

# The Basics of Outcomes and Assessment

## Writing Outcomes

Outcomes describe what skills or attitudes a student should be able to demonstrate at the end of a course (Student Learning Outcomes - SLOs) or program (Program Learning Outcomes – PLOs). The same principles that apply to writing SLOs apply to PLOs. These are the basics – refer to the [Learning Assessment Committee's webpage](#) for more detail and resources, including [Three Steps to Writing SLOs](#).

- Outcomes focus on big picture, overarching concepts in the course, and use action verbs from [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) with an emphasis on higher-order thinking skills for most college courses. Depending on the level of the course, more basic Bloom's verbs can be used. Aim to include outcomes from all the Bloom's domains.
- There should be about 3 outcomes for each course or program. When in doubt, fewer is better. Courses that are .5 or 1 unit may only need one outcome.
- Objectives are content-specific nuts and bolts of the course (what the instructor teaches). Objectives may be numerous. Outcomes are few, broad, and require students to apply skills or attitudes learned in the course (what the students can DO).
- Outcomes must be assessable, such as by exams, quizzes, writing assignments, projects or surveys.
- SLOs must be included in course syllabi.

## Approval of Outcomes

Your outcomes must be documented in CurricUNET Meta and approved by the Assessment Coordinators. When you create new courses or update courses, approval of outcomes and assessment methods is a required step in the process. See the [Rubric for Outcomes Approval](#), which includes examples from various departments, for more detail.

## Assessment of Outcomes

- Assessment is centered around student success and is a collaborative effort among faculty.
- You should assess at least one outcome per course per year, and document the findings in the Meta Assessment Module.
- Your assessment findings provide evidence of student learning, and analysis of this information may lead you to create an action plan for improvement.
- If your SLO maps to a PLO or an ILO (Institutional Learning Outcome), your assessment findings apply to those as well. Be aware of how your SLOs relate to PLOs and ILOs to help your department create a well-organized assessment plan.