The Basics of Developing a Great Project

AUTHOR	ASU Work+
DATE	April 2025
RESOURCE	Guide
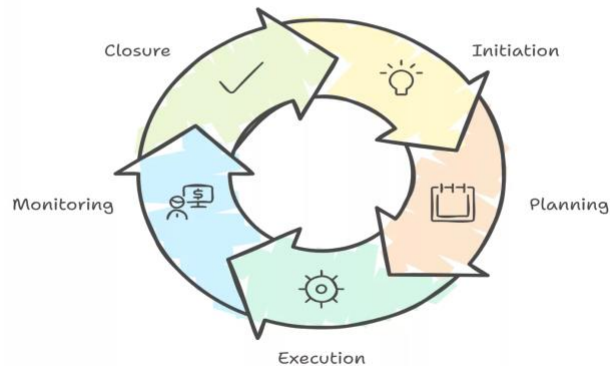
PROJECT INITIATION

This phase involves identifying a problem, opportunity, or improvement area within the department. The student employee determines the purpose and goals of the project and secures supervisor approval.

Key steps for Student Employees:
- *Brainstorm*: explore various project ideas that align with your working learners interests or the needs of the department
- *Research solutions:* identify a challenge, inefficiency, or enhancement opportunity and research existing solutions or gaps
- *Define the purpose*: consider the purpose and expected impact of the project
- *Discuss options*: share your idea with a supervisor for approval and oversight

Supervisor's Role:
- Provide insight into department needs and priorities
- Ensure feasibility and resource availability
- Help refine the project scope, if necessary

PROJECT PLANNING & ORGANIZATION

Once the project is approved, a structured plan is created to guide execution. This phase includes defining objectives, timelines, tasks, and required resources.

Key steps for Student Employees:
- *Create a project plan:* outline the project's scope, timeline, resources, and deliverables
- *Break down the tasks:* divide the project into smaller, manageable tasks or sub-projects
- *Set deadlines:* assign realistic deadlines for each task and milestone
- *Identify resources:* determine what resources (tools, materials, skills) you'll need
- *Consider dependencies:* identify tasks that depend on others and plan accordingly
- *Create a schedule:* consider how you should best track progress

Supervisor's Role:
- Offer guidance on realistic timelines and available resources
- Hep students anticipate roadblocks and adjust plans accordingly
- Encourage clear documentation of steps and goals

PROJECT EXECUTION & MONITORING

This is the action phase, where student employees implement their plan, monitor progress, and adjust as needed. Regular check-ins with supervisors help ensure the project stays on track.

Key steps for Student Employees:
- *Start working:* begin executing the project tasks according to the plan while maintaining flexibility
- *Track progress:* regularly monitor your progress against the timeline and milestones
- *Seek feedback:* regularly solicit feedback from supervisor
- *Address issues:* identify and address any challenges or roadblocks promptly and share with supervisor accordingly
- *Adapt as needed:* be flexible and willing to adjust the plan if necessary
- *Stay organized:* use project management tools or a system to keep track of tasks, documents, and communications

Supervisor's Role:
- Provide periodic check-ins and constructive, real time feedback
- Assist in troubleshooting roadblocks
- Ensure the student is gaining valuable skills through the process and communicate openly to ensure students can name and see the skills as well

PROJECT COMPLETION AND CLOSURE

This phase includes completing final deliverables, evaluating outcomes, and reflecting on lessons learned.

Key steps for Student Employees:
- *Finalize deliverables:* ensure that all deliverables are completed and meet the required standards
- *Review and evaluate:* conduct a post-project review to assess the project's success and identify lessons learned by summarizing the project's impact and effectiveness
- *Share results*: share your findings and results with your supervisor and/or team
- *Reflect on skills*: consider the various skills strengthened or gained through this project
- *Celebrate success:* acknowledge and celebrate the project's completion and the team's achievements

Supervisor's Role:
- Provide feedback on the project's impact
- Recognize and celebrate the student's contributions
- Discuss how the experience can shape the student's professional development
- Integrate the results, deliverable, or resource into the department