

# Writing and Using Effective Learning Outcomes

1. **Read the CQUniversity guide to creating and using effective learning outcomes.**  
This should give you sufficient background and practical advice to enable you to write and use learning outcomes in your teaching and assessments. The CQUni guide also contains additional tips and practical suggestions.
2. **Read other texts on learning outcomes, to broaden and deepen your understanding.**  
For example, the ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards information (<http://www.altc.edu.au/>) and the other sources listed at the end of the CQUni guide. This one-pager is not enough, on its own.
3. **Learn from good practice**  
Ask your academic colleagues, or an educational developer from the Office of Learning & Teaching for examples of well-constructed learning outcomes relevant to your discipline. Ask them to explain the features of these examples, so that you understand their good points.
4. **Don't feel constrained to follow frameworks such as "Bloom's taxonomy".**  
While such frameworks can help you think about the appropriate 'level' for your learning outcomes, they should not be viewed as prescriptive. It is more important to choose the 'right verb', followed by the 'right phrase' in the context of your course or program.
5. **Write simply, that others may simply understand.**  
Write your learning outcomes so that they can be read and understood by students whose first language may not be English (this applies to over one-third of CQUniversity students). Your learning outcomes should be short, sharp statements of what students will be able to do on completion of the course or program. They should not attempt to combine several different aspects into a single statement. Shorter and straightforward is better than complex and convoluted.
6. **Try to have as few learning outcomes as possible.**  
The aim is to write a set of high-level statements, each of which describes an aspect of what students will learn and will be able to do on successful completion. Fewer is better.
7. **Seek feedback from colleagues on your draft learning outcomes.**  
It is better to get early feedback from senior staff and educational developers than to write poorly structured learning outcomes. It is also worth revisiting current 'approved' learning outcomes for your course, to see if they are still valid, and whether they can be improved. Learning from others is better than struggling alone.
8. **Align course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes.**  
Ideally, there should be a clear relationship between the two, and this is often best shown as a two-dimensional 'map' of course learning outcomes to those of the program.
9. **Align course learning outcomes and learning activities.**  
There should be a clear and explicit relationship between learning outcomes, learning activities (including teaching) and, perhaps most importantly of all, assessments. The greatest clarity in learning and teaching is provided when the relationships between learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments (including assessment criteria and feedback) are explicit and visible to learners and lecturers, through constructive alignment (e.g: [http://www.johnbiggs.com.au/constructive\\_alignment.html](http://www.johnbiggs.com.au/constructive_alignment.html)).
10. **Talk about learning outcomes with your students.**  
Explain how their learning activities within the course contribute to each learning outcome, and how course learning outcomes contribute to the program learning outcomes. Refer to learning outcomes in assessment feedback, so that students can see clearly how their work contributes to their learning outcomes.