

Guidance on Writing Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Note: It is essential to distinguish between a program's intent and its measurable results in curriculum design. A learning objective represents an input-focused statement describing the specific knowledge, skills, or curriculum content a program intends to cover and expects students to meet. Conversely, a learning outcome is an output-focused, measurable statement that explicitly demonstrates what a student can actually do, exhibit, or apply upon the successful completion of that instructional unit. An example is provided below.

Learning Objective (Curricular Intent / Input): "To introduce students to the foundational principles of network security, including common cryptographic protocols, firewalls, and vulnerability scanning tools used to protect enterprise environments."

Context: This states what the curriculum will cover and what the instructor plans to teach.

Related Learning Outcome (Demonstrated Mastery / Output): "Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to perform a network vulnerability scan, identify active security exploits, and implement a configured firewall rule set to mitigate the detected threat."

Context: This uses measurable action verbs to establish the concrete capabilities the student must visibly demonstrate to prove mastery of the subject matter.