

# Why Create Student Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives?

## Introduction:

The most important work of Wright State happens through the teaching and learning in our classrooms, labs, and studios. Each course is a component of a program leading to students' graduation and degrees.

It is essential that every course has a purpose that is reflected in its stated student learning outcomes and course objectives. When every course aligns with the university's mission, we create an integrated whole that allows us to deliver an outstanding education to our students.

## WSU Mission Statement:

"We empower all students to excel in their lives and chosen careers through integrated learning, research, innovation, & experience."

### Concepts:



Learning outcomes and course objectives should incorporate one or more of these concepts per course to ensure alignment with the university mission.

## Why Write Learning Outcomes?

**Learning outcomes address the two most essential questions in teaching:**

- 1) *What do you want students to learn?*
- 2) *How do you know if they've learned it?*

Learning outcomes clarify what we expect students to know or be able to do as the result of their educational experiences.

### A Well-Written Learning Outcome is:

- Specific to the given course and incorporates disciplinary language
- Measurable by more than one method of assessment
- Achievable by approximately 70 – 80% of students to ensure appropriate rigor
- Relevant to the program in which the course exists, the professional practice of the discipline, and the institution's mission

Course learning outcomes support program learning outcomes.

Measurement of program learning outcomes is the basis of academic program review.

Academic program review is essential to achieving and maintaining institutional accreditation.

**Bottom Line: we write outcomes because it's good practice in teaching and because HLC and ODHE say we MUST.**

## Cited Requirements

The **Ohio Department for Higher Education** and **Higher Learning Commission** both have specific requirements relating to learning outcomes.

## External Requirements for Academic Program Review:

### Higher Learning Commission

–Excerpt from HLC Policy: Criteria for Accreditation

#### 4.A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

- The institution **maintains a practice of regular program reviews** and acts upon the findings.

#### 4.B. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

- The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and co-curricular offerings.
- The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
- The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, **including the substantial participation of faculty**, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Ohio Department of Higher Education

–Excerpt from Academic Program Review Guide

#### 1. General Standards for Academic Programs

##### J. PROGRAM CURRICULUM (P. 10)

- **The academic program has specific learning outcomes that are designed to meet the program’s intended purpose and, where applicable, meet state and national standards.**
- Learning outcomes are appropriate for the degree designation (i.e., associate degree vs. bachelor’s degree vs. master’s degree vs. doctoral degree).
- Course requirements and delivery mechanisms provide sufficient opportunities for students to meet learning outcomes.
- The learning outcomes address the major issues and concerns in the discipline or professional area.

##### K. ASSESSMENT

- Multiple assessments are used to inform continuous program improvement.
- Assessments are linked to the program’s mission and purpose.
- **Faculty members are involved in defining the expected outcomes for the program and in determining whether the outcomes are achieved.**
- Assessments include multiple direct and indirect measures and provide faculty with the opportunity to examine student performance in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.

# Why Write Course Objectives?

Like learning outcomes, objectives clarify what we expect students to know or be able to do.

*What do you want students to learn...*



...in today's lesson?



...in this unit?



...in this course?



...in this program?

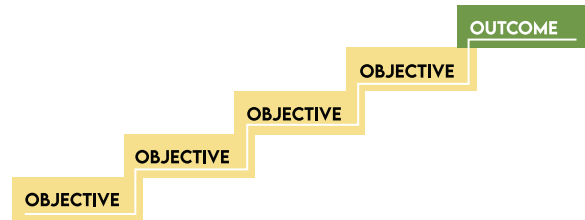
*...How do you know if they've learned it?*

## A Well-Written Objective is:

- Specific to the course
- Measurable and concise
- Achievable by a majority of students
- Relevant to the student learning outcomes of the course

## Objectives Lead to Outcomes

Each step on the stairway represents an **objective** connected to one or more lessons. The top of the stairway represents the **outcome**.



### Example Outcome:

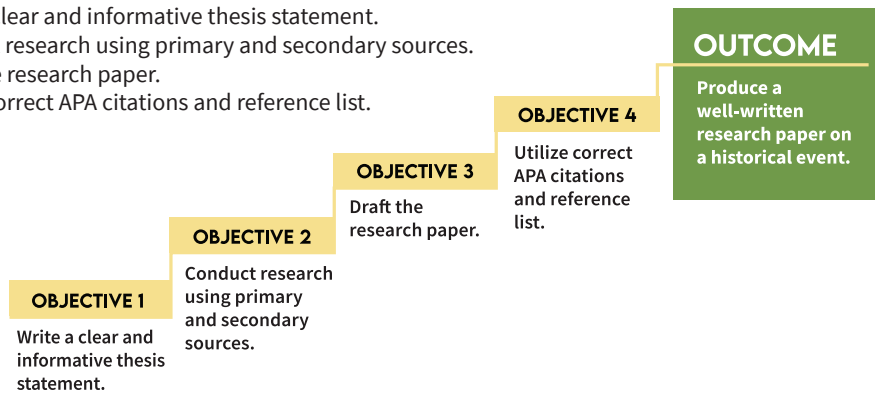
Produce a well-written research paper on a historical event.



### Example Objective:

Students will:

- 1: Write a clear and informative thesis statement.
- 2: Conduct research using primary and secondary sources.
- 3: Draft the research paper.
- 4: Utilize correct APA citations and reference list.



## Alignment

- Institutional integrity means that everything we do aligns with the university's mission at each level.
- Colleges, schools, departments, and programs should have mission statements that align with the university's mission. Courses must contribute to the achievement of those aligned mission statements.
- This alignment serves the students with an improved and focused education, leaving them better prepared for future challenges and continued learning.