

San Diego City College

Handbook for
Student Learning &
Administrative Outcomes

San Diego City College began Student Learning, Administrative Outcome and Institutional Assessment work in May 2003. The process has involved the instructional, student, and administrative services community in an institution-wide dialogue at the “grass roots” level. Staff and faculty began with dialogue regarding their values, the nature of their teaching, and goals for learning in their programs. They design and measure student learning or administrative outcomes that are unique to their programs and departments. Our efforts are directed towards incremental program improvement in meaningful ways and accreditation compliance.

The faculty and staff of each department determine and develop their own outcomes for on-going continuous course and program improvement. They select the areas for improvement, the methods of assessment, collect the findings and plan action for continued improvement. The department faculty and staff document their continuous cycles of improvement using an online software tool called Taskstream. Taskstream has served as a repository for ongoing improvement of courses and program throughout San Diego City College since 2009.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) vs Administrative Outcomes (AOs)

San Diego City College recognizes that Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are statements that describe how a student will be different because of a learning experience and reflect the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students will take with them from a learning experience. SLOs exist at the course, program and institutional level. SLOs are developed and assessed by Faculty as part of an ongoing assessment of student achievement.

Administrative Outcomes (AOs) measure outcomes related to student services, campus programs, or administrative services/projects and reflect the actions and strategies administrative units implement to accomplish tasks that support student learning.

Outcome Assessment

San Diego City College is committed to the ongoing assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness in order to continuously improve curriculum, programs, and services offered. Students, faculty, staff and administrators are all critical to successful student learning and all benefit from the useful and meaningful assessment strategies.

Assessment of curriculum, programs and services is conducted by academic, administrative and student services departments. Such assessments may in the form of faculty evaluation of student performance, student projects, program evaluation, completion of satisfaction surveys, or a variety of other tools and instruments.

Gathering evidence of academic and institutional accomplishments and the knowledge, skills and competencies students gain as a result of their college experience is a continuous process. It occurs at various levels and across many dimensions throughout the college. The findings enable San Diego City College to engage in a meaningful dialogue designed to guide improvements, assess the impact of changes in academic programs, and provide evidence of learning outcomes to those to whom they are accountable.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND MEASURES

What is a Student Learning Outcome?

SLOs are broad, overarching statements that describe knowledge, skills and attitudes to be gained by the student as a result of participation in the course. SLOs describe higher-level skills that integrate course content and activities and can be observed and measured.

Writing SMART SLOs

- **Specific** – clear, definite terms describing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, values and performance desired. Use action words or concrete verbs.
- **Measurable** –SLOs should have a measurable outcome and a target can be set, so that you can determine when you have reached it.
- **Achievable** – Know the outcome is something your students can accomplish
- **Realistic** – make sure the outcome is practical and reflects course content
- **Time-bound** – When will the outcome be done? Identify a specific timeframe.

SMART SLOs can help guide your development of activities, projects, homework and other instructional strategies. SMART SLOs can also assist you in developing exams, portfolios, and other methods of assessing student performance.

A **Course Student Learning Outcome (CSLO)** is a clear statement of what a student should learn and be able to demonstrate upon completing a course. It describes the assessable and measurable **knowledge, skills, abilities** or **attitudes** that students should attain by the end of a learning process. Faculty have the responsibility for developing course CSLOs, and thus, the authority on how they will be developed and assessed.

SLOs and Course Objectives

A question that arises occasionally is, “Are course objectives the same thing as course learning outcomes?”

According to *The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide*, the 2008 publication of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), objectives “bring to the forefront what must be focused upon by any faculty delivering the course.” As such, the Course Objectives serve as guidance to instructors in how to design and deliver courses. *The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide* further describes Course Objectives as the “key elements” that must be taught each time the course is presented to students. In short, Course Objectives are indicators of what will be taught in the course. The following charts help to distinguish the difference between a course objective and a course SLO:

Course Objectives	SLOs
Describe what a faculty member will cover in a course – focus on content	Identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course – focus on behaviors
Provide students the means to organize their efforts toward accomplishing the desired behaviors	Allows students to understand what faculty expect the student to know or how to act after successfully completing the course
Highlight components that will ensure students achieve intended learning	Allows students to decide if the course is right for them before enrolling

Course Objective	Okay Student Learning Objective	Better Student Learning Objective
Describe Erikson’s stages of development.	Develop a daily plan for use in a child development center.	Utilize knowledge of human development to create learning activities for the pre-school child.
Describe the characteristics of an effective member of the health care team.	Function as a member of the health care team.	Reflect upon one’s own contributions to a team effort required to achieve a goal.
List the components of a cell.	Using a diagram, name the cell parts.	Construct a model of a cell.

In order to inform students what they can expect to gain from a course or a program, SLOs may be published in the College Catalog, course outline, syllabus, web site, or other public forums.

