Outcomes Assessment of Student Learning

**Who:** Faculty

**What:** A process intended to improve the student learning process. The process involves setting clear learning goals for students and assessing how well students achieve those learning goals.

**Where:** Outcomes Assessment Alignment table (formerly Phase III form) on syllabus; Phase IV form

**Why:** Gives faculty the opportunity to review student achievement and performance, providing a vehicle for improving teaching and learning. This process also provides a systematic and consistent approach to clearly documenting the student learning assessment that faculty have already been doing in their courses.

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| Abilities (8 Abilities)| Learning that is central to the personal and professional success of all MSU-Great Falls COT students, e.g. institutional outcomes for student learning. The institutional abilities should align with the institutional mission statement. | **What:** Institutional student learning goals- what students should achieve upon completion of any degree or credential from the institution.  
**Where:** Listed in college catalog.  
- Column 5 on Outcomes Assessment Alignment table (formerly Phase III form) on syllabus.  
- Not listed on Phase IV form (Assessment of Course Objectives)  
**Other things to know:** Impact each course, each program, each degree, and the institution as a whole.  
- These are the skills that employers want to see in their employees, so our school has committed to developing these skills in our students.  
- Students need to be engaged with understanding and developing the 8 Abilities during their education.  
- At some point in the outcomes assessment process, we may need to revisit the 8 Abilities to ensure they are measurable and adequate for our institution’s goals |
| **Department/Program/Degree/Division Outcomes** | The specific knowledge, skills, or developmental attributes that will be listed in the catalog that students experience during a course taught within a specific department or division, or through their experience in a program. Department/division/program outcomes are linked to the College’s abilities. | **What:** Student learning goals specific to the department/division/program level - what students should achieve upon completion of the program or degree.  
**Where:** Column 2 on Outcomes Assessment Alignment table (formerly Phase III form) on syllabus and Column 2 on Phase IV form  
**Other things to know:** This column’s heading does not clearly translate for all courses - programs have specific outcomes tied to accreditation, but the courses taught in Developmental Education & Transfer (like math, writing, communication, etc.) are not tied to specific outcomes. For now, it is most important to show clearly what outcomes these courses’ objectives are tied to.  
- For many courses in the Developmental Education & Transfer Division, information in this column may come from the MSUGF Core Outcomes, but depending on departmental decisions, could also come from the objectives created by the common course numbering FLOCs (Faculty Learning Outcomes Committees). Be sure to check with your department chair and/or Division Director to decide what is best for your course. |
| **Course Objectives** | The specific measurable expectations that appear on course syllabi as to what an individual in a course will achieve. Course objectives are linked to program, department, or division outcomes. | **What:** Student learning goals specific to the course - what the student should achieve upon completion of course.  
**Where:** List on syllabus under “objectives”  
- Column 1 on Outcomes Assessment Alignment table (formerly Phase III form) on syllabus  
- Column 1 on Phase IV form.  
**Other things to know:** Courses should have objectives that are specific and measurable.  
- You may choose to use the objectives created by the common course numbering process; if these objectives are too broad to measure, you might choose to write more specific course objectives that align with the common course number objectives. |
### Course Assessment Tools

The instrument(s) developed by the faculty and used to gather information on student learning, development, or success in area (e.g., observations, quizzes, papers, presentations, portfolios, surveys, self-reflections, etc.). The purpose of utilizing these tools is to measure the students’ accomplishments of the course objectives.

**What:** The tools we use to assess student learning.

**Where:** Column 4 on Outcomes Assessment Alignment table (formerly Phase III form) on syllabus
- Column 4 on Phase IV form.

**Other things to know:**
- To easily assess and compare outcomes, it is particularly useful to use a common assessment tool for all sections of the same course (i.e. a common final or common writing prompts).
- *Objective learning goals* (i.e. identify information) can be assessed easily with tools like quizzes, etc.
- *Subjective learning goals* (i.e. write an effective sentence) require more guidance for assessment. Rubrics are one way to provide that guidance and help students understand what an instructor’s expectations are when terms like “effective” are used. Rubrics create objective assessments of subjective learning goals.

### Benchmarks

A standard in measuring. Prior to measuring how well students are performing a course objective, faculty will not only need the assessment tool, but also a benchmark.

