

Guide for Developing Course Outlines

2019-2020

School of
**Contemporary Teaching
& Learning**

St. Lawrence College

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Support for Developing Course Outlines

In addition to this guide, members of the Curriculum Team in the [School for Contemporary Teaching and Learning](#) can provide assistance. Further, if the course you are working on belongs to a program that has recently undergone Curriculum Mapping, the Curriculum Map will include much of the information needed in the Outline. Contact the SCTL for more information about Maps.

Course Identification

Complete the course identification table.

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE	
COURSE NAME/CODE	Enter approved information from Peoplesoft. Contact your School Office or the SCTL for more information.
PROGRAM(S)	Enter the program this course is taught in. If it is taught in multiple programs, enter "This course is taught across multiple programs"
COURSE HOURS	Enter the total number of course hours and how those hours are distributed.
PRE-REQUISITES	List the courses students require before taking this course.
CO-REQUISITES	List the courses student are required to take concurrently with this course
PLAR	Indicate if the course is eligible for PLAR (Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition) and by what means that prior learning would be demonstrated.
PROGRAM CONTEXT	In 1-2 sentences, explain where the course is situated in the program, including what learning it builds on and towards.
APPROVAL	Upon completion of the Course Outline, send it to appropriate Associate/Campus Dean for approval.



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Course Description

The Course Description complements the Course Learning Outcomes and provides students with an overview of the purpose and topics included in the course. It is a single paragraph and approximately 100 words long. Course descriptions:

- use present tense and active voice
- use simple, concise sentences
- use gender-neutral pronouns
- use simple, lay-person's language
- are written from the learner's perspective
- avoid jargon and technical terms that may change over time
- avoid course names, numbers, and levels

Example Course Description

This course introduces students to developmental psychopathology and examines the interaction of genetic, biological, psychological, and behavioural processes in the development of normal and abnormal behaviour from infancy to adolescence. In surveying the major psychological disorders of this period, students learn that many factors relate to the development of troubled behaviour. The course emphasizes proactive and positive strategies for managing and preventing childhood and adolescent behaviour problems. Course content is delivered using a lecture/discussion format. In order to enliven concepts and discussions, this course incorporates guest lectures, student presentations, and written case materials.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are measurable, performance-based statements that describe what the learner will be able to do by the end of the course. The CLO section begins with the text "At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:" The CLOs are listed after this statement and use the following formula:

Do something for a reason or in a given context according to a certain standard or performance criteria.

Example Course Learning Outcomes

Applying the formula above, here are three examples of course learning outcomes.

- **Design marketing communication materials to meet the advertising needs of clients using industry standard technology.**



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- Apply theoretical concepts of growth and development when working with individuals and families in the community as required by the public health regulations.
- Describe the significant events in the historical development of the internal combustion engine in terms of their relevance to the development of current and future engines.

Strong Learning Outcomes

As you develop course learning outcomes remember that strong learning outcomes:

- begin with a single, measurable action verb that reflects a level of learning congruent with the position of the course within the program
- are achievable in the time frame of the course
- align with and help students progress towards mastery of the Vocational Learning Outcomes
- are free from jargon and technical language that may change over time
- do not dictate specific assessments, content, or learning activities

Choosing the Right Verb

In addition to being a measurable and action-oriented, the verb that begins the CLO must reflect a level of learning/performance appropriate to the course's situation with the program. To choose an appropriate verb, refer to the Vocational Learning Outcomes (see below for more detail) identified for the course. The level (foundational, developing, mastery) will help in understanding the relative level of achievement students in the course should be achieving.

The verb selected should relate to the knowledge, skill, or attitude that the course develops as part of the course learning experience. A variety of learning taxonomies exist to support the development of student ability in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), or affective (attitude) domains. The table on the following page outlines these domains in different levels and associates verbs that can be used to describe student action at each level.



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	COGNITIVE (KNOWLEDGE) DOMAIN	OUTPUT VERBS	PYSCHOMOTOR (SKILL) DOMAIN	OUTPUT VERBS	AFFECTIVE (ATTITUDE) DOMAIN	OUTPUT VERBS	
	COMPLEX	Creating	build, compose, create, construct, design, develop, devise, formulate, generate, hypothesize, invent, modify, organize, plan, predict, produce	Naturalizing	compose, delegate, design, devise, specify, manage, invent, plan, supervise, troubleshoot	Characterizing	act, display, influence, internalize, integrate, relate, resolve, qualify, practice, verify
		Evaluating	appraise, assess, choose, compare, conclude, critique, check, defend, detect, evaluate, hypothesize, judge, justify measure, monitor, rank, rate, recommend, review, score, test, validate	Articulating	adapt, calculate, coordinate, combine, compile, construct, develop, edit, formulate, integrate, manipulate, modify, replace, repair, solve	Organizing	alter, arrange, build, codify, construct, compare, develop, discriminate, display, generalize, modify, order, organize, prioritize, reconcile
		Analyzing	analyze, appraise, attribute, break down, coherence, compare, conclude, contrast, correlate, deconstruct, determine, differentiate, discriminate, dissect, distinguish, extrapolate, find, integrate, investigate, outline, separate	Fine tuning	adjust, calibrate, conduct, control, complete, demonstrate, install, operate, show, perfect, practice, present, simulate	Valuing	argue, criticize, debate, decide worth, defend, devote, explain, join, justify, persuade, present, propose, pursue, refute, share
		Applying	apply, calculate, carry out, clarify why, compute, demonstrate, discover, execute, extrapolate, generalize, illustrate, implement, manipulate, make, predict, show, use, utilize	Manipulating	administer, apply, assist, assemble, build, carry out, collect, configure, contribute, draw, execute, fabricate, graph, implement, locate, measure, perform, re-create, select	Responding	complete, contribute, comply, conform, cooperate, discuss, describe, examine, formulate, perform, provide other references/examples, react, respond, seek, use
		Understanding	choose, cite, clarify, classify, compare, conclude, convert, describe, discuss, exemplify, explain, express, extrapolate, give an example, illustrate, infer, interpret, match, paraphrase, restate, respond, summarize, translate	Imitating	adhere, copy, duplicate, follow, replicate, repeat, trace	Receiving	ask, accept, attend, acknowledge, concentrate, follow, give, identify, select, recognize, retain
	SIMPLE	Remembering	accumulate, arrange, define, describe, identify, label, list, locate, match, name, recall, recite, recognize, repeat, retrieve, state				

