Creating Quality Student Learning Outcomes
Overview

- **A few FAQs**
  - What is a Student Learning Outcome (SLO)?
  - What should be considered when creating SLOs?
  - How many SLOs are needed per state-required objective?
  - Do all sections of the course have to have the same SLOs?

- **How To Construct Well-Written SLOs**

- **Putting the Elements Together: Examples of SLOs**

- **Next Steps**
What is a Student Learning Outcome (SLO)?

- The skill or concept students will learn
- The “take away” from instruction
- Creating quality SLOs is the first step in the assessment process.
What should be considered when creating SLOs?

1. What are the specific student behaviors, skills, or abilities that would tell you the course goals have been achieved?

2. Ideally and briefly, what would a skeptic need (evidence, behaviors, etc.) in order to see that students are achieving the goals set out for them?

3. In your experience, what evidence tells you when students have met these goals – how do you know they’re “getting” it?

Excerpt from *Program-Based Review & Assessment*

University of Massachusetts Amherst
How many SLOs are needed per state-required objective?

- There is no magic number. The number of SLOs will vary depending on their complexity. However, one SLO is most likely not sufficient to adequately address a state-required objective. More than 5 would be too many.

- Note that Communication Skills is a 3-pronged state-required objective. Therefore, you should have at least one SLO to address each aspect: oral and written and visual.
Do all sections of the course have to have the same SLOs?

Yes.

Remember, you are assessing the entire course.

Therefore, SLOs should be the same for all sections of the course.
How To Construct Well-Written SLOs
SLOs Contain 3 Elements

- **Learner**
  - Written in terms of the student (not the instructor)

- **Verb**
  - Observable, measureable action verb that implies cognition
    - Ex’s of Acceptable Verbs: summarize, create, analyze, evaluate, solve
      
      *If the student can summarize, create, etc. s/he has learned.*

    - Ex’s of Unacceptable Verbs: read, think
      
      *These are not observable, measureable & do not imply learning.*

- **Result**
  - The product/performance that will be evaluated.
Putting the Elements Together: Examples of SLOs

Critical Thinking Skills

- **Students** [the learner] will be able to **analyze and evaluate** [verbs that imply learning] the **content and delivery of a speech of historical significance** [result].

Communication Skills (Visual)

- **Students** will **determine** the **best tabular or graphical method to present data**.
Empirical & Quantitative Skills

- **Students** will calculate incidence and prevalence of a communicable disease over a 10 year period.

Teamwork

- **Students** will contribute to team meetings.

Social Responsibility

- The **student** will identify at least 3 health disparities within underserved and/or vulnerable populations.

Personal Responsibility

- The **student** will identify areas for potential communication abuse connected with their own reports.
Next Steps

- After SLOs have been developed, faculty should determine the method by which each one will be assessed, i.e.: rubric, embedded exam questions.

- Assessment method(s) should
  - match the SLOs &
  - be the same across all sections of the course.

- Want further guidance?
  - For details RE steps in assessment & state requirements, see resources located elsewhere on this web site.