

Academic Contract Proposal Worksheet

THIS IS NOT THE CONTRACT FORM.

DO NOT SUBMIT THIS WORKSHEET AS A CONTRACT.

This worksheet is designed to help you and your faculty sponsor think through contract components and construct your contract before completing the [contract application form](#) on Engage. Draft your answers in the boxes below, then cut and paste your answers into the online form. For more information, consult the Contract Learning and Experiential Learning sections of the [BSC College Catalog](#) or contact staff in the Krulak Institute (krulakinst@bsc.edu).

Independent academic contracts are a unique way for BSC students to design their own credit-bearing learning experiences. Students may also contract non-credit bearing Experiential Learning (EL) projects, although this is rare. Students are responsible for researching the topic, constructing a contract proposal (essentially an individualized syllabus), planning their course of study, then executing the academic coursework. Contracts are sponsored by a full-time BSC faculty member who plays an active role in the contracted course/project. The Contract Learning Committee reviews all proposals. Once approved, contracts are sent to the Academic Records Office to be added to the student's academic transcript.

For a successful contract, you will need:

- A **topic, problem, or project** that interests you
- A **faculty sponsor** who will collaborate with you in the design, execution, and evaluation of the learning experience
- Specific and relevant **learning goals** (projects seeking EL designation should include EL learning outcomes)
- **Readings and activities** to inform your project
- **Assignments** that demonstrate your learning (e.g., conversations with your sponsor, papers, presentations, lab reports, posters)

Also, consider if you want your contract to count for the **Experiential Learning (EL) designation** (new for the 2022-2023 catalog).

CONTRACT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

State the **title** of the project.

The title is important because it appears on your transcript. Be specific and accurate. If applicable, make sure your title indicates the time period(s) and place(s) you will study.

Example: Summer Research Internship at the Faulkner Institute: Why Low Income, Minority Students in Faulkner City Schools Engage or Disengage in College and Career Preparatory Programs

State the **title** of the project.

Give a **general description** of the project. Summarize your project in two sentences or less.

This statement also appears on your transcript. Consult the College catalog for examples of general descriptions of other classes. Most descriptions begin with phrases such as “An in-depth study of...,” “An exploration of...” or “A research project involving....” If your contract proposal involves an internship or offsite location, make sure that description is easily understood by a layperson.

Example: A summer research internship at the Faulkner Institute, where I will look at why low-income minority students in the Faulkner City Schools (FCS) engage or disengage in college and career preparatory programs, and how effective the Faulkner Foundation’s programs are in preparing FCS students for college, career, and life. I will conduct a literature review on current college and career preparatory programs for low income and minority students and assess the Faulkner Foundation’s current programs’ effectiveness.

Give a **general description** of the project. Summarize your project in two sentences or less.

LEARNING OUTCOMES/GOALS

*List the **learning outcomes/goals** of the project.*

Explain here in a bulleted list what you plan to achieve and what you hope to learn from this project. Provide background information on your topic if necessary. Use the following questions to help you develop and articulate your learning goals: What specifically do you hope to learn through and because of this project? What skills, knowledge, or abilities will this project help you develop? How will you be different at the end of this project? Refer to the “learning outcomes” section of syllabi from previous courses and the current BSC catalog for inspiration.

EL projects should include these three goals:

1. Apply or adapt skills, abilities, theories, or methods gained in one situation to another
2. Draw connections between this experience and your academic knowledge; clarify your abilities, values, or professional aspirations; AND/OR engage with a community (e.g., a local, global, scholarly, cultural, political, or business community).
3. Develop as a lifelong learner

Example:

- Formulate a specific, empirical research plan, and identify relevant background research for the plan
- Synthesize relevant research and create a literature review regarding student engagement in and best practices for college and career preparatory programs
- Reflect critically on my own experiences in relation to the concepts in the sociology of education
- Apply my academic achievements and learning in research conducted externally from college by gaining hands-on experience in social research and education research
- Explore my post-college, career, and professional aspirations and goals through participating in the research project
- Gain further academic knowledge, as it relates to research methods, and professional development

*List the **learning outcomes/goals** of the project.*

CONTRACT ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS

List **required readings and resources** for the project (in full citation format).

