Writing Learning Goals

Learning goals should clearly articulate expected outcomes of student learning upon completion of instruction (e.g. major, minor, graduate degree, course). These goals should be directly measurable (i.e., student assignments), although indirect measures are also useful and can be used in addition to direct measures (i.e., student surveys, feedback from student focus groups, course evaluations).

Although this list is not exhaustive, learning goals can also be referred to by the following:

- Learning objectives
- Outcomes
- Aims
- Competencies
- Educational objectives

Learning goals should follow the model that the college has adopted for learning goals associated with courses: “By the time that students have completed [the program/major/minor/course], they will be able to…”

- See: http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/facultyhandbook/LearningGoals.htm

For each goal, use verbs that make clear to students (and instructors) what students will be able to do upon the completion of the program. The emphasis is on the student and not the faculty member. Use verbs such as those contained in typical discussions of “Bloom’s taxonomy.” In writing student learning goals use active verbs.

Example:

Student will be able to:

- List
- Explain
- Summarize
- Interpret
- Compare/contrast
- Design
- Evaluate

Student learning goals should be appropriate to the level of each course or program. The following diagrams illustrate Bloom’s taxonomy as well as common verbs associated with levels of learning.
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Verbs Useful for Stating Learning Outcomes

Remembering
- Name
- Recall
- Record
- Relate
- Repeat
- Underline

Understanding
- Define
- Describe
- List
- Name
- Recall
- Record
- Relate
- Repeat
- Underline

Applying
- Translate
- Restate
- Discuss
- Describe
- Recognize
- Explain
- Express
- Identify
- Locate
- Report
- Review
- Tell

Analyzing
- Interpret
- Apply
- Use
- Demonstrate
- Dramatize
- Practice
- Illustrate
- Operate
- Schedule
- Shop
- Sketch

Creating
- Combine
- Compose
- Construct
- Design
- Develop
- Formulate
- Invent
- Make
- Originate
- Organize
- Produce
- Tell
- Compile
- Devise
- Generate
- Propose

Evaluating
- Judge
- Appraise
- Construct
- Design
- Develop
- Formulate
- Invent
- Make
- Originate
- Organize
- Produce
- Tell
- Compile
- Devise
- Generate
- Propose

Analyzing
- Distinguish
- Differentiate
- Inventory
- Rate
- Compare
- Value
- Revise
- Score
- Select
- Choose
- Assess
- Estimate
- Measure

Applying
- Interpret
- Analyze
- Debate
- Evaluate
- Design
- Develop
- Formulate
- Invent
- Make
- Originate
- Organize
- Produce
- Tell
- Compile
- Devise
- Generate
- Propose

Creating
- Putting information together in an innovative way.
- Making judgments based on a set of guidelines.
- Breaking the concept into parts and understanding how each part is related to one another.
- Using knowledge gained in new ways.
- Making sense of what you have learned.
- Recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

INTRODUCTORY
ADVANCED