# Learning Outcomes

A **learning outcome** states a particular kind of knowledge or a particular skill or disposition that students are expected to possess by the time they complete a course, a program, or some other area of the curriculum, such as general education.

### Benefits of learning outcomes

There are several benefits to articulating learning outcomes for a course, program, or curricular area.

* In order to agree on outcomes, faculty must examine together their shared pedagogical aims.
* Once formulated, outcomes help ensure that each faculty member's teaching is informed by these shared aims.
* When attached to syllabi and other course materials, outcomes help students understand the purposes accomplished by an individual course with a larger program of study, or the purposes accomplished by an individual assignment within a given course.
* Because they state what **students** are striving to know, value, or be able to do - not what **faculty** are attempting to "cover" - they help keep both students' and faculty's attention on **results.**

### Wording of learning outcomes

The last point above should always be remembered when wording learning outcomes. Although student learning is presumed to be partly a function of a course or program's effectiveness, learning outcomes should **never** be statements about the course or program itself. They should **always** be worded in terms of what students will know, value, or be able to do as a result of taking a course or program of study.

Thus, properly worded learning outcomes typically begin with phrases such as

* Students will be able to apply . . .
* Students will demonstrate the ability to . . .
* Students will analyze

The example below may look at first as though it follows the pattern of the above examples. But examined closely, it turns out to be a statement **about the program** rather than about the students in it.

Students will demonstrate the depth and breadth of our program through their post-graduate experiences including educational achievements, career paths, and other life experiences.

Though the example begins with the word "Students," it says nothing about specific knowledge, skills, or values that students will demonstrate. Its emphasis is on the "depth and breadth" of the academic program, and it is this depth and breadth - rather than any particular knowledge, skill, or value - that these students are imagined as demonstrating.

[**https://wiki.geneseo.edu:8443/display/acadassess/Learning+Outcomes**](https://wiki.geneseo.edu:8443/display/acadassess/Learning+Outcomes)