Writing Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes (SLOs):

• Help students learn more effectively.
• Make clear what students should expect from their educational experience.
• Encourage students to be intentional learners who direct and monitor their own learning.
• Help faculty design courses, curriculum, and programs.
• Make graduates’ skills and knowledge clear to employers, accrediting agencies, etc.

Questions that student learning outcomes address:

• What knowledge, skills, abilities, and values should the ideal student graduating from our program demonstrate?
• How well does our program prepare students for careers, graduate school, professional study, and/or lifelong learning?
• What evidence can be used to demonstrate growth in students’ knowledge, skills, abilities, and values as they progress through our program?

Program student learning outcomes:

• Align with school and institutional mission.
• Describe what students will learn, rather than what faculty will do.
• Are framed in terms of the program and not individual courses.
• Are observable and/or measurable.
• Rely on verbs that specify definite, observable behaviors (see Bloom’s Taxonomy).
• Focus on the central abilities of the discipline. Incorporate or adapt professional organizations’ outcome statements when they exist.
• Are collaboratively authored and collectively accepted.

Examples of student learning outcomes:

• Students analyze the grammar of music in varying historical eras and styles and demonstrate fluency in analytical practices. (Music BA)
• Students communicate effectively in writing using APA (American Psychological Association) style, the accepted publication style of the discipline. (Psychology BS)
• Students recognize and explain the major theoretical perspectives and key issues of debate in the academic study of religion. (Religious Studies BA)
• Students design and conduct a research project relevant to Urban Studies. (Urban Studies BA)