A **Program Student Learning Outcome (PSLO)** is a clear statement of what a student should demonstrate upon completion of a program of study. It describes measurable student achievements desired as well as clear, explicitly stated goals that can guide the assessment of program effectiveness.

What is a Measure?

The measure of a student learning outcome is a tool or process used to determine if a student has met the established learning outcome. Measures can be indirect or direct.

Indirect measures include data from surveys, retention rates, graduation rates, progression rates, professional exam passing rates, etc. Indirect measures enable inferences to be made regarding the benefits to students from their educational experience, but do not adequately reflect exactly what students have learned, skills acquired, or attitudes developed as a result of their experience at the College.

Direct measures provide more robust evidence of the knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes acquired by students. Examples of direct measures include exams, assignments that ask students to perform some kind of conceptual task (e.g., create a concept map), portfolios compiled over a course of study, assignments, and other types of student artifact. It is important to emphasize that these student work products need to be systematically reviewed for evidence. To be of value, student work products need to be analyzed and compared to the established learning outcome. Rubrics are an effective method to analyze papers, thesis, or portfolios in order to assess learning. Grades can also be a measure of attainment of course student learning outcomes.

Adapted with permission from Boyd, M. & Vitzelio, T (n.d.) *A Guidebook to Student Learning Outcomes and Administrative Unit Outcomes*. Chaffey College.

Administrative Outcomes

What is an Administrative Outcome?

An Administrative Outcome (AO) is a statement about what an individual will experience, receive, or understand as a result of a given service offered by. An individual can be anyone receiving a service from the College, including students, faculty, staff, and/or members of the community served by San Diego City College.

AOs are statements that identify an individual's responses to a certain service that an administrative department provides. AOs identify activities that are critical and central to the administrative department. Designed and developed by the administrative department, these statements provide evidence that positive individual reaction has occurred as a result of a specific service. These statements are very similar to SLOs in that they examine the result of an experience but AOs deal exclusively with non-instructional services provided to students or other members of the campus community.

AOs are connected to planning. The objective is developed and assessed. Then, the data is collected, summarized and analyzed. From the results, the unit plans for improvement. Improvements could include increased staff development, equipment purchases, software modifications, and process development.

AOs are generally tied to the non-instructional areas of student support services but can include any unit, office, or department that provides any service to any individuals (whether they are students or not) in order to directly or indirectly maximize student success.

The four main purposes AO of assessment are:

- **To improve** – The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the administrative unit can be improved.
- **To inform** – The assessment process should inform department staff and other decision-makers of the contributions of the administrative unit and its effect on the development and growth of students.
- **To prove** – The assessment process should demonstrate what the administrative unit is accomplishing to benefit students, faculty, staff and the community served by the college.
- **To support** – The assessment process should provide support for unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

Effective administrative unit assessment should answer these questions:

- What are you trying to do?
- How well are you doing it?
- Using the answers to the first two questions, how can you improve what you are doing?
- What and how does an administrative unit contribute to the development and growth of students?
- How can the student learning experience be improved?

(Adapted from Hutchings and Marchese, 1990)

Writing SMART AOs

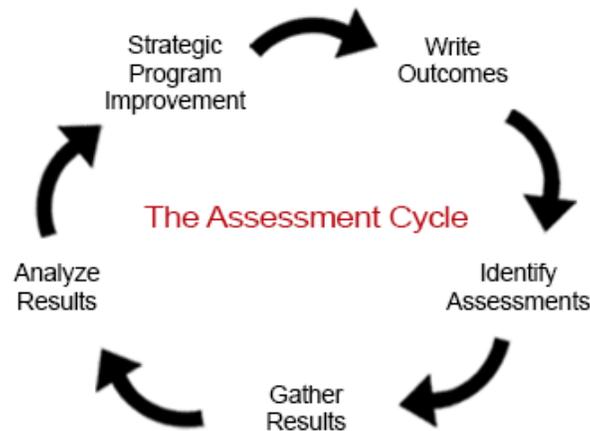
- **S**pecific – clear, definite terms describing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, values and performance desired. Use action words or concrete verbs.
- **M**easurable –SLOs should have a measurable outcome and a target can be set, so that you can determine when you have reached it.
- **A**chievable – Know the outcome is something your students can accomplish
- **R**ealistic – make sure the outcome is practical and reflects course content
- **T**ime-bound – When will the outcome be done? Identify a specific timeframe.

Examples of AOs

- The Office of the President will provide leadership to guide the College in meeting its mission to enhance and promote excellence in teaching and learning.
- Admissions and Records will respond to external data requests within 5-7 working days.
- Through participation in Social Justice Programs and Trainings, members of the San Diego City College community will examine issues of privilege and oppression from their personal context.

SLO/AO ASSESSMENT

Gathering evidence of academic and institutional accomplishments and the knowledge, skills and competencies students gain as a result of their college experience is a continuous process. It occurs at various levels and across many dimensions throughout the college. The findings enable San Diego City College to make improvements, assess the impact of changes in academic programs, and provide evidence of learning outcomes to those to whom we are accountable.



