

# EFFECTIVE QUALITIES OF PROGRAM-LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES



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## 1 THE STEM

Learning outcome statements flow from a common stem or introductory phrase that frames the statement on the learners and what they will do in the program, the end-state of learning, and/or the program context.

## 2 ACTION VERB

Naturally following the stem is a verb that describes the nature and depth of learning to be achieved. This verb is most effective when it is actionable and observable. It describes what students will do to demonstrate their achievements in the program.

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Following the action verb, the remainder of the learning outcome statement describes the what, why, and sometimes the how, of learning. This description should be meaningful – in that it describes the lasting knowledge, skills, or values that students will gain by the end of the program.

## 4 DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT

Rather than remaining generic, learning outcome statements place learning in context of the program and its disciplinary/professional focus. For example, if students are to develop writing skills how do they do so in context of disciplinary perspectives, conventions, or common forms of communication/dissemination?

## 5 APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF LEARNING

Finally, learning outcome statements should reflect the level of learning considered appropriate for the program context. Consider the academic level of study (e.g. undergraduate, graduate, certificate), and the intentions of the program. These factors influence the focus and depth of learning.

### Examples:

By the end of the program, successful students will be able to...

Upon completion of the program, graduates will be able to demonstrate the ability to...

Define, Analyze, Practice, Reflect, Create, etc. Try using Learning Outcomes Action Verbs lists to identify the best words from various domains and taxonomies of learning.

...Formulate/Solve integrative chemistry problems (Chemistry)

...Apply theoretical knowledge and family-centred care principles to diverse health and community settings (Health Sciences)

...Present clear and compelling arguments, based on critical analysis of diverse historical sources, and effectively communicate interpretations in written essays and/or other media (History)

...develop and conduct appropriate experimentation, analyze and interpret data, and use engineering judgment to draw conclusions (Engineering)