List at least five books or articles that apply to your project and are relevant given your learning goals. Even if you are doing an internship, you **must** have a bibliography, mostly like a list of resources that provide context and meaning for your work with the internship site. For extensive research projects, this section should include a preliminary list of sources to demonstrate that you have done some groundwork for the project. You should provide **complete, alphabetized citations** in a standard bibliographic format (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.)

List **required readings and resources** for the project (in full citation format).

FACULTY INTERACTIONS:

Describe how you will interact with your **faculty sponsor**.

To support the achievement of your learning goals, your project should include interactions with your faculty sponsor on a regular and recurring basis. In this section, consider the following questions: How will you work with a faculty member to complete this project? How often will you check in? What will you discuss? Check-ins may include, but are not limited to, meetings, emails, receiving feedback on written responses, and informal conversations. **A minimum of 3 interactions are required for approval.**

Example: I plan to keep a journal about my experiences on the internship and the reading materials related to my internship. I will maintain this journal as a google doc and provide my sponsor with access. We have drafted an initial set of journal prompts to get started and agreed that she will read my journal entries each week and provide additional feedback and questions for me to consider.

Example 2: My faculty sponsor and I have scheduled bi-weekly meetings while I conduct my research and readings. At each of these meetings, I will provide an update on what I have read in the last two weeks as well as drafts of my literature review and analysis. We will meet for at least one hour every other week throughout the term to ensure I am making progress on the main project.

Describe how you will interact with your **faculty sponsor**.

CRITICAL REFLECTION:

*Outline your plan for **critical reflection**.*

Experiential learning projects require a critical reflection process that should take place before, during and after the relevant experience (e.g., an internship, service experience, travel experience, or research experience). Include the number and type of reflective assignments (e.g.: journal entry, conversation with faculty supervisor) and examples of writing and discussion prompts. Be clear about how these activities support the learning outcomes. Questions to consider for this section include: What is your schedule for reflection? How will it take place? (e.g., journaling, blogging, conversations with your faculty sponsor) What kinds of questions or topics will you address? How do those topics connect to what you hope to learn from the experience? **Response required for EL projects.**

Example: Reflections will range from 3-5 pages and will be evaluated based on a rubric. Three written reflection assignments will be completed. Informal oral reflections will take place with my faculty sponsor (at each check-in) throughout the research internship. Written reflections will consist of the following: 1.) Pre-reflection—reflect on the meaning, purposes, and parameters of college and career preparation, draw connections between purposes and individual experiences, and clarify my own career aspirations; 2.) Midway reflection—reflect on my thoughts on research methodology in general and the impact research has on the broader public interest; and 3.) Post-reflection—a full summative reflection on what I have learned through my research internship personally and professionally.

Critical Reflection Plan:

PARTNERSHIP:

Depending on the nature of your contract, your project may include a **partnership** with an employer, community or campus organization, research lab, global or cultural community, or, if this is a TA position, the class you are working with. Describe your partnering agency or location in this section. Additionally, explain how you will work with them and what your responsibilities are to the group. **Response required for EL projects.**

Partnership:

PRODUCTS:

*Describe the **product(s)** to be evaluated.*

All projects should include a product or products, usually produced or completed near the end, that demonstrate the achievement of your learning goals. Projects might include papers, presentations, portfolios, videos, performances, or other products that can embody and demonstrate the achievement of your goals. Describe the product(s) to be evaluated (e.g., oral or written examination, research or reflection paper, poster, website, portfolio, works of art, performances, etc.) Include the length of papers and presentations and the audience for presentations and performances. Questions to consider in this section: What **products or activities** will demonstrate achievement of each outcome and goal articulated earlier in the **Learning Outcomes** section? How and why will these projects demonstrate the achievement of your learning goals?

Example: At the end of my research internship, I will produce a 15-20-page extensive paper analyzing low-income students' engagement or disengagement in college and career preparatory programs. I will give a 30-minute oral presentation of my research on Honors Day. I will participate in the Krulak Institute Poster Expo. In my paper, presentation, and poster, I will provide a synthesis of the research, an explanation of my study design, and report on my findings and their implications.

