

Course Proposal Development and Review Tips
Office of Assessment
University of Missouri-Kansas City

The following requirements and suggestions are intended to facilitate the development and review of course proposals by faculty, department chairs, program directors, unit curriculum committees, and academic administrators for elements related to the assessment of student learning outcomes. Faculty are urged to contact Caitlin Horsmon, the FaCET Faculty Fellow for Assessment, or Ruth Cain, Director of Assessment, to discuss the development of learning outcomes, curriculum mapping, and methods for assessment of student learning prior to submitting proposals for new or revised courses into the CourseLeaf management system. Faculty are also urged to review the information on the UMKC course approval policies and process available [here](#) prior to submitting the proposal through CourseLeaf. Additional information on assessment of student learning is available on the UMKC Assessment [website](#).

New Course Proposals

Review proposals for new courses to ensure they include:

- 1) measurable learning outcomes (see below for examples).
 - If the course is intended to be offered concurrently on the graduate and undergraduate levels, the student learning outcomes, required levels of performance, and educational experiences must be differentiated between and appropriate to each degree level.
- 2) a curriculum map that indicates the role of the course in supporting achievement of the programmatic student learning outcomes. If the course is intended to be cross-listed with other programs, curriculum maps for all-cross listed programs included in the proposal should be provided. (See the resources on curriculum mapping available [here](#).)
- 3) The syllabus for the course that includes the student learning outcomes. (Please see the [Syllabus Components](#) document for detailed information on UMKC syllabus requirements.)
- 4) If the program is substantially revising its curriculum, a revised assessment plan should be developed and submitted along with newly proposed courses.

Proposal for Substantive Revisions to Existing Courses

Proposals for substantive changes to courses should be reviewed to ensure they include:

- 1) measurable learning outcomes (see below).
 - If the revisions to the course include substantial changes to the identified student learning outcomes, a revised curriculum map should be attached to the proposal.
- 2) The syllabus for the course that includes the student learning outcomes. (Please see the [Syllabus Components](#) document for detailed information on UMKC syllabus requirements.)
- 3) If the program is substantially revising its curriculum, a revised assessment plan should be developed and submitted along with the proposals for revised courses.

Proposals for Non-Substantive Revisions to Existing Courses

Proposals for non-substantive changes to courses should be reviewed to ensure they include:

- 1) measurable learning outcomes (see below), and
- 2) the syllabus for the course that includes the student learning outcomes. (Please see the [Syllabus Components](#) document for detailed information on UMKC syllabus requirements.)

Tips on Developing Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Course-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) are statements that describe the skills or abilities that students will demonstrate at or near the time they complete the course. In order to ensure they are measurable, student learning outcomes are usually stated as:

<one action verb> + <one something>.

SLOs must be cognitively appropriate to the degree level (e.g., SLOs for master's programs reflect higher order skills than those for baccalaureate programs, upper-division courses reflect higher order abilities than lower-level courses). Student learning outcomes should represent the collective agreement of program faculty concerning:

- what students will learn, instead of what they will be taught;
- what students will demonstrate, represent, or produce because of their learning;
- how knowledge and skills of the discipline are used and applied; and
- essential qualities of individuals who work in the discipline (Jonson, 2006).

Here are some examples of measurable SLOs for a variety of disciplines:

- Students will be able to:
 - identify the role that cultural diversity plays in defining what it means to be a social being.
 - evaluate the validity and limitations of theories and scientific claims in experimental results.
 - synthesize multiple choices, beliefs, or diverse ethical frameworks when making decisions to respond to ethical dilemmas or problems.
 - construct a marketing plan appropriate to a client firm.
 - describe the potential effects of biotic and abiotic stresses on plants at various stages of development
 - analyze options for reduction of biotic and abiotic stresses with minimal disturbance to the environment and human beings.
 - apply anthropological theory to the analysis of a linguistic, cultural, or archeological phenomenon.

The following statements are not measurable student learning outcomes because they do not provide information on what students are able to do:

- Students will gain knowledge in X
- Students will appreciate Y.
- Student develop an understanding of Z.
- Students will comprehend X.

Such statements should be revised to indicate what specific skill or abilities students will demonstrate so that you will know they have achieved the learning outcome.

There are a number of taxonomies that may be used, as appropriate to the course and the discipline, as you develop measurable student learning outcomes. One useful tool to stimulate thinking about construction of student learning outcomes is available [here](#).