

Writing Program Goals

Guidance for Academic Programs

Program Goals are: Broad and abstract statements, developed collaboratively with faculty and other stakeholders, that describe general knowledge and abilities that students are expected to achieve through the program.

The key considerations when writing program goals for academic programs are that they are:

- 3-7 goals identified
- Clearly stated and concisely written
- Realistic and achievable
- Aligned clearly to the program mission
- Focused on student learning
- Reflect the field's purpose & intentions
- Uses action verbs to clearly describe the general knowledge and abilities that are expected of all graduates
- Publicly available, known, and easy to find

The Structure of a Program Goal for an Academic Program

“Program graduates will **[verb]** **[general knowledge or ability]**.”

- See [Bloom's Taxonomy of Measurable Verbs](#), via NILOA, for examples of usable verbs.
- The program goals are not just for internal use, but also for informing stakeholders within and beyond the university. Make sure that they are written for a general audience and are prominently displayed on your program's website.

An Example of a Program Goal

“Program graduates will **transform** data into actionable knowledge for use in assessment.”

Writing Your Program Goals

A Process for Academic Programs

Brainstorming your Program Goals

List 3 to 7 distinct items of general knowledge or abilities that all graduates are expected to master by the time they graduate from your program. For example: “*Data processing, analysis, and reporting.*”

Drafting your Program Goals

Using action verbs, draft each of your brainstormed items into a goal statement. You can refer to [Bloom’s Taxonomy of Measurable Verbs](#), for examples of usable verbs. See the previous page for an example.

Reviewing your Draft Program Goals

Once you have drafted your program goals, you can use the following questions to review and refine.

1. Does each goal align clearly to the approved program mission?
2. Do they reflect the field’s purpose and intentions?
3. Are they focused on student learning?
4. Are they realistic and achievable?
5. Are they written clearly and concisely with a general audience in mind?