Adapted From: [CLT Guide to Learning Outcomes](#) at the University of Alberta, 2017



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Verbs to Avoid

Common verbs to avoid are those that are not measurable. Sixteen sinister verbs have been recommended to avoid. These verbs are passive, internal, and/or unobservable (Potter & Kustra, 2012).

COMMON VERBS TO AVOID

Understand	Appreciate	Comprehend	Grasp
Know	See	Accept	Have a knowledge of
Be aware of	Be conscious of	Learn	Perceive
Value	Get	Apprehend	Be familiar with

From: [Primer on learning Outcomes](#)¹

Common Pitfalls and Related Improvements of CLOs

PITFALL

WRITTEN TO REFLECT SPECIFIC CONTENT	Describe the levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.	Describe theories of motivation to interpret human behavior in non-stressful situations.
NOT WRITTEN AS AN OUTCOME BUT AS A GOAL OR A PROCESS	Appreciate the importance of personal responsibility in mature human sexuality.	Explain the relationship between personal values and attitudes and mature sexuality.
NOT REALISTIC	List the chemical symbol and valencies of all the known elements.	Identify the chemical symbol and valencies of all elements using the periodic table.
NOT VERIFIABLE OR MEASURABLE	Improve your understanding of the laws of electricity.	Use the laws of electricity to explain the viability of particular circuitry in specific applications.
TOO NARROW; TOO SPECIFIC	Describe the functions of MS Word 2010.	Use word-processing software to prepare reports and correspondence.
DESCRIBES A SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT	Produce a collection of community resources for promoting positive family functioning.	Select appropriate community resources to promote family functioning.

¹ <http://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl/sites/uwindsor.ca.ctl/files/primer-on-learning-outcomes.pdf>



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Relationship to Vocational/Program Specific Learning Outcomes

Vocational or Program Learning Outcomes (VLOs/PLOs) are learning outcomes that describe what a graduate of the program will know and be able to do. For some programs, VLOs are provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. In other cases, PLOs are developed by faculty during initial program development or curriculum mapping.

If the course is part of a program of study, the VLOs/PLOs attached to a particular course were developed by faculty in the curriculum mapping process and cannot be altered. If you are unsure which VLOs your course supports, please contact your Program Coordinator or the SCTL Curriculum team.

Courses that are part of Local Board Certificates or Statements of Achievement have their own learning outcomes. These are inserted in this section. Check with the Associate/Campus Dean.

Definitions of Foundational, Developing, and Mastery for VLOs/PLOs

Foundational

This level emphasizes the introductory concepts, skills, and attitudes upon which achievement of vocational or program learning outcomes can later be built. Instructional activities and assessments focus on foundational knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values at an entry-level complexity. Courses in this level introduce components related to the vocational learning outcome, begin to lay a foundation for achievement, and prepare students for greater complexity at future stages of the program.

Developing

This level emphasizes reinforcement and provision of opportunities for students to develop the concepts, skills, and attitudes needed to eventually master the vocational or program learning outcomes. Instructional activities and assessments focus on developing expertise through further practice and scaffolding experiences. Courses in this level provide students with an opportunity to enhance fluency with key ideas and skills related to vocational or program learning outcomes.

Mastery

This level emphasizes the opportunity for students to demonstrate achievement of the vocational learning outcomes. Instructional activities and assessments focus on the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for mastery of the vocational learning outcomes. Courses in this level provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the outcome in modalities that are authentic to the vocation.



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Essential Employability Skills

As with the VLOs, the Essential Employability Skills (EESs) have been mapped by faculty in the curriculum mapping phase of the program review cycle. The EESs indicated for your course cannot be changed outside of that process. Please note:

- If the course is part of a College Graduate Certificate Program, the EES section is not applicable.
- If the course is part of a Local Board Certificate or Statement of Achievement, EESs usually do not apply. Check with the Campus Dean/Associate Dean for exceptions.

Definitions of Foundational, Developing, and Mastery for Essential Employability Skills

Foundational

At this level, faculty introduce concepts related to the Essential Employability Skill. Instructional and learning activities focus on skills at an entry-level complexity to begin to lay a **foundation** of achievement.

Developing

At this level, faculty reinforce and provide opportunities for students to further **develop** the concepts related to the Essential Employability Skill. Instructional and learning activities focus on students beginning to apply the skills and are expected to demonstrate their ability at increasingly proficient levels.

Mastery

At this level, faculty continue to reinforce, develop and provide opportunities to integrate all the skills necessary for **mastery** of the Essential Employability Skill. Instructional and learning activities focus on using the skill in multiple contexts and at mastery level of complexity for the credential level.

College Policies and Procedures

This section is drawn from the Academic Policy Manual and cannot be altered.



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