

Introduction and Objectives

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your intern year. This is a transformative time, and you will likely not forget the first time you walk into a patient's room, whether it's the operating room, emergency room, or hospital ward, and introduce yourself as a physician. It is also a time when you will encounter many new challenges. These will range from very simple to the most complex. You have acquired the tools to address this adversity. Even when you feel most overwhelmed, you are undoubtedly surrounded by a wealth of available resources that include ancillary and nursing staff, fellow interns, senior residents, and attending physicians. As I think back to my intern year, I recall the sage advice from my chief resident, "Intern year is only one year!"

OBJECTIVES

Although the year ahead of you may now seem long and daunting, your tasks are quite achievable. The following rotation objectives were copied from the curriculum for the inpatient general medicine rotation for the internship program at Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes-Jewish Hospital. You can see that not only are the objectives quite simple, but also your rigorous work in medical school has prepared you well to master many of your goals. Your program likely has a similar document, whether in medicine or another specialty. Use these objectives throughout the year as a checklist to remind yourself of your accomplishments and to guide your learning in potential areas of weakness.

- Patient care
 - Gather and synthesize essential and accurate information to define each patient's clinical problems, including performing a thorough history and physical examination.
 - Synthesize data into a prioritized problem list and differential diagnosis, and then develop and achieve comprehensive management plans for patients.

- Manage patients with progressive responsibility and independence.
- Monitor and follow up patients appropriately.
- Know the indications, contraindications, and risks of some invasive procedures and competently perform those invasive procedures.
- Request and provide consultative care.
- Prioritize each day's work (if you're an intern, for yourself; if you're a resident, for your entire team).
- Medical knowledge
 - Demonstrate an increasing fund of knowledge in the range of common problems encountered in inpatient internal medicine and utilize this knowledge in clinical reasoning. If you're a resident, while on service you should become familiar with the diagnostic and therapeutic approach to patients with chest pain, shortness of breath, deep vein thrombosis/pulmonary embolism, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, fever, mental status changes, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal bleeding, syncope and lightheadedness, renal failure (acute and/or chronic), anemia, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, pneumonia, urinary tract infection, soft tissue infections (e.g., cellulitis, diabetic foot infection, decubitus ulcer), and alcohol withdrawal. You should also demonstrate an increasing ability to teach others on these and other topics.
 - Increase your knowledge of diagnostic testing and procedures.
- Practice-based learning and improvement
 - Understand your limitations of knowledge and judgment, ask for help when needed, and be self-motivated to acquire knowledge.
 - Monitor practice with a goal for improvement.
 - Learn and improve via performance audit.
 - If you are a PGY2 or PGY3, you should learn how to use knowledge of study designs and statistical methods in the critical appraisal of clinical studies and apply to the care of patients.
 - Use information technology to manage information and access online medical information.
 - Accept feedback, learn from your own errors, and develop self-improvement plans.
 - Learn and improve via feedback.
 - Learn and improve at the point of care.

- Interpersonal and communication skills
 - Communicate effectively with patients and caregivers. For example:
 - Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors with patients, families—including those who are angry and frustrated—and all members of the healthcare team.
 - Counsel and educate patients and their families.
 - Conduct supportive and respectful discussions of code status and advance directives.
 - Communicate effectively with interprofessional teams.
 - Facilitate the learning of students and other healthcare professionals.
 - Ensure appropriate utilization and completion of health records. Demonstrate ability to convey clinical information accurately and concisely in oral presentations and in chart notes.
- Professionalism
 - Display respect, compassion, and integrity.
 - Demonstrate a commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development.
 - Have professional and respectful interactions with patients, caregivers, and members of the interprofessional team.
 - Accept responsibility and follow through on tasks.
 - Develop an appreciation for the ethical, cultural, and socio-economic dimensions of illness, demonstrating sensitivity and responsiveness to each patient's culture, age, gender, and disabilities.
 - If you are a resident, display initiative and leadership; be able to delegate responsibility appropriately.
 - Exhibit integrity and ethical behavior in professional conduct.
 - Demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and other aspects of clinical care.
- Systems-based practice
 - Work effectively with an interprofessional team (such as with nurses, secretaries, social workers, nutritionists, interpreters, physical and occupational therapists, technicians).
 - If you're a resident, you should develop proficiency in leading the healthcare team and organizing and managing medical care.

- Advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities.
- Recognize system errors and advocate for system improvements.
- Identify forces that affect the cost of healthcare and advocate for and practice cost-effective care.
- Transition patients effectively within and across the healthcare delivery system. For example, understand and appreciate the importance of communicating with the primary care physician at the time of admission or soon thereafter.