

GUIDE TO WRITING COURSE LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following is a list of characteristics describing well written course level student learning outcomes. In general, a student learning outcome should be observable, measurable, and rooted in the essential content of the course. The list is designed as a guideline, and some characteristics may not apply to all courses, outcomes, or disciplines.

❖ OUTCOMES ARE CENTRAL TO THE COURSE CONTENT

Does the statement describe what students will know or be able to do as a result of taking the course?

Describes what the course will do: The course will introduce students to the scientific method.
Describes what students will be able to do: **Apply the scientific method when conducting experiments**

❖ OUTCOMES ARE CLEAR

The outcomes are written in such a way that students can understand what they will gain from taking the course. Would another faculty member teaching the same course understand the expectations? Would a student?

Not as clear: Students will appreciate 19th century American literature.
Clear: **Describe the distinct literary characteristics of 19th century American literature**

❖ OUTCOMES ARE OBSERVABLE & MEASURABLE (ACTION VERBS)

What evidence needs to be present or what specific behavior needs to be visible in order to determine that students are achieving the outcomes?

List of verbs to avoid when writing learning outcomes:

- Understand
- Be aware
- Enjoy
- Know
- Realize

❖ **OUTCOMES REPRESENT CRITICAL COURSE MATERIAL**

What are the most important things a student gains or achieves in your course?

What is the most important knowledge that your students acquire from your course?

A review of course level learning outcomes might reveal outcomes that are not essential to the course or represent a component of a broader program learning outcome. Consider revising, streamlining, or eliminating such outcomes.

❖ **OUTCOMES ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE COURSE LEVEL AND DEGREE**

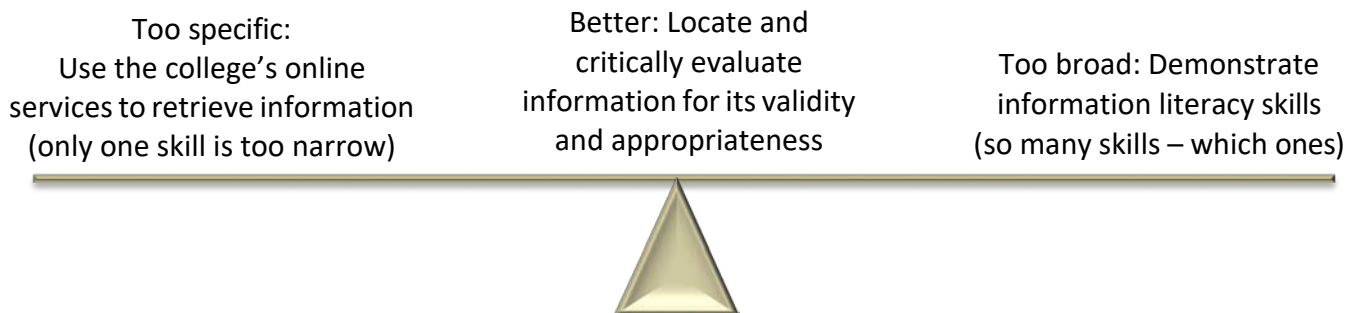
Is this outcome achievable for students in an introductory course?

Or is this outcome more rigorous or advanced and may be a better fit for a higher level course?

❖ **OUTCOMES ARE NEITHER TOO BROAD NOR TOO SPECIFIC**

Is the outcome so specific that it dictates curriculum content (there is only one way achieve the outcome)?

Is the outcome so broad that it does not represent the unique knowledge and skills covered by the course?



❖ **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on developing course level learning outcomes, see the [Course Assessment Guide](#).