

# Developing an Assessment Plan and Writing Learning Outcomes

## Overarching Guidelines

- When someone reads your mission, objectives, and outcomes, they should know what your unit is trying to accomplish.
- Your outcomes should provide a focus for your work.
- More specifically, your outcomes should represent the most important aspects of your unit and paint a picture of what you are about.

## Definitions

- **Mission** – The purpose or essential function of your unit. What you are here for, what your essential values are, and who you serve.
- **Objectives** – Broad, general statements of (1) what the program wants students to be able to do and to know and/or (2) what the program will do to ensure what students will be able to do and to know.
- **Outcomes** – More detailed and specific statements derived from the objectives; detailed and meaningful enough to guide decisions in program planning and improvement. Deal specifically with what you want students to learn; how you want them to grow and develop as a result of your activities.

### The Assessment Plan

1. Mission
2. Objectives
3. Outcomes
4. Activities
5. Methods
6. Analysis
7. Decisions/  
Recommendations

## Tips for Writing Learning Outcomes

- Think about all that you do and jot down a list of the impacts/learning that you expect to occur.
- Rank those by importance and then start with the top third of that list – there are lots of things we want students to learn from us, but some are primary and some are secondary.
- Do not be concerned about being right/wrong – this is for you.
- Do not be overly concerned with how you will measure your outcomes at the beginning.
- Be sure that it is something you will have a direct impact on – something that can be directly attributed to the intervention/program/interaction that students have with you and your work.
- Keep it simple – use only one concept per outcome.
- Remember – it is a working document, not a final product.

## Questions to Ask as You Write Your Outcomes

- Is it meaningful/valuable?
- Is it manageable?
- Is it measureable/identifiable?
- Who is the target audience of my outcome?
- Is it clear – how will I know if it has been met?
- Will it provide me with evidence that will lead me to make decisions for improvement?