

Degree Learning Outcomes

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Overview and Outcomes

Learning Outcomes form the foundation of a course and provide a very clear picture of course purpose and content. They indicate the knowledge, skills or attitudes that students will be able to demonstrate upon successful completion of the course. **Degree learning outcomes** also provide an indication of the level of learning that must be achieved to meet degree-level expectations.

This second module focuses on developing, interpreting and implementing degree-level Course Learning Outcomes. It is recommended that participants complete the Exploring the Degree Level Standard module prior to beginning this unit.

By the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Determine the level of learning of the Degree Level Standard element(s) mapped to a degree course
- Relate a Course Learning Outcome to cognitive and knowledge domains of the revised Bloom's taxonomy
- Identify appropriate degree level teaching strategies for the achievement of a Course Learning Outcome and an associated element of the Degree Level Standard



Curriculum Mapping

In the previous module, we explored the six elements of the Degree Level Standard for an Honours Bachelor degree program. It is important to remember that not every element of the Degree Level Standard needs to be met (or can be met) in every course. Curriculum mapping determines where your course “fits” within the degree program and what role it will play in meeting the Program Learning Outcomes and the Degree Level Standard. General information on curriculum mapping is available in the Teaching & Learning Centre space ([Curriculum Map](#)).

Curriculum mapping of Honours Bachelor degree programs differs from mapping of other college programs in that it must also consider achievement of the Degree Level Standard.

In addition, Honours Bachelor degree programs not only provide a detailed study of the major areas within a field, but also an understanding of how these areas interconnect with one another and with other fields. Consulting a curriculum map can help you identify the appropriate breadth, depth and complexity level for your course material, the position of your course within the progression of learning and the relationship of your course to the overall discipline. This will help you interpret and implement the Course Learning Outcomes in a manner appropriate to the year of study and the relevant elements of the Degree Level Standard.

A curriculum and Degree Level Standard map for your program is developed as part of the degree consent application process and is available from your Chair. It is important to consult these maps in order to interpret the appropriate level of your course content. Begin by determining how your course fits into the program as a whole and to what other courses it is directly connected. For example, what are the pre-requisites for your course, and/or are there subsequent courses in the program that are dependent upon successful completion of your course? Determine which elements of the Degree Level Standard form part of the Course Learning Outcomes. Where in the progression of learning for the achievement of the relevant elements does your course fall? This will help you identify the appropriate level of learning when it comes time to implement the Course Learning Outcomes.

The following table may assist you with this planning:

Activity – Degree Level Standard Mapping Exercise

Program:	
Course:	Semester:
Pre-requisites:	Dependent Courses:
Degree Level Standard elements mapped to this course:	Level: (F / I / A)

F = Foundational

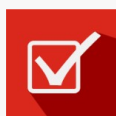
Students acquire fundamental knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for progression through the program.

I = Intermediate

Students build towards achievement of the Degree Level Standard element through guided practice.

A = Adept

Students demonstrate achievement of the Degree Level Standard element.



Degree Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills or attitudes that students will be able to demonstrate upon successful completion of a course. Detailed Course Learning Outcomes for each subject within an Honours Bachelor degree program are developed as part of the initial application for Ministerial consent. As descriptors of course content, Course Learning Outcomes play an important role in the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) course evaluations. Course Learning Outcomes are structured to fit into the broader curriculum to ensure the program as a whole meets the Program Learning Outcomes at an Honours Baccalaureate credential level. As faculty teaching in a degree program, you will need to be able to interpret and implement approved degree level Course Learning Outcomes for your courses. You may also be involved in the development or review of Course Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes for new and existing degree programs, as part of a program development team.

Degree level learning outcomes follow the same format as other Seneca Course Learning Outcomes. Each learning outcome statement begins with an action verb and describes an observable or measurable behaviour or performance. Course Learning Outcomes are written from the students' perspective and describe or indicate what the students can expect to achieve if they are successful in the course.

There are three parts to every learning outcome statement:



A single **action verb** that identifies the performance to be demonstrated and the level of learning



The **content** or learning focus that specifies what knowledge, concept or skill the learner is expected to acquire



The **context** or criteria that specifies the parameters or the measurable characteristics in which the learning is grounded

Additional information on verbs for learning outcome statements is available in the [Bloom's Taxonomy: Guide for Verbs \(PDF\)](#).

Degree level Course Learning Outcomes generally reflect higher cognitive complexity levels within Bloom's taxonomy and may be associated with more abstract knowledge. The following table summarizes Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson et al, 2001) and provides examples of learning outcomes at the different levels. The appropriateness of a learning outcome to meeting degree level criteria increases as one moves towards the upper right quadrant of the table.



Download Accessible PDF of [Bloom's Revised Taxonomy \(PDF\)](#)



Meeting Degree Level Course Learning Outcomes

The Course Learning Outcomes for your subject can be found on the [Seneca Subject Outline System](#).

