

# Guidelines for Drafting Student Learning Outcomes for Courses and Programs

Curriculum committees at UNC Greensboro expect to see Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that:

- Clearly state what a student will know or be able to do upon completion of the course or program
- Are measurable
- Have one concrete action verb in each SLO
- Align with the course content or program mission

## Structure of a Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes generally follow a basic structure that looks like this:

**Students (subject) interpret (verb) current research and its practice (object) in clinical practice related to chronic disease (modifiers).**

- Students are the subject, since they are the ones learning. We sometimes see “graduates” or “graduating students,” which indicate the learning outcome relates to someone completing the program.
- The subject is followed by a concrete action verb that specifically describes what they will know or do.
  - [Bloom’s Taxonomy](#) or the [Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy](#) offer good examples of verbs to use, but these are not exhaustive lists. A specific verb is generally an acceptable verb.
  - Verbs like “understand” and “appreciate” are too vague, and the curriculum committees have consistently returned these to the faculty for revision.
  - Verbs do not correlate to a course level. For example, a 600-level graduate course may still use the verb “describe” even though it relates to a lower cognitive level. There are things that graduate students must learn to describe in their disciplines! It would be unusual for a program (graduate or undergraduate) to have a SLO that includes this, though.
- SLOs often include objects that more explicitly describe the content of learning and doing in the course or program.
- Modifiers provide further explanation and specification of learning in courses and learning experiences.

SLO Examples:

- Students apply advanced skills in contemporary dance technique.
- Computer Science graduates design software and computer solutions based on concepts and theories of computer science.
- Students will demonstrate an advanced critical understanding of the literary, cultural, and/or rhetorical theories that inform the study of discourse in English.

## Activities & Assignments

To demonstrate that faculty have structured courses that create teaching and learning opportunities, course proposals must include the activities and assignments that will be used to assess student learning. These are generally connected to student grades, which are high-stakes activities that entice students to put forth their best efforts. Curriculum committees expect that assignments:

- Are described with some specificity. Committees have returned proposals that have only “Classroom discussions” as the full description, for more information.
- Are directly connected to the student learning outcomes. If the outcome indicates the student will analyze data, then the assignment asks the student to analyze data (not find data or create a data set, for example).
- Reflect the appropriate course level. Students in a 400-level course might need more than creating a 2 minute video to demonstrate they’ve learned a course SLO.

Assignment Examples:

**SLO:** Students interpret descriptive statistics for quantitative data

**Assignment:** In their final comprehensive semester project, students complete an analysis of a data set from start to finish, from formatting data to interpretation of results.

**SLO:** Discuss in writing the characteristics of musical genres and individual works, using appropriate musical terminology.

**Assignment:** Students write an ethnographic account of a musical context. Includes an interview with participant.