

Los Angeles Southwest College

**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND
REPORTING OF
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs) and
ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT OUTCOMES (AUOs)
At the Course, Program/Service Area, & Institutional Levels**

I. Introduction

What can students do at the end of the course that they couldn't do at the beginning? How have their beliefs changed? In what ways have their cognitive abilities improved? How do you know? How can we improve student learning based on the assessment results? Student learning outcomes provide a focus and a standard for the classroom.

One of the key themes in the new Accreditation Standards (adopted June 2002) is Student Learning Outcomes. Not only do colleges need to demonstrate a concerted effort to develop SLOs at the course, program and institutional (degree) level, but also outcomes should be measured to determine how well learning is taking place so that learning and teaching can be improved.

1. Course Level—A course consists of all the classes (sections) being taught. A class is one section of a course.
2. Program Level—an academic program can be defined as a series of courses that lead to a specific degree or certificate. Program level can also denote non-academic centers that provide a specific service to students (e.g., Financial Aid Office, EOP&S, etc.).
3. Institutional Level—these are the SLOs that all students acquire as a result of their educational experience at LASC. General education SLOs may be included in this category.

II. Definition and Philosophy of SLOs

After reviewing numerous SLO definitions from the field, the SLO Committee created the following definition:

Definition

LASC SLOs are campus wide objectives that are achievable and measurable. Our SLOs represent knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained by students as a result of a college experience.

Philosophy

SLOs should be assimilated into students' life experiences and communities. These SLOs are reflective of mutual communication and are part of an ongoing planning process to improve learning among students, faculty, staff, and administration.

III. Development of SLOs

A. Course Level:

LASC Curriculum Committee passed a motion that recommended 1-3 SLOs per course.

Getting Started (from Fulks & Pluta, 2004, "Assessing Student Learning")

SLOs, in general, differ from course objectives in the following ways:

Objectives*	Outcomes
Objectives represent valuable skills, tools, or content (nuts & bolts) that enable a student to engage a particular subject.	SLOs represent overarching products (e.g., attitudes, skills, or knowledge) of the course.
Objectives focus on content and skills important within the classroom.	Outcomes express higher level thinking skills that represent an important product applicable outside of the class.
Course goals reflect the goals a faculty member has for the course.	SLOs represent an end product displayed by something the student can learn and apply.

*You may find out that you have written your objectives as outcomes.

Course Objectives	Course SLO
<p>Examples of course objectives from a nutrition course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review nutritional recommendations and components. • Discuss differences in nutritional requirements associated with sex, age, and activity. • Describe causes and consequences of nutritional problems. • Explain complications of underlying physiologic conditions (e.g., diabetes & mal-absorption). • Identify key factors involved in correcting nutritional behaviors. • Describe resources and strategies to treat nutritional disorders. 	<p>Example of an SLO from the same nutrition course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student will be able to analyze a documented nutritional problem, determine a strategy to correct the problem, and write a draft nutritional policy addressing the broader scope of the problem.

Student Services Objective	Student Services SLO
<p>Example from Financial Aid Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist students in obtaining financial aid 	<p>After visiting the Financial Aid Office, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine financial aid eligibility, and after identifying available grants/loans, apply for financial aid.

Writing Your Own SLOs

- Realize that you may have been doing this all along; the task now is to communicate and articulate your outcomes and criteria.
- Complete the chart below on course or program dynamics.

Instructional Course Outcomes	Student Service Area
Name a specific course	Name a specific program or service (e.g., counseling, financial aid, etc.)
Are there any prerequisites for this course?	This program must interface with what other key areas?

Does this course serve as a prerequisite for any other courses?	
Course Purpose	Purpose, Mission, or Function that best describes this program's role in student learning.

- As the expert in this discipline, think about the 1-3 most important things a student should leave your class or service area being able to DO.
- Spend 15 minutes writing down words that express knowledge, skills, or values that integrate the most important aspects of your class or service area.