Assessment Process

Assessment of CSLOs and AOs occurs regularly, on a schedule approved by MPAROC and consist of the following:

The 4-Step Cycle of Continuous Improvement

1. **Assessment Planning** – identification and development of outcome and identifying the measure(s) to determine achievement of the outcome
2. **Assessment Findings** – gather data according to established measure; analyze and evaluate the findings to determine achievement of outcome
3. **Action Plan** – using information from Assessment Findings, determine if changes in course, program, or service need to be made and develop a plan to implement those changes
4. **Status Report** – report on the status of established action plan

Utilizing Taskstream for Outcomes, Program Review, and Master Planning

Creating an Outcome

1. Open your web browser and go to www.taskstream.com
2. Click the login link located in the upper right corner
3. Log in with your username and password
 - a. If you forgot your user information click the link below the login box
4. Locate your division, department, or course and click the link to open it
5. Click on the Outcome Link Upper left of the list SLO or AUO
6. Click “Check Out”
7. Click “Create New Set”
8. Enter a title and click “Continue”
9. Click “Create New Outcome”
10. Provide a “Title” and “Description” and click “Continue”
11. Please see mapping instructions to complete outcome development

Mapping

1. Open your web browser and go to www.taskstream.com
2. Click the login link located in the upper right corner
3. Log in with your username and password
 - a. If you forgot your user information click the link below the login box
4. Locate your division, department, or course and click the link to open it
5. Click on the Outcome Link Upper left of the list SLO or AUO
6. Click “Check Out”
7. Click the link titled “Map” to the right of the outcome
8. Click “Create New Mapping”
9. Click the drop down box and select “Goal Sets”
10. Click “Go”
11. Click the checkmark bubble on the area to be mapped and click “Continue”
12. Repeat these steps for all areas including “Competencies, Priorities, Mission, General Ed (if required)”, and see below for Courses mapped to “Instructional Programs (PSLOs)”
13. If the SLO is from a course, it must be mapped to Department/ Program level outcomes
 - a. Follow the same steps and clicking on “Create New Mapping”
 - b. Click on the drop down box selecting “Outcome Sets in Other Organizational Areas”
 - c. In the second drop down box locate the Depart/ Program and click “Go”
 - d. Select the PSLOs checkmark bubble
 - e. Click “Continue”
 - f. Select the correct PSLOs matching to the course and click “Continue”
 - g. Ensure all CSLOs are mapped to the PSLOs
 - h. Click “Check In”

Course Assessment and Action Planning

1. Open your web browser and go to www.taskstream.com
2. Click the login link located in the upper right corner
3. Log in with your username and password
 - a. If you forgot your user information click the link below the login box
4. Locate your course and click the link “Course Assessment and Action Planning”
5. Locate the academic year you are measuring and click on “Measure/ Findings/ Action Plan”
6. Click “Check Out”
7. Follow the instructions and prompts to either create a new measure or copy the previous year as a starting point
8. If you are creating a new measure select the “Existing Set” follow the prompts and click “Add Measure”
9. If you are copying forward click “Edit” on the right side
10. Fill in your data and click “Submit”
11. Click Check In and you are done

Administrative Outcome Assessment and Action Planning

1. Open your web browser and go to www.taskstream.com
2. Click the login link located in the upper right corner
3. Log in with your username and password
 - a. If you forgot your user information click the link below the login box
4. Locate your division or department and click the link “Student or Admin. Services Assessment & Action Plan”
5. Locate the academic year you are measuring and click on “Assessment Plan”
6. Click “Check Out”
7. Follow the instructions and prompts to either create a new measure or copy the previous year as a starting point
8. If you are creating a new measure select the “Existing Set” follow the prompts and click “Add Measure”
9. If you are copying forward click “Edit” on the right side
10. Fill in your data and click “Submit”
11. Click “Check In”
12. Staying in the same heading click on “Assessment Findings”
13. Click “Check Out”
14. Click “Add Findings” and enter your data
15. Click “Submit”
16. Click “Check In”
17. Staying in the same heading click “Action Plan”
18. Click “Check Out”
19. Click Create New or copy as a starting point
20. Select the correct findings and click “Add Action”

Adapted with permission from Boyd, M. & Vitzelio, T (n.d.) *A Guidebook to Student Learning Outcomes and Administrative Unit Outcomes*. Chaffey College.

21. Enter the data and click Submit
22. Click Check In”

Program Review and Master Planning

1. Open your web browser and go to www.taskstream.com
2. Click the login link located in the upper right corner
3. Log in with your username and password
 - a. If you forgot your user information click the link below the login box
4. Locate your division or department and click the link “Program Review and Master Planning”
5. Locate the academic years you are working on and click the link to access each category
 - a. Program Review addresses the previous academic year and Master Planning addresses the next academic year
6. Click “Check Out”
7. Located at the bottom, click “Add Text & Image”
8. Enter your data
9. Click Save and Return
10. Click “Check In”