

Writing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Guidance for Academic Programs

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are: Specific and measurable skills, abilities, knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes that students are expected to achieve through the program.

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

- Clearly stated, precise and concisely written
- Expressed in terms of the student
- Realistic and achievable within the timeframe of the program
- Aligned clearly to the program goals
- Measurable, an observable behavior
- Uses action verbs to clearly identify a specific skill, ability, knowledge, belief, or attitude that students are expected to achieved
- Publicly available, known, and easy to find

One Possible Structure of a Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for an Academic Program

“Students will be able to [action verb] [specific skill, ability, knowledge, belief, or attitude] to [person, place, or thing and purpose].”

- See [Bloom’s Taxonomy of Measurable Verbs](#), via NILOA, for examples of usable verbs.
- The Student Learning Outcomes 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, when finalized, are prominently displayed on your program’s website.

An Example of an Academic Program Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

“Students will be able to **design** data visualizations and other reporting mechanisms to communicate useful information to **stakeholders to inform assessment**.”

Writing Your Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

A Process for Academic Programs

Brainstorming your Student Learning Outcomes

For each of your program goals, list the distinct and specific skills, knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes that all graduates are expected to master by the time they graduate from the program. For example: “*Design data visualizations.*”

Drafting your Student Learning Outcomes

Using action verbs, draft each listed item into an outcome 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 Student Learning Outcomes

Once you have drafted your student learning outcomes, you can use the following questions to review and refine.

1. Are they aligned clearly to the Program Goals?
2. Are they written in terms of the student?
3. Are they observable and measurable behaviors?
4. Are they realistic and achievable in the timeframe of the program?
5. Are they written clearly and concisely with a general audience in mind?
6. Are they written precisely?