

Outcomes Guidelines for Courses Curriculum/Gen Ed Committee of the EAC

Below are listed a series of questions that the Curriculum/Gen Ed Committee members will consider when reviewing Outcomes statements for individuals courses.

Criteria for Outcomes Statements

1. Does it describe what we intend the students will be able to do “out there” (in their life roles as worker, family member, community citizen, global citizen or lifelong learners) as opposed to an activity “in here?” Good outcomes statements will suggest context to indicate this “out there”
2. Does it describe what the students can DO with what they know or understand? (rather than just what they can demonstrate that they know, or understand).
3. Is the statement clear? Does it give a clear sense of the course to faculty and to students?
4. Is the statement robust (complex) enough to express the essential content (concepts, issues, skills, knowledge bases) in a way that is informative to students, to faculty and to the outside world ?
5. Does the outcome statement suggest appropriate assessment tasks and quality criteria?
6. How do these course outcomes align with degree and/or certificate outcomes?
7. How do these course outcomes align with the college core outcomes?

Additional Principles for Course Outcomes

8. In general a course should be described in three to six outcomes statements.
 - Some courses, particularly in professional technical areas, may have more than six, but care should be taken to distinguish outcomes from a large set of skills or competencies.
 - Skills and competences can be mastered by repetition; outcomes are more complex, and speak to the aggregate of skills mastered, concepts understood, and knowledge acquired.
9. Two courses will not have identical sets of outcomes.
 - Courses may share outcomes, but at least some of the outcomes should be unique to each course, such as in expressing differences in content or level
10. The context (“the “out there”) for the outcome may be another course for which this course is a prerequisite, but it would be good if that is not the only outcome for a course.

Some Examples:

(Note: some, but not all of these are PCC outcomes. Specific discipline names have been omitted or changed in most cases).

Original:	Demonstrate an understanding of the management process
Better:	Apply the management process effectively in real work environment
<i>Why better?</i>	<i>It looks outside the classroom, and speaks to how the student will carry this understanding into the real world “out there”, in both level of integration of knowledge (apply rather than demonstrate) and in contexts.</i>
Original:	Discuss employment availability and trends in the _____ industry
Better:	Adapt career plans and seek professional development opportunities that reflect the changing trends in the _____ industry
<i>Why better?</i>	<i>“Discuss” is something that appears to be a classroom activity, but an outcome should apply to the post-class world.</i>
Original:	Understand professional and ethical responsibility.
Better:	Work with in the ethical and professional parameters of the _____ profession
<i>Why better?</i>	<i>The desired outcome is not that they would merely understand ethical issues, but put them into play, working ethically and professionally. Also, it speaks to the specific context.</i>
Original:	Understand the history, current practices and mission of the _____ profession.
Better:	Use an understanding of the history, current practices and the mission of the _____ profession to make effective on-the-job professional decisions.
<i>Why better?</i>	<i>The understanding they have gained allows them to do something (better than they otherwise would).</i>
Original:	Develop the skills necessary for the care of cancer patients
Better:	Skillfully care for cancer patients. (can be modified to specify level by adding a degree of supervision required or modified to reflect a specific context).
<i>Why better?</i>	<i>Development is something that happens during the course – the outcomes should speak to where a person should be as a result of having taken the course. Developmental steps can be woven into the individual course outcomes by specifying setting, supervision, or other discipline-specific parameters</i>