

# **Department of Institutional Effectiveness and Research**

Helpful Tips When Developing Student Learning Outcomes

The examples and tools included in this resource are intended to serve only as a reference and guide and not as an exclusive representation of all possible examples, tools, or best practices.

#### **Introduction to Student Learning Outcomes**

What is a student learning outcome? The Texas Higher Education Coording Board (2015)
defines the term student learning outcomes "what students are able to demonstrate in terms of the knowledge, skills, and attitude upon complete of a program" (pataist) with this definition in mind that student learning outcomes are developed, assessed, and improved upon.

How to begin developing student learning outcomes? As a start, bainstorming amonghe departmental faculty members, with likeinded colleagues and with knowledgeable professionals in the field can generate answers to the below questions:

How do we know if our student learning outcomes are comprehensive? Because student learning outcomes should be appropriate to and comprehensive of the program's academic discipline, consult resources such as the following to gauge the relevance of the program's learning outcomes:

### **Strong Student Learning Outcomes**

#### A strong student learning outcome is a S.M.A.R.T. student learning outcome

Weaker Outcomes	Strong Outcomes
Outcome verbs are vague (e.g., understand, comprehend, demonstrate an understanding and do not really get at the intended outcome	Outcome verbs are sharp, clear, and specific ( write, calculate, describe, analyze) and make it of clear what students should know and be able to do at the end of the program
Multiple verbs per learning outcome	One verb per learning outcome
Wordy, packing in multiple ideas	Brief and to the point
Focus onlyon lower levels of thought	Demonstrate varying levels of thought (Bloom's Taxonomy)

Not easy to observe/demonstrate/measure

#### How are student learning outcomes structured?

There are a variety of formats and guides to structuring a student learning outcome. The below formula and the ABCDs of SLOs are two practiessempless of what to include when writing a student learning outcome

Using a formula to assist in structuring the writing of a student learning outcome:

Graduating students will be able to [

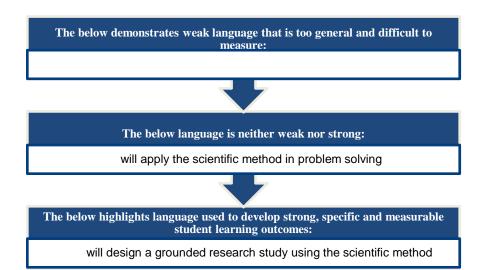
How can Bloom's Revised Taxonomy help in creating the student learning outcome? "The taxonomy is useful in two important ways. First, use of the taxonomy encourages instructors to think of learning objectives in behavioral terms to consider what the learner can do ascar result the instruction. A learning objective written using activerbs will indicate best method of assessing the skills and knowledge taught. Second, considering learning goals in light of Bloom's taxonomy highlights the need for including learning objectives that require higher levels of cognitive skills that and to deeper learning and transfer of knowledge and skills to a greater variety fasks and contexts (Adams, 2015, p.153)

What type of language should be used to create student learning outcomes?

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY OF ACTION VERBS								
LEVEL	DEFINITION	SAMPLE VERBS				SAMPLE BEHAVIORS		
KNOWLEDGE	Student recalls or recognizes information, ideas, and principles in the approximate form in which they were learned.		Identify Label List Match	Memorize Name Order Outline	Recognize Relate Recall Repeat	Reproduce Select State	The student will define the 6 levels of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain.	

COMPREHENSION

## Examples of language used to develop student learning outcomes



#### Helpful Tips for Student Learning Outcomes

**Do a program's student learning outcomes always remain the same?** A program's **s**udent learning outcomes are not set in stone – they can evolve and change over time.

When might an SLO change?								
After continuously meeting the outcome over multiple assessment cycles	When changing the direction of the program mission or curriculum		disciplinary or professional					

To whom should a program's student learning outcomes be communicated? A variety of audiences should be aware of or would benefit from being familiar with a program's student learning outcomes.

#### References

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