



## Suggestions for writing Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes & Course-Level Learning Goals

Goals and Outcomes should be student-centered, define directly observable/clearly assessable demonstration of knowledge or skills, and expect higher-order thinking, as appropriate to the course level.

- Goals and Outcomes statements should begin with “Student will be able to...” and should include an action verb and an object of that action.
- Useful verbs for Learning Goal statements include:
  - Lower order: classify, categorize, define, describe, label, list, recite
  - Higher order: apply, compare, create, critique, defend, develop, design, evaluate, infer, interpret, illustrate, synthesize, verify, test100- and 200-level course might mostly include lower order actions.  
Upper-level courses should mostly ask students to engage with higher order learning goals that build upon some lower order goals, either from that course or earlier courses.
- Goals and Outcomes should inform the design of assignments or activities that generate evidence you can directly observe in the results of student work (learning artifacts).
- Statements should avoid references to internal states of mind and ambiguous language: appreciate, feel, know, learn, understand, explore, awareness of.
- Knowledge is impossible to observe while it is internalized. When wanting to assess knowledge, rather than demonstration of skills, focus assignments/students on the ability to demonstrate knowledge, by producing an artifact that contains expected information.
- Learning Goals statements that include more than one goal for skill or knowledge demonstration are more difficult to assess. If the Learning Goal asks students to do A *and* B, it will be difficult to measure with a single score which items students are or are not being successful with. A single average score on an assignment with multiple Goals can only reveal so much. Student may do poorly, but it will be unclear if they struggled with A or B, or perhaps both, so it is difficult to know what to target for improvement in the future. In such cases, the assessment instrument might need to focus on a single line in a rubric for reporting, rather than a total score.