

Five Guidelines for Well-Written SLOs

1. **Meaningful: Informed by disciplinary standards:** What do you want a student who graduates from your program to be able to do?
2. **Measurable:** Can you measure the SLO with a rubric or a marking chart? Can you link it to specific assignments or parts of assignments (a specific question or questions on a quiz or exam; assignment designed to measure that SLO; capstone project; internship; artistic performance or product)?
3. **Simple:** One action verb that is observable. Bloom's Taxonomy may help with this (or some other taxonomy if you don't like Bloom's).
4. **Specific:** Avoids vague language that is open to interpretation.
5. **Few enough in number to assessed frequently:** Ideally, between 3 and 5.

PSLO examples from a fictional History Department:

Hard to observe (verb is abstract): Students *understand* the complexity of historical events.

Better: Students *interpret* historical events by using multiple primary source documents/artifacts.

Hard to measure (two verbs): Students *explain and evaluate* multiple historical interpretations of significant historical events.

Better: Students *evaluate* multiple historical interpretations of significant historical events.

Too vague: Students *present an argument* about an historical event.

Better: Students *create their own well-reasoned historical arguments using forms proper to the discipline.*