

Student Learning Outcomes



Program Student Learning Outcomes

Program-level Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) are defined as the knowledge, skills, abilities, or attitudes that students have at the completion of a degree or certificate. Faculty within a discipline meet to discuss the expected learning outcomes for students who complete a particular series of courses, such as those required for a certificate or a degree. PSLOs should be the BIG things you want students to get out of a degree or certificate. PSLOs should be developed throughout the program and in multiple courses. Discussions might also involve colleagues in other programs on prerequisites and transfer courses and with community stakeholders for job expectations. Program outcomes and assessment translate into the important role of institutional improvement. This level of outcomes assessment has the greatest potential to improve student pathways and overall achievement.

It is recommended that each program have 3-6 PSLOs. Discipline faculty members might have a more comprehensive list based on the requirements of external stakeholders (employers, state requirements, etc.). PSLOs can be assessed in many ways but for most programs, PSLOs are only assessed through linked course-level SLOs. First, you might assess PSLOs in a capstone project or capstone course that many students complete when earning a certificate or degree. Second, you could assess development of a set of skills as students advance through different courses in your program (ENG 1A -> ENG 4 or 7). Third, programs could use assessment results from standardized tests developed internally or by outside organizations. You could compare longitudinal data across a three-year period to see if there have been any changes in student learning

Program-level outcomes should:

- describe what students are able to do after completing a degree or certificate;
- be limited in number (3-6 outcomes);
- be clear so that students and colleagues can understand them;
- be observable skills (career-specific or transferable), knowledge, attitudes, and/or values;
- be relevant to meet the needs of students, employers, and transfer institutions;
- be rigorous yet realistic outcomes achievable by students

Why do we collect data on PSLOs? We analyze PSLOs:

- to make sure students are prepared for further study in the program
- to encourage and document faculty dialogue about student learning and achievement
- to help faculty with program improvement
- to communicate and clarify our expectations to students

Analysis of PSLO data is reported during the annual Program Review process. Analysis requires all faculty understanding, contributing, and discussing the impacts of PSLO results. PSLOs for a certificate or degree should be analyzed every 3 years (aligning with the 3-year program review process).

For more information please contact:

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