Three Domains of Student Learning Outcomes	
Attitudes or values developed as a result of this course or service area.	
Skills or performance ability as a result of this course or service area.	
Knowledge and concepts they will have as a result of this course or service area.	

Note: SLOs may or may not address all three domains.

- Use active verbs to craft sentences that are clear and measurable.
- Share these draft SLOs with other faculty to sharpen the focus.
- Compare the SLO drafts with course outlines, articulation and prerequisite agreements as indicators of external expectations.

B. Program Level:

What is a “Program”?

- Any organizational unit that exists to assist students in achieving specific learning outcomes

Examples of Programs:

- A discipline or cluster of disciplines in a departmental plan (e.g., Biological Sciences, ESL, etc.)

- Group of courses leading to a certificate or degree (e.g., AA in English, Professional Spanish Skill Certificate)
- Administrative or student service area (e.g., Personnel Office, Financial Aid Office, EOP&S, etc.)

When writing program SLO outcomes,

- state the program purpose or mission
- consider other areas or programs that feed into or interact with your program
- analyze community expectations for the program
- survey program descriptors and accomplishments
- review the components of the program and
- determine participant expectations

Program SLOs should be aligned with your program's **Mission Statement**. A mission statement explains what the program goal or goals are in a sentence or two. It is a simple statement that encapsulates the direction or purpose of the program.

Step 1:

- Brainstorm the activities of the program. List what the program does and how it does things.
- What makes the program unique? Why does this program exist? What are the defining characteristics of this program?

Step 2:

Begin by writing who you are, what you do, for whom, and why

For example:

DRAFT Mission statement for the Pre-allied Health Biology program:

The pre-allied health biology program prepares students for vocational health programs by providing rigorous courses and hands-on experiences in human biology.

Step 3:

Take this statement and modify it by asking questions.

- Does this represent us?
- Is this really what we do?
- Is this all we do?
- Does this include our unique features?
- Does this include the aspects that make us successful?
- Does everyone involved in the program understand the statement?
- Does the statement suggest a vision and mission for the future?

Step 4:

- Compare your statement to other mission statements on line or other departments on your campus and modify again. Refine the statement so that it is clear and succinct.
- *The pre-allied health biology program prepares students for vocational health programs through rigorous coursework, hands-on lab experiences, and relevant field trips in human biology. Students learn to seek out and apply the appropriate information, think critically, develop communication skills, and value others.*

Questions to consider answering:

- What roles do you see students taking in society?
- What should students be able to DO in these roles as a result of this academic preparation?

C. Institutional Level:

Historical Background

From an all-college forum and survey on SLOs conducted during the Fall 2005 semester, a list of common institutional themes became evident. The SLO Committee compiled the most identified values into 5 main categories in Spring 2006 and subsequently were approved by the Academic Senate in September 2006 and later by the College Council in Spring 2007. A campus-wide survey using Survey Monkey was initiated to obtain feedback. Out of a total of 23 responses, 21 agreed with the core values and 2 disagreed with comments. The following institutional SLOs (ISLO) were subsequently reviewed and revalidated by representatives of the college's constituency groups in August 2008.. In order to complete the cycle, the ISLOs will be assessed and after evaluation of results, plans will be implemented to improve teaching and student learning.

LASC INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Communication (Oral and Written Skills)

- use language (oral and written) and non-verbal modes of communication appropriate to the audience and purpose.

2. Cognition (Reading Comprehension, Computational Skills, and Critical Thinking)

- use critical thinking and computational skills to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate ideas and information.

3. Information Competency (Information Competency and Technological Literacy)

- utilize research skills necessary to achieve educational, professional, and personal objectives.

4. Social Responsibility (Responsible Citizenship and Valuing Diversity)

- demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for others and participate actively in group and civic decision making.