**What:** Defines acceptable level of performance of a course objective

**Where:** On the Phase IV form, column 4
- List benchmarks indicating the acceptable level of performance for the assessment tool (i.e. 80% of students will achieve a “B” or better on specific portions of the exam).

**Other things to know:**
- Work with your supervisor to determine appropriate benchmarks for your course. Benchmarks may already exist, or it may be up to you, or your department/division to set them.
- Benchmarks will vary depending on the course. A course with no pre-requisites may not have high benchmarks as compared to an upper-level course in a specific program.

### Evidence of Change (or Evidence of change or student)

**What:** This is where you show the results of your assessments for each
| **Student Learning** | Learning is accomplished by analyzing the results of the course assessment tools. Evidence of change may include changes in knowledge, student behavior, attitudes, and their perception and engagement with their local and global environment. This evidence will be utilized to support continuing with the current steps of the Student Learning Pathway or to support making changes in the Student Learning Pathway. | The Student Learning Pathway is the path in which students gain knowledge in their courses, as well as achieve the course, departmental, divisional, and institutional objectives, as well as the 8 Abilities.  
**Where:** Column 5 on Phase IV form  
**Other things to know:** It is helpful to fill this section of your Phase IV form out each time you complete an assessment, rather than waiting until the end of the semester. That way, the information is still “fresh” in your mind.  
- Consider: Did students meet or exceed the benchmark you set in column 4? |
| **Recommendations to continue or modify Student Learning Pathway** | Once a faculty member compares the student performance on the assessment to the benchmark, the faculty member will need to decide to maintain or modify his or her teaching methods. | **What:** This is where you decide how to proceed with the teaching and learning process for the next time you teach the course.  
- If students **met or exceeded** the benchmarks: Indicate that you will continue to teach the subject matter in the same way.  
- If students **did not meet** the benchmarks: Indicate what you will do to improve student learning in the future.  
  - Some questions to consider: What will you do to ensure student learning for this course objective next time? What prevented students from meeting the benchmark? What change(s) will you make? Is the assessment tool or benchmark ineffective? Is the course objective too difficult to measure?  
**Where:** Column 6 on Phase IV form |
| **Closing the Loop** | Reviewing and gathering outcomes assessment data is not enough; it must come full circle. Utilizing outcome results to increase the quality of student learning is the purpose of the next step. | **What:** By using the information from the outcomes assessment process and Phase IV form, you will have “closed the loop,” which means you have used assessment data to make changes or continue on the same path in your teaching.  
**Where:** In your actions and choices when you teach the course again. This |
Learning gives outcomes a process, not an end product. Part of the outcomes assessment process is not documented specifically on paper, but is the result of the process as a whole.

- This includes implementing the changes indicated in column 6 of the Phase IV form.

**Other things to know:** “Closing the loop” is not the end. Outcomes assessment is a circular process, so we “close the loop” for every class we teach, making changes and improvements each time.

## Kinds of Learning Objectives

**Who:** Faculty; eventually program/division directors will use this information to map the sequence of learning for the Student Learning Pathway for specific program or degree outcomes and the 8 Abilities.

**What:** Requires faculty to determine at what level students can achieve course objectives.

**Where:** Columns 3 & 5 on Outcomes Assessment Alignment table (formerly Phase III form) on syllabus; Column 3 on Phase IV form

**Why:** Shows a clear sequence of learning that differentiates between newly introduced material and material that students already know and can apply.

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<td>Learning Objectives: Introduce</td>
<td>Students learn the facts and concepts necessary for an introductory skill.            (Introductory Objective verbs: know, list, name, identify &amp; recall)</td>
<td>This is new material for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives: Reinforce</td>
<td>Students use what they know to reason and solve problems.                               (Reinforce Objective verbs: predict, infer, classify, hypothesize, compare, conclude, summarize, analyze, evaluate, &amp; generalize)</td>
<td>This is material that students have learned (perhaps recently) and that they are able to begin using in a more skillful manner beyond identification and recall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives: Emphasize</td>
<td>Students use their knowledge and reasoning to act skillfully.                           (Emphasize Objective verbs: demonstrate, exhibit, display, prove, &amp; show)</td>
<td>This is material that students are knowledgeable about and are able to apply in more sophisticated ways.</td>
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