

## FAQ'S for completing the Course Learning Outcomes (CLO's) Worksheet

1. How many CLOs should there be?

Each course should have 4-8 learning outcomes

2. How should the CLOs be worded?

Learning Outcomes need to be observable and measurable, and begin with an action verb (an action verb expresses action, something that a person, animal, force of nature, or thing can do (example.: develop, developed, develops, developing). The most common mistake is to use verbs that are vague, such as:

“Students will be familiar with...will be able to embrace...students will learn to...”

How do you measure familiarity and embracing? And we know they are learning, but the purpose of what we are doing is to identify a measurable outcome of that learning process. So it must be more specific. Consider how each revised CLO below moves from the vague to the specific, from nebulous to something specific and measurable – something that can be clearly evaluated and assigned a grade:

3. Can you show me some examples of proper CLOs?

**Bad CLO:** Students will recognize major theoretical concepts of western art.

**Good CLO:** Students will be able to describe and apply major theoretical concepts in western art.

**Bad CLO:** Provide students with the tools to write more clearly.

**Good CLO:** Students will be able to formulate a thesis and develop it through research.

**Bad CLO:** Students will learn to be better at computer skills.

**Good CLO:** Students will be able to launch an application, create a file, and create an image in Photoshop.

**Bad CLO:** Students will understand basic design principles.

**Good CLO:** Students will be able to apply design principles and research methodologies to create a proposal.

4. What format should these be in?

There is no need to repeat the phrase “Students will be able to” over and over. Please follow the following formatting example by Allison Goodman when writing your Course Learning Outcomes to make the completed set more streamlined:

*Students in Communication Design 2 will be able to 1) Construct messages in different and mixed contexts, 2) Use research as a catalyst for ideas, 3) Design with understanding of content, audience and context, and 4) Use graphic devices including color and simple grids.*

5. How long should these be?

As long as they need to be to articulate the outcome: but the more you can boil it down, the easier it will be for you to write and for the student to read, and the clearer it is likely to be for everyone. Try and make the phrase that follows “Students will be able to “ as brief as possible. In the example above, the section that follows “Students will be able to “ range from 8 to 12 words. It is even possible to reduce this section of the CLO further, to as little as 5 words – but whatever it takes is just fine. Let’s relax a bit about the number of words.

Please remember that these CLO's are meant to be very broad, much like looking at a terrain from about 10,00 feet in the air. They should be broad and umbrella-like, and are not meant to define the specifics of what happens in your class: that will come later in the section descriptions of the new syllabus format, and will be unique to your class – and your intellectual property.