



University of Vermont

Student Learning Outcomes Information Sheet

Assessment begins with the learning outcomes (LOs) students are expected to meet. LOs are statements of what observable and measurable student outcomes the course, Program, or Catamount Core Curriculum (CCC) category intends to accomplish. LOs are student-centered and describe what it is that the learner is expected to learn.

LOs exist at multiple levels. General Education Learning Outcomes (also often referred to as Institutional Learning Outcomes) indicate what every undergraduate student matriculated at an institution is expected to learn. At The University of Vermont, the CCC details the General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) all students are expected to meet. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) indicate what students enrolled in a program (certificate, minor, major, etc.) are expected to learn. Finally, Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) describe what students enrolled in a course are expected to learn. CLOs are often mapped to either GELOs or PLOs. In other words, students typically acquire GELOs and PLOs in their courses; however, it is possible for GELOs or PLOs to be acquired outside courses (co-curricular activities, internships, etc.). It is also expected that courses have additional LOs that exist independently of GELOs and PLOs. Curriculum Mapping is a handy tool often used to indicate where students are expected to be exposed to and acquire GELOs and PLOs; where (which courses) and when (which year of the assessment cycle) the outcomes are assessed is often indicated on the curriculum map as well.

LOs must be observable and measurable student behaviors that can be assessed using quantitative and/or qualitative methods. Standardized Language that can be used to construct the statement of an outcome behavior includes (but is not limited to) such phrases as:

- Students will be able to show....
- Students will be able to define....
- Students will be able to demonstrate...
- Students will be able to use....
- Students will be able to solve....
- Students will be able to identify....
- Students will be able to plot or draw....
- Students will be able to calculate or formulate....
- Students will be able to apply....

- Students will be able to discuss or describe or write....
- Students will be able to distinguish....
- Students will be able to explain....

Good learning outcomes are:

- learner centered; good learning outcomes focus on what students can do instead of the effort we put into teaching them,
- not tied to a particular Faculty member's approach to a course,
- meaningful for Faculty and students; if you cannot explain *why* a certain outcome is important, it probably isn't meaningful,
- measurable; they communicate how student learning will be assessed in the course.

Additional Resources:

- [Creating Learning Outcomes from Boston University](#)
- [Student Learning Assessment at the University of Wisconsin - Madison](#)