Products or activities to be evaluated:

DETAILED TIMELINE:

*Provide a **detailed timeline** for completing the project.*

Include the milestones and achievements that will indicate your progress, including assignment due dates. Explain here how you will achieve the outcomes you outlined above. Go into detail. For example, if you are doing an internship, you should describe the duties or responsibilities you will have. If you are doing a research project, indicate where and how the research will be performed (libraries, archives, interviews, museums, laboratories, etc.) and what arrangements have been made for this research. You should convey here all the preparation, legwork, and thought you have put into this project.

Example: I have contacted Katy Pete at the Faulkner Institute. She has agreed to assist me with my research into college and career preparatory programs. I will meet with Ms. Pete for ___ hours a week for ___ weeks, spend ___ hours researching (either total hours or weekly hours), and ___ hours (either total hours or weekly hours) writing my paper. In addition, I will obtain CITI certification and get IRB approval on my research plan. I will meet with my faculty sponsor weekly via face-to-face meeting or phone conference to discuss the project in my progress. In addition, we will use the time to reflect on my experiences and how they do or do not connect with my learning outcomes.

Detailed Timeline:

TIME COMMITMENT AND MINUTE CALCULATION:

To earn the requisite number of units, projects require a specified time commitment. Full units require a time commitment of **150 hours or 9,000 minutes**, both in- and out-of-class. **Estimate the time commitment** for your project using a list like the one below (the activities and minutes listed will change based on your project). [This site](#) will help you estimate the time commitment for your readings, writings, and other activities. Be sure to include your planned faculty interactions.

Example: Time at Internship Site - 10 hours per week x 12 weeks = 7,200 minutes

Meetings with faculty sponsor - 30 minutes x 6 = 180 minutes

Weekly Journal Entries - 60 minutes x 12 weeks = 720 minutes

Assigned Readings/Research - 60 minutes x 10 = 600 minutes

Reflection Paper - 300 minutes

TOTAL = 9,000 minutes

Time Commitment & Minute Calculation:

CONTRACT DETAILS

Course Prefix: The course prefix indicates the academic discipline of your course (BA, EH, PY, etc.). A faculty member from that discipline must sponsor you. If your project does not fall into a particular category, you may list it as IND (if Fall, Spring, or Summer term) or GEN (if E-Term), and a faculty member from any department may sponsor you.

Course Prefix:

- Course Number:**
- All **non**-E-Term independent studies end in 93.
 - **Non-E**-Term term internships end in 97.
 - Teaching experiences end in 98.
 - All E-Term projects are 299, except senior projects required for the major, which are 499. **E-Term contracts cannot end in anything other than 99.**

Examples: EH 293 (an English independent study at the 200 level)
BI 299 (an E-Term term biology contract)
BA 497 (an advanced business internship)

Course Number:

Number of units: Non-credit, .25-unit, .5 unit or 1 unit

Number of Units:

Form of grade: S/U or LETTER, to be decided by you and your contract sponsor. Generally, all internships and travel projects are S/U. All senior projects and courses that count toward the major are letter grade. Non-credit projects are S/U.

Form of Grade:

There is a place on the form to indicate your interest in one or more of the following opportunities to showcase your work:

- September Krulak Institute Poster Expo (for summer projects)
- At the E-term Showcase at the end of January (for E-term projects)
- At Honors Day (for fall or spring projects)
- In Compass: A Journal of Leadership, Service, and Experiential Learning (for all terms)
- At an off-campus conference

OFF-CAMPUS CONTACT

If you are working with an off-campus organization as noted in the “partnership” section above, provide the name and full address of the **organization** and the name, title, phone number, and email address of your **contact person**.

Off-Campus Contact:

Please note:

All students with approved contracts that involve traveling off-campus, even for interviews or observation, are required to sign and submit a release form. The release forms are located on the [Krulak Institute forms page](#) of the BSC website. Please read the descriptions carefully to determine which release form is appropriate for your project.

If your contracted project involves research with human subjects, you must obtain approval from BSC's Institutional Review Board before your contract may be approved and registered. More information about the IRB process is available [here](#).

Once submitted, your contract will be reviewed by the Contract Learning Committee. The committee will either approve your contract or ask you to revise and resubmit, addressing comments and questions from the committee. You will receive a notification from Engage notifying you of the committee's decision. The notifications may get routed to the Clutter/Other folder in your email, but you can also log into Engage at any time to check the status of your contract.

Once approved, your final contract will be sent to Academic Records to be registered. You will receive an email notifying you when this has taken place.