



Learning Outcomes Toolkit

A portable guide to helping
colleagues learn about program
learning outcomes, a key component
of program assessment

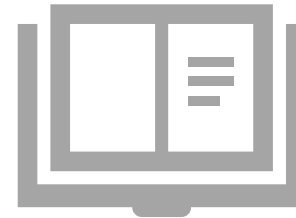


Preparation



Preview existing LOs and mission statements as context for choosing from among the elements of this toolkit.

Knowing where programs are with their learning outcomes will help you efficiently guide colleagues to the most urgent matters to address.



The information on the remaining slides can help you answer some of the common questions that arise, such as:

Why spend my time on writing/improving LOs? What are they good for?

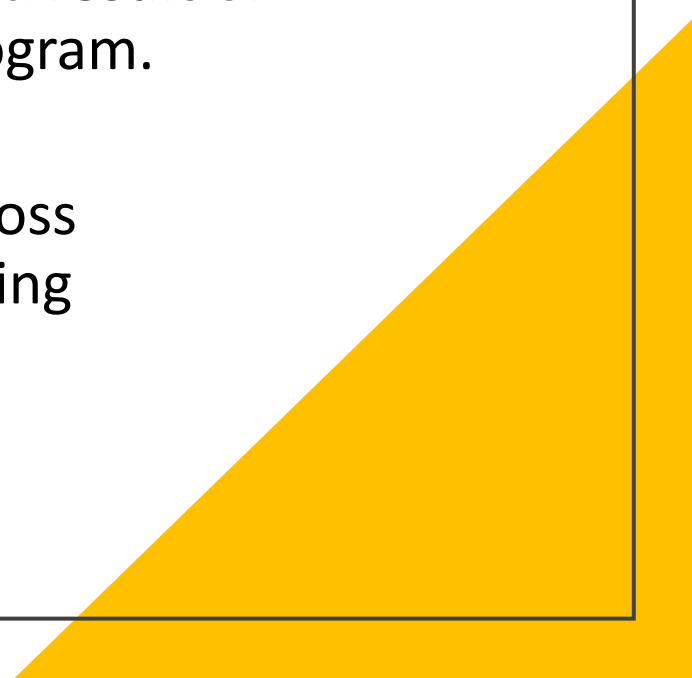
What's the difference between program and course LOs?

Do we have enough LOs?

Are they the right LOs?

Are they "good" LOs?

Learning Outcome (LO) Definition

- A good program learning outcome (PLO) is a **measurable** statement of what graduating/exiting students should **know, be able to do, believe, or value** as a **result** of participating in your program.
 - PLOs describe students' **cumulative** learning across courses and other learning opportunities.
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Uses for Learning Outcomes

Students can

- explain what they have gained through their studies to peers, parents, and employers
- better understand how to focus their efforts and connect their learning across courses and experiences into a more coherent whole.

Faculty and staff can

- communicate expectations to students
- focus their efforts on activities that support the primary goals of their program
- assess whether those goals are being met
- promote the value of their program to stakeholders.

Good LO Examples: Doctor of Physical Therapy

PLO example:

- Students examine patients using appropriate tests and measures

Course learning outcomes (CLOs) that support this program learning outcome:

- PT 5320: Students [physically] demonstrate appropriate tests or measures during practical examination.
- PT7100/7200: Students utilize tests and measures during a [practical] examination.
- PT8800/8820: Students interpret findings of tests and measures.

Questions:

- Do our outcomes describe all of the key skills, knowledge, and values or dispositions taught in our program? Are any outdated or are any missing?
- Are the LOs precise enough that faculty, staff, and student will interpret them in the same way?
 - For example, for an LO like *Students write well*, some may assume this includes a well-supported, organized argument with supporting graphics and adherence to a discipline's style guide, whereas others may assume the outcome only includes some of those criteria.
- Do multiple courses or other learning opportunities contribute to each PLO?
 - If not, you might have a CLO instead of a PLO.

Broad Discussion Questions for LOs

Hands- On Activity Options

1. **Review** existing LOs using the [assessment plan review rubric](#) criteria

- Focus on the **results** of learning or participating in the program
- Isolate **one** behavior per outcome
- Identify a **measurable, observable behavior** using an [action verb](#)
- Are clearly **derived** from the **mission statement**
- Are **appropriate** for the target audience (e.g., BA vs. MA students)

2. **Analyze** CLOs and/or course assignments

- List each CLO or assignment under the PLO that it supports.
 - If a CLO corresponds to more than one PLO or doesn't align with any PLO, highlight it for discussion.
- Discuss whether the PLOs effectively capture the full range of behaviors elicited in the CLOs and the assignments.
 - Look for omissions, mismatches in scope, outdated goals

Want More Help?



See the [Academic Programs](#) or [Student Services Programs](#) assessment handbook.



Contact Dr. Cathy Barrette, Sr. Director of Assessment, at c.barrette@wayne.edu



Attend a workshop or request a consultation with the [Office for Teaching and Learning](#)