5. Personal and Professional Development (Employability and Confidence Building)

- demonstrate self-management, maturity, and growth through practices that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

IV. Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUO)

An administrative unit outcome is a statement about what a stakeholder will experience, receive, or understand as a result of a given service. Stakeholders can be anyone (excluding students) receiving a service. The outcomes are developed by unit staff and should be measurable. Similar to SLOs, these outcomes deal exclusively with non-instructional services provided to campus personnel.

Differences (Explanation):

Examples of units using SLOs and AUOs are:

SLO (Student Learning Outcomes)	Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUO)
Administration of Justice 2 (Course Level)	Personnel
English (Program level)	Plant Facilities
EOP&S (Program level)	Reprographics
Learning Assistance & Success Center (Program level)	Payroll

V. Assessment of SLOs

Each SLO should have an assessment tool to measure the specific outcome. Various types of assessment data include indirect and direct, quantitative and qualitative. An excellent review of assessment strategies can be seen at Janet Fulks’ (Bakersfield College) site:

http://online.bakersfieldcollege.edu/courseassessment/Section_4_Assessment_Tools/Section4_1.htm

Common Assessment Methods

- Tests-locally developed or standardized
- Performances-recital, presentation or demonstration
- Cumulative-portfolios, capstone projects
- Rubrics
- Surveys-attitudes and perceptions of students, staff, and employers
- Database tracked academic behavior-grades, graduation, lab usage, persistence
- Embedded assessment-using grading process to measure SLO
- Narrative-staff and student journals, interviews, focus groups

V. Interpreting and Sharing Results to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness

Once the SLOs are measured, data should be collected, discussed, and analyzed to determine instructional enhancements to improve student learning.

Refer to the reporting matrix on this page that is currently part of our course outline of record form and can be downloaded from:

http://www.lasc.edu/faculty_staff/slo/Approved_Documents.html).

Examples of SLO matrices (without assessment results and modifications) are also included from Dev Com 21 and Child Development 10. Once results and evaluation are undertaken, the last two columns will be filled out.

- Course**
- Program**
- Institutional**

(check one box above)

LASC STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES MATRIX

Course/Program/Institutional

Title: _____

Faculty/Staff Participants in SLO Development: _____

The student will... (outcome)	As measured by the following method.... (assessment strategy)	And, if applicable, scored by the following learning rubric. (provide	Results are examined to determine if the outcome is achieved. Include planned or	Recommendations to improve teaching and learning. (modifications)
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		attachment)	actual assessment date. (results & evaluation)	
1.				
2.				

curricommSLOcourseoutlineAddendum, Approved Curriculum Committee, 2/29/08; Approved Academic Senate, 3/11/08

- Course**
 Program
 Institutional

(check one box above)

LASC STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES MATRIX

Course/Program/Institutional Title: DEV COM 21

Faculty/Staff Participants: Phyllis Norwood, Chair, and discipline faculty

* 8/20/08, SLO Review

The student will... (outcome)	As measured by the following method.... (assessment strategy)	And, if applicable, scored by the following learning rubric. (provide attachment)	Results are examined to determine if the outcome is achieved. Include planned or actual assessment date. (results & evaluation)	Recommendations to improve teaching and learning. (modifications)
1. Develop at least a three-paragraph essay with each paragraph containing effective topic	1. Final essay	1. Scored by rubric below	1. Fall 08	

sentences, major and minor detail supporting sentences, and a conclusion.				
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curricommSLOcourseoutlineAddendum, Approved Curriculum Committee, 2/29/08;
Approved Academic Senate, 3/11/08

Rubric for Assessment of Paragraph

	Well done (3 points)	Average (2 points)	Insufficient (1 point)
Topic sentence	Clearly stated or implied sentence at beginning, middle or end of paragraph	Vague sentence, not strong enough to carry the rest of the paragraph	Not stated
Major detail	Strong sentence supporting rest of paragraph topic	Vague or unclear support of the rest of the paragraph topic	Not stated
Minor detail	Strong supportive sentence for major detail sentence	Vague or unclear support of the major detail sentence	Not stated
Conclusion	Clear restatement of paragraph topic in one sentence	Vague or unclear summary of the paragraph	Not stated

