

Guide for Writing Learning Outcomes

Programs, Emphases, & Minors

WHAT

PLOs are the skills, knowledge, and abilities students will possess upon completion of a program, emphasis, or minor

WHY

PLOs can clarify purpose in curriculum for students, accreditors, and other stakeholders

General Guidelines

Note: most programs have 3-5 outcomes

Begin with the end in mind

A vision is the foundation for writing student learning outcomes.

- What will the program, emphasis, or minor look like?
- How will you prepare students to enter the workforce?
- How will student success be measured?

Differentiate

- Each program, emphasis, or minor needs their own learning outcomes
- For instance, an associates in music should have different learning outcomes than a minor in music

Use plural nouns

- Theories vs. Theory
- Skills vs. Skill
- Methods vs. Method
- Problems vs. Problem

Example: Identify core elements of professionalism

Use only one verb in each outcome

Exception:

Two verbs are allowed if they are interdependent.

Example of interdependent verbs:

Design and conduct experiments to test physical science theories.

Use measurable verbs



Measurable

summarize

critique

explain

develop

analyze

classify



Non-measurable

understand

appreciate

know

observe

recognize

read

PLO Structure

PLOs must complete this sentence

Upon successful program completion, the student will be able to...

**Action verb + description of specific behavior
(+ what is the measure of success)**

Examples

MINOR | Russian

- Communicate in Russian at an intermediate to advanced low level.
- Evaluate Russian culture within historical, social, political, and economic perspectives of Russia.

MAJOR | Technology Management

- Manage complex systems and processes.
- Assess current and emerging technologies to problem solve and support innovation.
- Communicate with a wide range of internal stakeholders and various outside communities.

MASTERS | Public Administration

- Solve public service-related problems and make effective decisions in a dynamic and constantly changing environment.
- Execute budgets using public finance principles and procedures.
- Evaluate the legal, regulatory, human resource, and ethical issues surrounding public service delivery.
- Develop technical and leadership skills within all career levels of public services.

Additional Examples

CP | Theater Technology

- Execute basic makeup application skills for stage.
- Plan and produce scenery, props, lighting and sound for theatrical productions.
- Employ costume construction technologies using a commercial pattern.

A.A.S. | Art & Design: Photography

- Develop proficiency in the technical aspects of photographic capture, lighting, editing, and printing.
- Apply principles of composition, color theory, and form to communicate and express unique ideas within photographic work.
- Incorporate conceptual and logistical techniques in both traditional and digital photography.
- Develop self-critique skills to edit photographic work that reflects a professional level of technical and artistic skills.

CP 3 | Emergency Management

- Evaluate disaster impacts and implications for policy and program planning, operations, and management.
- Protect life, property, and the environment through communication, collaboration, and coordination with stakeholders.

M.ED | Applied Behavioral Analysis

- Address problem behavior with functional assessment and behavior support planning that meets best practice standards in applied behavior analysis.
- Develop a comprehensive treatment plan that meets best practice standards in Applied Behavior Analysis.
- Identify appropriate forms of measurement and data display to make informed clinical decisions.
- Develop training and performance monitoring for staff and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate ethical conduct in their professional practice.

Editing & Revising PLOs

Are you wondering if your program learning outcomes are up to par? Consider these questions and update the PLOs where necessary. If your program outcomes relate more closely to the red words, there is need for revision. The words in green meet the required standards for PLOs.

Is it a  **step** or  **part of a larger outcome** ?

Is it at a  **course level** or  **program level** ?

Is it  **an assignment** or  **a program result** ?

Does your PLO set cover  **one course** or  **several** ?

Need additional help?

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