

Learning and Program Outcomes for New Academic Programs (Degrees and Certificates)

What should I do?

Write, in your proposal to implement (Section VIII, A), or certificate proposal, outcomes (including assessment and evaluation statements) as listed below:

- Bachelor's Degree - 7 student learning outcomes and 1 program outcome
- Graduate and Professional Degrees - 2 student learning outcomes and 1 program outcome
- Certificate - 3 student learning outcomes and 1 program outcome

What is a student learning outcome?

A learning outcome is simply what a person will be able to do after the instruction that they couldn't do before it. It describes knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student has attained. A student learning outcome must identify specific, measurable, and achievable results. It defines the goal against which results will be measured (AKA: assessment and evaluation statements).

A good student learning outcome will inform the reader about:

- Who (or what group) you will be including in the expectations of the outcome;
- What you expect the student to be able to do at the end of a course of study that he or she could not do at the beginning of the course;
- When you expect the student to gain additional knowledge, skills and abilities; and
- Where the learning experiences occur.

What is a program outcome?

A program outcome identifies what improvements you expect to achieve as a result of your new academic program that will guide you toward your stated goals. It is similar in structure to a student learning outcome and must identify specific, measurable, and achievable results. It defines the goal against which results will be measured (AKA: assessment and evaluation statements).

A good program outcome will inform the reader about:

- Who is responsible for conducting the activities you include in your outcome;
- What will be the measurable results of your activities;
- When you expect your outcome to be attained; and
- Where you expect the experiences to take place.

What is an assessment and evaluation statement?

The assessment and evaluation statement must be included in both your student learning outcomes and your program outcome and identifies the:

- Specific behaviors you are looking for as evidence of the learning outcome accomplishment;
- Standard or criterion against which the outcome will be judged successful;
- Measure and method by which the assessment will occur;
- Validity of the measure and method used in the assessment;

- Time frame indicating when the assessment will occur;
- Responsibility indicating who is to review and store the assessment; and
- Conditions under which the assessment will occur and the reasons why the specific conditions (usually courses, and specific tests, papers, or other assessments within those courses) were chosen.

Consider each of these questions as you write your outcomes:

- What do you want to have happen, with the program and in terms of student learning? (outcome)
- In your most skeptical mood, how do you know if you're making progress? What concrete evidence of progress can you gather? (assessment)
- Later, when the program is approved and in operation for a year, you will gather your evidence, analyze the results, and adjust your plan, considering:
- Where are you now? (results)
- How will you improve your results in the future? Or, how will you retain your good results? (improvements/action plan)

What else is important?

- Be specific! This cannot be stressed enough. The reader will not necessarily have a background in your discipline, so be specific about what you want in your outcomes.
- You must have a standard against which you will analyze your data. Identification of the required score is not enough. You must also set the percentage of students you wish to demonstrate your competency as outlined in the outcome.

What should I avoid doing?

- Do not use letter grades in your assessment and evaluation statement. SACSCOC does not allow us to use end-of-course grades or any letter grades such as A, B, C on assignments. You may assess student ability to gain the knowledge, skill, or ability outlined in the outcome through a course-embedded assignment, quiz, exam, or even certain questions within an exam. Because we cannot use grades, we recommend that you translate student scores into percentages. For example, you may say: 80% of students will score 70% or higher on the question, exam, portfolio, etc.
- Do not try to use verbs that are outside those embedded in the Institutional Effectiveness Portal.

What are some good examples?

Learning Outcome Example:

Competency in physical geography - Upon completion of the course of instruction, students will be able to determine how natural agents (water, ice, wind, gases) scour, mold, build and circulate the landscape and atmosphere.

Assessment and Evaluation Process: This will result in 80% of students receiving 70% or better on normal course examinations and assignments in GEO2200C Physical Geography.

Program Outcome Example:

Program student quality - The admitted class will report a high score earned on the GMAT.

Assessment and Evaluation Process:

This will result in 80% of the full-time MBA students admitted to the program obtaining a score greater than 530, with an average score for the class greater than 575 on the GMAT standardized test. Statistics will be obtained from the GMAT testing service as part of the student application process. These statistics will be collected and compiled by the Program Director for the Summer 2016 entering class. Method(s) Performance on Licensing or other External Examinations.

How can I get help writing the outcomes for my degree or certificate proposal?

Contact the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Ms. Kayce Morton, at 645-2740 or at kmorton@admin.fsu.edu. (Email usually works best for Kayce.)