American Jewish University
Developing Learning Outcomes
Program Learning Outcomes vs Student Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes describe how students will be different because of a learning experience. More specifically, they are the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience (Suskie, 2009).

Outcome: in assessment of student learning, a concise statement of what the student should know or be able to learn. Well-articulated learning outcomes describe how a student can demonstrate the desired outcome. Learning outcomes can be formulated for different levels of aggregation and analysis; at the course level, student learning outcomes (SLOs) or course learning outcomes (CLOs) are used, at the program level, program learning outcomes (PLOs) are used, and at the institutional level, institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) are used (2013 Accreditation Handbook, WASC Senior).

Program Learning Outcomes:

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are statements that identify the knowledge, skills, or attitudes that students will be able to demonstrate, represent, or produce upon successful completion of the program. PLOs are clear, concise statements that describe how students can demonstrate their mastery of program goals (Allen, 2008). **They should be consistent with the overarching college and program mission statements and goals, but specific enough to be measured and assessed at the course and program level.** The curriculum should be aligned with these learning outcomes because students cannot be expected to master outcomes if they are not given appropriate learning opportunity to do so throughout their program of study.

Example Program Learning Outcomes:

Psychology

PLO 1: Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends in psychology.
PLO 2: Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis and interpretation.
PLO 3: Students will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.
PLO 4: Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social and organizational issues.
PLO 5: Students will be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a discipline.
PLO 6: Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats, including verbal and written communication.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are the course level statements that identify what a student is expected to learn as a result of participating in a specific course or academic activity. **They should be consistent with the overarching program learning outcomes, but specific enough to be measured and assessed at the course level.** SLOs should be clear statement about what students will have learned or be able to demonstrate by the end of a course.

Example Student Learning Outcomes:

Introduction to Psychology course

SLO 1: Students will possess knowledge of the major theorists in psychology.
SLO 2: Students will possess knowledge of the basic theories of psychology.
SLO 3: Students will demonstrate familiarity with the basic concepts necessary for the study of psychology.
SLO 4: Students will develop an understanding of the basic type of research methods used in psychology and determine the scientific basis for that research.

Advanced Research Methods course

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the practical issues related to conducting research in psychology.
SLO 2: Students will possess knowledge of the ethical issues and recognize the dilemmas faced in research conducted in psychology.
SLO 3: Students will use their knowledge of psychological theories to understand how they are translated into research questions and be able to write research questions related to psychology.
SLO 4: Students will use information gathered through instruction, experience, and other sources about already existing data gathering instruments in order to create new instruments for research purposes.
SLO 5: Students will possess skills in data collection and be able to input data into appropriate statistical software for analysis.