Course
 Program
 Institutional

(check one box above)

LASC STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES MATRIX

Course/Program/Institutional Title: Child Development 10, Child Health

Faculty/Staff Participants: LaShawn Brinson, Chair and discipline faculty

The student will... (outcome)	As measured by the following method.... (assessment strategy)	And, if applicable, scored by the following learning rubric. (provide attachment)	Results are examined to determine if the outcome is achieved. Include planned or actual assessment date. (results & evaluation)	Recommendations to improve teaching and learning. (modifications)
1. analyze and identify health, safety, and nutritional needs of young children and evaluate the interrelationship of all components to healthy growth and development.	1. Review of random samples of student responses to an embedded test question. Test Question: Describe the interrelationship of health, safety and nutrition on children's growth and development.	1. <u>Criteria:</u> Answer to the embedded test question incorporates the following concepts in their answer: (1)Safety-indoor/outdoor environments, (2)earthquake/fire safety and planning, (3)traffic & pedestrian safety, (4)State regulations, (5)child abuse laws, (6)health-proper nutrition, (7)health assessments/appraisals and resources, (8)hygiene/universal precautions, (9)promoting positive mental health, (10)consideration of parents. 1. <u>Rubric:</u> <i>Exemplary:</i> Answer	1. Final Exam - end of each semester	1. TBA

		<p>the question using all 10 concepts listed above.</p> <p>Acceptable: Answer the question using at least 7 of the 10 concepts listed above.</p> <p>Unacceptable: Answer the question using fewer than 7 concepts listed above.</p>		
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SLOAssessmentExamples,908

VI. Resources and Bibliography

Allen, Mary and Noel, Richard, *Outcomes Assessment Handbook*, May 2002.

“An Assessment Framework For the Community College”, *League for Innovation in the Community College*, August 2004.

Fulks, Janet, and Pluta, Kate, “Assessing Student Learning”, Bakersfield College, 2004.
 Fulks, Janet, “Plan for Implementing Campus-wide Course and Program Assessment,” Bakersfield College, 2004.

Fulks, Janet, <http://online.bakersfieldcollege.edu/courseassessment/>, 2004.

LACCD Student Success Initiative, SLO link:
http://www.laccd.edu/inst_effectiveness/Student_Learning/

Maki, Peggy, “Developing an Assessment Plan to Learn About Student Learning,” *American Association for Higher Education*, 2004,
<http://www.aahe.org/assessment/assessmentplan.htm> (26 Aug. 2004).

Peirce, William, “Course Assessment Handbook,” Prince George’s Community College, Pilot edition, Feb. 2003.

Other Useful College & Organizational SLO Websites:

- LASC—Student Learning Outcomes
http://www.lasc.edu/faculty_staff/slo/SLO_Committee_Membership.html
- LACCD Institutional Effectiveness—Student Learning Outcomes
http://www.laccd.edu/inst_effectiveness/Student_Learning/
- The RP Group—Center for Student Success

http://css.rpgroup.org/ka.php?ka_id=7&PHPSESSID=d032d53f62f6dc99e8837c7b9047399b

Assessing Student Learning in Higher Education (Janet Fulks)

<http://online.bakersfieldcollege.edu/courseassessment/>

Glendale Community College Student Learning Outcomes

<http://www.glendale.edu/program/SLO/index.htm>

Skyline College Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (SLOAC)

<http://www.smccd.net/accounts/skysloac/index.htm>

Cabrillo College Student Learning Outcomes

<http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos/index.html>

Saddleback College—Office of Institutional Effectiveness

<http://www.saddleback.edu/gov/senate/ie/SLOassessmentforms.html>

College of the Sequoias—Student Learning Outcomes

http://cos.edu/view_page.asp?nodeid=3138&parentid=933&moduleid=5

Diablo Valley College—Student Learning Outcomes

<http://www.dvc.edu/research/slo/>