When determining how to implement Course Learning Outcomes into your lesson planning, keep in mind the breadth, depth and complexity level that is appropriate for your course, and the Degree Level Standards that have been mapped to the course. In addition, consider how Seneca's Core Literacies are addressed by the course material. Remember that instructional activities and assessments should align to the intended Course Learning Outcomes.

Aligning Outcomes

This tip sheet from the University of Waterloo Centre for Teaching Excellence provides examples of assessments and activities aligned to learning outcomes across a number of disciplines:

[Tip Sheet](#)

Some questions to consider:

- Where is the outcome situated in the progression of learning? How does the outcome build on learning from prior courses? How will the learning be extended in future courses?
- What level of Bloom's Taxonomy is associated with this outcome?
- Is the measured achievement of the outcome aligned with meeting one or more Degree Level Standards?
- How can I incorporate primary sources, methodologies, current advances, etc. into the delivery of the outcome?
- How do students practice what they are learning? What activities contribute to achievement of the outcome and the associated Degree Level Standards?
- Do my assessments measure achievement of the outcome?
- Are the content, teaching activities and assessments at a level of breadth, depth

and complexity consistent with the position of the course within the program curriculum and the degree level?

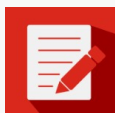


Degree vs Diploma Learning Outcomes

Below is a comparison of degree vs diploma level Course Learning Outcomes taken from selected Seneca degree and diploma Course Outlines:



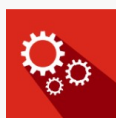
Download Accessible PDF of [Degree versus Diploma \(PDF\)](#)



Writing Degree Level Course Learning Outcomes

As an expert in your field, you may be involved in developing Course Learning Outcomes for a new Honours Bachelor degree program, or in reviewing outcomes for an existing program undergoing renewal. These activities must be done in collaboration with your Chair, program coordinator and other faculty to ensure the program as a whole meets the overall Program Learning Outcomes and Degree Level Standards. Keep in mind best practices for writing SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-limited) 3-part learning outcomes. Numerous resources on writing learning outcomes are available in the Teaching & Learning Centre space (). Always begin with curriculum and Degree Level Standard

mapping and be sure the Course Learning Outcomes reflect the appropriate breadth, depth and complexity of the corresponding Degree Level Standard.



Activity – Implementing a Degree Level Course Learning Outcome

This exercise will assist you in developing instructional strategies for the achievement of a specific Course Learning Outcome appropriate to the level of an Honours Bachelor degree. You will also need to consider an associated element of the Degree Level Standard when planning your activity. A template and example are provided to assist you with designing your implementation.

Step 1: Visit the [Seneca Subject Outline System](#). Enter your course name, and from the Course Outline select a Course Learning Outcome.

Step 2: Write down a relevant Degree Level Standard element that has been mapped to this course and the level of learning you assigned to this element in the Degree Level Standard mapping activity earlier in this module.

Step 3: Determine the cognitive process and knowledge domain associated with the learning outcome.

Step 4: Develop a teaching and learning activity aligned to the Course Learning Outcome and Degree Level Standard element. Activities may take place in the classroom or outside of class time and may be individual, group-based or class-based.

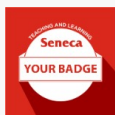
Step 5: Develop an assessment aligned to the activity, the Course Learning Outcome and Degree Level Standard element.

Step 6: Reflect on the appropriateness of the Course Learning Outcome as written and your implementation with respect to one or more elements of the Degree Level Standard. Does the work meet degree level expectations? What modifications would you suggest?

Activity template and example

[Implementing Degree Learning Outcomes template \(PDF\)](#)

[Implementing Degree Learning Outcomes example \(PDF\)](#)



Complete this Module and Apply for Your Badge

To receive micro-credential recognition for completion of this module, apply for the Degree Learning Outcomes digital badge.

To demonstrate completion of the module, you will be asked to:

- Review all learning materials,
- Develop and reflect on a teaching and learning activity and assessment for the achievement of a degree level Course Learning Outcome and associated element of the Degree Level Standard,
- Complete and submit the “Implementing a Degree Level Course Learning Outcome” activity and worksheet.

Apply for a Badge

[Badge Application Form](#)

References

- Anderson, L.W. (Ed.), Krathwohl, D.R. (Ed.), Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K.A., Mayer, R.E., Pintrich, P.R., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M.C. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Complete edition). New York: Longman.
- Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Iowa State University. [Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy](#).
- Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo. [Aligning Outcomes, Assessments and Instruction](#).

tags : degree-learning-module, degree-learning-outcomes, degree-learning-outcomes-learning-module, degree-level, degree-level-learning-module, degree-level-teaching, degree-level-teaching-learning-module, learning-module, teach, teaching-and-learning, teaching-and-learning-centre