

How do objectives and goals differ from learning outcomes?

Student learning outcomes build upon, but are different from, course or program objectives and goals because they represent a new perspective.

Objectives	Outcomes
Objectives represent valuable skills, tools, or content (nuts and bolts) that enable a student to engage a particular subject.	SLOs represent overarching products of the course.
Objectives focus on content and skills important within the classroom or program: what the staff and faculty will do. Often termed the input in the course.	Outcomes express higher level thinking skills that integrate the content and activities and can be observed as a behavior, skill, or discrete useable knowledge upon completing the class.
Objectives can often be numerous, specific, and detailed. Assessing and reporting on each objective for each student may be impossible.	An assessable outcome is an end product that can be displayed or observed and evaluated against criteria.

“Outcomes demonstrate an understanding and application of a subject beyond the nuts and bolts which hold it together; objectives represent the nuts and bolts.” (BC Chemistry Prof).

Course Goal – the purpose of the course.

- The goal of this general art course is to cultivate a sense of aesthetic significance through analysis of problems and interpretations as they apply to a variety of disciplines
- The goal of this general education biology course is to help students acquire and retain relevant biologic knowledge/information, teach them to think/apply this knowledge, and stimulate them to continue learning in the field.
- The goal of this nutrition course is to prioritize key nutrition behaviors, identify health and nutrition needs, and integrate these behaviors into health interventions, educational training, and policy.

Course Objectives – the specific teaching objectives detailing course content and activities. (see examples for the nutrition course)

- Review nutritional recommendations and components.
- Discuss differences in nutritional requirements associated with sex, age, and activity.
- Describe causes and consequences of nutritional problems.
- Explain complications of underlying physiologic conditions (e.g. diabetes & mal-absorption).
Identify key factors involved in correcting nutritional behaviors.
- Describe resources and strategies to treat nutritional disorders.

Course SLO – This is an outcome that describes what a student will do at the end of this nutrition course.

- A student will be able to analyze a documented nutritional problem, determine a strategy to correct the problem, and write a draft nutritional policy addressing the broader scope of the problem.