



Developing Course Learning Outcomes

Well- developed learning outcomes create a strong foundation for building your course. Once you have defined your outcomes, the required content and methods of assessment will be clear. Before developing your course outcomes, consider these questions, which focus on outcomes in slightly different ways:

- For each of the stated program goals, what are the specific knowledge, skills, or attitudes that would tell you this goal is being achieved?
- What would a skeptic need (evidence, behavior, etc.) in order to see that your students are achieving the major goals you have set out for them?
- In your experience, what evidence tells you when students have met these goals – how do you know when they’re “getting” it?

Components of learning outcomes

Learning outcome statements may be broken down into 3 main components, easily recalled as the “ABC” of outcomes:

1. A *verb* that identifies the performance to be demonstrated (**A**ction). The action must be observable and measurable, such state, identify, explain, produce, design, or calculate. Verbs such as understand and appreciate are not observable and will create vague, unmeasurable learning outcomes.
2. A *learning statement* that specifies what learning will be demonstrated in the performance (**B**ehavior)
3. A broad statement of the *criterion* or standard for acceptable performance (**C**riterion)

For example:

Verb (action/performance)	Learning Statement (the learning)	Criterion (the conditions of the performance demonstration)
Produces	a video documenting their internship experience	Including all items specified on the rubric, and within the specified length - 5-12 minutes)
Analyzes, in writing	4 global and environmental factors	in terms of their effects on people, using real life, current examples

Natural Sciences

- Students create a research proposal incorporating the principles of scientific methodology.
- Students can evaluate the validity and limitations of theories and scientific claims in experimental results.
- Students can explain the relevance and application of biology in everyday life, citing specific examples.

Psychology

- Students can write research papers in APA (American Psychological Association) style.
- Graduates can analyze experimental results and draw reasonable conclusions from them.

- Graduates can recognize and articulate the foundational assumptions, central ideas, and dominant criticisms of the 4 approaches to psychology: psychoanalytic, behaviorist, humanistic, and cognitive.

History

- Students can list 5 major events that occurred between the colonial era and WWI.
- Students can compare and contrast the major causes of the American and Spanish Civil wars.
- Given a contemporary American issue, students can identify the historical antecedents and causes related to this issue.

Editing an SLO to clearly describe a measurable outcome

The following examples describe an SLO that is not measurable as written, an explanation for why the SLO is not considered measurable, and a suggested edit that improves the SLO.

Original SLO:

Explore in depth the literature on an aspect of teaching strategies.

Evaluation of language used in this SLO:

Exploration is not a measurable activity but the quality of the *product of the exploration* would be measurable with a suitable rubric.

Improved SLO:

Write a paper based on an in-depth exploration of the literature on an aspect of teaching strategies.