Guidelines for Writing Course Goals vs. Intended Learning Outcomes for Course Outlines (New Course Proposals)

Often, in curriculum writing, there is some confusion between <u>Goals</u> and <u>Intended Learning Outcomes</u>. Think of it this way…

A goal is a broad statement of desired outcomes associated with a given course or program. For goals, you can use words like: *Foster, Enhance, Learn, Improve, Develop, Understand, Know, etc.*

Intended Learning Outcomes are **measurable** and **specific.** They tell what students will be able to do when they complete the unit or the course. Lists of appropriate verbs to be used for writing Learning Outcomes are often based on Bloom's Taxonomy, which delineates skills into six levels of learning (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). Below are suggestions for verbs that can be used to write Intended Learning Outcomes for course outlines.

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Count	Associate	Apply	Analyze	Categorize	Appraise
Define	Compute	Calculate	Arrange	Combine	Assess
Describe	Convert	Change	Breakdown	Compile	Compare
Draw	Defend	Classify	Design	Create	Conclude
Identify	Distinguish	Complete	Detect	Design	Contrast
Label	Estimate	Compute	Develop	Devise	Critique
Match	Explain	Divide	Diagram	Explain	Determine
Name	Extrapolate	Examine	Differentiate	Formulate	Evaluate
Outline	Generalize	Graph	Discriminate	Generate	Interpret
Point	Give examples	Manipulate	Illustrate	Integrate	Judge
Quote	Paraphrase	Modify	Outline	Modify	Justify
Read	Predict	Operate	Point out	Organize	Measure
Recite	Rewrite	Perform	Relate	Prescribe	Prioritize
Recognize	Specify	Produce	Select	Propose	Rank
Record		Show	Separate	Rearrange	Rate
Repeat		Solve	Subdivide	Reconstruct	Support
Reproduce			Utilize	Revise	Test
Select				Summarize	Validate
State					
Write					

When someone sees the list of verbs for Intended Learning Outcomes, they can often be confused because some of the verbs indicate **process** as well as the outcome. For example, the verb "outline" can be used in both senses. ***Outline*** can describe a learning outcome when the result you are expecting is developing that skill of making an outline. In that case:

Intended Learning Outcome	Assessment Method
Outline a passage	Final outline is assessed against criteria established in a rubric.

Outline can also be thought of as an activity that leads to another learning outcome. You may ask a student to outline a passage in order to have the student be able to detect an anomalous sentence in a passage. In that case:

Intended Learning Outcome	Assessment Method
Detect anomalous sentence in a passage	Outline of passage shows detected anomaly

Example of Goal to Outcome mapping for a Technical Course

3.0   Goals of the course

      3.1   To develop technical vocabulary related to lens design features
      3.2   To develop knowledge related to the identification and application of procedures used to enhance lens performance
      3.3   To develop knowledge related to common lens aberrations

7.0   Intended learning outcomes and associated outcome assessment methods

One method of showing intended learning outcomes and goals:

Intended learning outcomes	Assessment method
7.1 To develop technical vocabulary related to lens design features (Goal 3.1)	
7.1.1 Define technical vocabulary	Out-of-class assignments
7.1.2 Describe common lens designs using appropriate technical vocabulary	Test

Alternative method of showing intended learning outcomes and goals:

Intended learning outcomes	Assessment method
7.2 List lens treatments used to enhance the optical performance capabilities of lenses (Goal 3.2)	Out-of-class assignments; Test
7.3 Determine appropriate lens designs and materials based on lens application (Goal 3.2)	Final Exam
7.4 Describe characteristics, properties and interactions of light in different materials (Goal 3.2)	In-class assignments; Test
7.5 Identify lens aberrations inherent in the lens manufacturing process (Goal 3.3)	Out-of-class assignments; Final Exam