

A Guide to Developing Measurable Outcomes

Everything starts with the **mission statement** of your degree plan or unit/service area. Make sure your mission supports the broader college or service area mission and values.

Outcomes should be

- ❖ Specific
- ❖ Measurable
- ❖ Attainable
- ❖ Results-Oriented
- ❖ Time-Bound

Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, or Disposition: Regardless if they are written for an academic program or a service unit, outcomes can be identified as knowledge, skills, attitudes, or disposition.

ACADEMIC – Student Learning Outcomes: SLOs are statements that specify what students will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate when they have completed or participated in the program, course, project or activity.

- ✓ Think...what are the most important things a student should know, be able to do, or demonstrate after completing my degree program?

SERVICE UNIT – Service Outcomes: Service Outcomes are statements that specify what an organization intends to do, achieve, or accomplish through certain activities or experiences (what a program accomplishes for its students, faculty/staff or institution).

- ✓ What are the most important things my organization does for the student or university?
What does it do that distinguishes itself from other organizations?

Specify an action by the student that must be observable, measurable and demonstrated.

Use action verbs that result in behavior that can be observed and measured such as:
analyze, apply, argue, arrange, assemble, assess, calculate, categorize, choose, classify, compare, compile, compute, create, criticize, critique, defend, define, demonstrate, describe, design, develop, differentiate, discuss, distinguish, estimate, examine, explain, formulate, identify, illustrate, indicate, interpret, label, list, locate, manage, memorize, order, operate, organize, plan, practice, predict, prepare, propose, question, rate, recognize, repeat, report, reproduce, review, revise, schedule, select, solve, state, translate, use, utilize, write

Avoid: appreciate, become aware of, familiar with, know, learn, understand (cannot be measured).

Test it: Does your outcome:

- ❖ Support the program objectives?
- ❖ Result in learning or improvement?
- ❖ Is the outcome detailed and specific enough to be measured?
- ❖ Describe what the program intends for students to know (cognitive), think (affective, attitudinal), or do (behavioral, performance)? For an administrative unit, think in terms of providing a service, performing a task, or process.
- ❖ Can the outcome be used to make decisions on how to improve the program?

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Measures

Combines the assessment Methodology and a Target – ask yourself:

- ❖ What data will allow us to determine whether the outcome has been met?
- ❖ Is the data attainable?
- ❖ How often should it be collected?
- ❖ Who is responsible for collection, analysis, reporting?
- ❖ When will the collection, analysis, reporting occur?

What is the Methodology?

Direct (most applicable to academic programs):

An assessment method designed to directly measure what a participant knows or is able to do. It requires demonstration of the skill or knowledge, such as write an essay).

Indirect (most applicable to service units):

An assessment method that indirectly measures what a target subject knows, can do or values (i.e., what a subject perceives or is satisfied with).

What is the Target? What is expected? What is success? Push the envelope! Should be hard to obtain. Example would be 95% percent of student can do (what ever task to ___degree). The units satisfaction survey will result in 95% of those serviced as satisfied.

For example, **a measure could evaluate** the following:

- ❖ Experiential activities (e.g. internships, voluntary activities, etc.)
- ❖ Student work samples (e.g., case study responses, essay responses, etc.)
- ❖ Collection of products demonstrating extent of learning (portfolios)
- ❖ Surveys (student, alumni, etc.)
- ❖ Exit interviews
- ❖ Employment rates
- ❖ Retention/graduation data
- ❖ Demographics of student population
- ❖ Focus groups
- ❖ Performance
- ❖ Efficiency
- ❖ Compliance
- ❖ Attitudes
- ❖ Process

Strive to develop **two assessment measures** for each outcome. Consider:

- ❖ What data will you need?
- ❖ Where / how will the data be collected?
- ❖ Are there mechanisms in place already to collect data?
- ❖ How often is the data collected?
- ❖ How will data be disseminated and discussed?