

## Academic Assessment (About-Tips-Techniques-Guidelines-Examples)

### What are Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)?

Statements:

- That specify what learners will know, be able to do or be able to demonstrate when they complete or participate in a program/activity/course/project.

Outcomes:

- Are expressed as knowledge, skills, attitudes or values.

Outcomes focus on the end result of your program

- How do you know the students have learned what you want them to learn?
- What does it look like?
- How will you identify it?

Student Learning Outcomes relate to the mission of UAH, the mission and goals of your college and/or your department or program. SLOs define what the graduate should know and be able to do at the end of your program. Avoid compound outcomes and/or also called double barreling.

Use simple, specific action verbs to describe what the students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of your program.

- Action verbs result in overt behavior that can be observed and measured.
  - Analyze, apply, compare, create, estimate, demonstrate, illustrate  
(see *Learning Taxonomies*, p. 10)
- Avoid verbs that are unclear and call for behavior that cannot be observed or measured.
  - Appreciate, understand, learn, know, become familiar with

### SLO Tips

Begin your outcomes with a statement like the following:

- “By the end of this program, successful students will be able to ...”

Begin each outcome with an action verb that is specific to the desired level of learning.

- The action verb is followed by the subject of learning and context to which the learning will occur.

### Assessment Techniques

#### Direct Measures

- Standardized tests
- Performance on licensure or professional exams
- Essays
- Exhibits
- Performances
- Course assignments
- Portfolios of work samples
- Authentic assessments
- Job placement rates

## Academic Assessment (About-Tips-Techniques-Guidelines-Examples)

### Indirect Measures

- Student surveys
- Graduate follow-ups
- Focus groups
- Exit interviews

### Common Pitfalls for Assessing Student Learning

- Using grades, final exam scores or student GPAs as a criteria for success.
  - These indicators do not provide sufficient information to guide program improvement.

### SLO Guidelines

Identify 3-5 (at least 3) student learning outcomes for your program to serve as benchmark assessments for completion of your program

- Write outcomes that are Measurable, Manageable, Meaningful
- Identify 2 appropriate assessment method strategies for each learning outcome (at least one direct)
- Develop a scoring guide/rubric
- Identify the target criteria for success
- Identify the course/s where assessment will occur

Program Assessment answers these questions:

- What should an UAH graduate in ----- know and be able to do at the end of the program that they could not do before?
- Do they know it?
- How do I know?
- How does this information help improve the quality of this program at UAH?

### SLO Examples

By the end of this program, successful students will:	Learning Outcome	Learning Outcome Analysis
Outcome 1: (Bad Outcome Example)	Be given opportunities to learn effective communication skills	This outcome only describes the programmatic content and not the attributes of successful students
Outcome 2: (Vague Outcome Example)	Have a deeper appreciate for good communication practices	Does not start with action verb or define level of learning; no context and not specific
Outcome 3: (Less vague)	Understand principles of effective communication	Begins with an action verb, no level of learning is defined, subject of learning is too vague to assess
Outcome 4: (Specific)	Communicate effectively in a professional environment through technical reports and presentations	Begins with an action verb, defines level of learning, provides context to ensure outcome is specific and measurable