Apr – Jun)**

- Hold your Candidacy meeting with your Degree Committee
- Final review of Learning Contract demonstrations and evaluation

