



Tips for Writing Learning Objectives

 AdvocateAuroraHealth®



Writing a learning objective

Component	Definition	Example
WHO	Participants, learners, physicians, and healthcare providers	Participants should be able
HOW	An action verb that identifies the level of performance	to integrate
WHAT	A description of the relevant factors associated with the desired result that specifies what learning will be demonstrated	the key components of a successful smoking cessation program in a busy primary care practice

Examples of learning objectives that are written specifically to address:

Improvement in Competency

Knowing how to do something: What a physician would do if given the opportunity but has not been put into practice yet

- *Example: Evaluate the factors involved in developing cultural competence and how to address these clinically.*

Enhanced Performance

The ability to apply knowledge, skills, and judgments in practice

- *Example: Implement strategies that address cultural competence (specifically linguistic, cultural and social issues that affect mental health in the lower socio-economic community) in clinical practice.*

Change in Patient Outcomes

The consequences of performance that have direct and positive results for patients

- *Example: Reduce morbidity and mortality rates of the lower socio-economic population by addressing linguistic, cultural and social issues that affect the mental health in this community.*

Objectives Should Address these Questions

- What should the result of the educational activity be for participants?
- What should the participant be able to do after attending the activity?
 - Make sure that objectives are measurable
 - State what the learner might do differently (behavioral change) because of what has been learned
 - Use verbs which allow measurable outcome and that can be used in the evaluation process

Source: Stanford Medicine Center Continuing Medical Education

Good Verbs to Measure Competence

Analyze	Assess	Compare	Contrast
Design	Develop	Differentiate	Distinguish
Evaluate	Formulate	Plan	Recommend

Source: Stanford Medicine Center Continuing Medical Education

Potential Learning Objectives: Competence

- Describe key elements of treatment protocols for patients with [insert disorder or disease state] and apply to applicable treatment plans in clinical practice.
- Distinguish information about emerging diagnostics, technologies, and therapeutics related to [insert disorder/disease] to treatment plans.
- Identify common high risk [insert subspecialty] problems so that they can be triaged and treated appropriately.
- Evaluate recent innovations in [insert subspecialty] clinical practice in order to assess their use for safe and effective patient care.

Potential Learning Objectives: Competence (cont.)

- Summarize recent advances in [insert subspecialty] research in order to design best-practice approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of [insert disorder/disease] .
- Design diagnostic and therapeutic plans for common presentations of [insert subspecialty] diseases.
- Evaluate contributing factors to near-miss cases, including breakdowns in communication and coordination of care.
- Apply current practice guidelines in the field of medicine or surgery to patient treatment plans.

Good Verbs to Measure Performance

Apply	Counsel	Diagnose	Employ
Examine	Incorporate	Integrate	Interpret
Manage	Perform	Prescribe	Utilize

Source: Stanford Medicine Center Continuing Medical Education

Potential Learning Objectives: Performance

- Integrate new information on up-to-date technologies, recent advances, updated guidelines, and/or best practices into daily clinical practice.
- Apply evidence-based methods for improving care to current clinical and surgical quality improvement efforts.
- Apply current practice guidelines in the field of medicine or surgery to treatment of patients.

Verbs to Avoid...

- Appreciate
- Be aware of
- Be familiar with
- Comprehend
- **Define**
- **Discuss**
- **Know**
- Learn
- **List**
- Think
- **Understand**

Source: Stanford Medicine Center Continuing Medical Education