

# Objectives vs. Outcomes

[Course Objectives vs. Student Learning Outcomes \(table\)](#)

## Objectives

- Objectives describe the goals and intentions of the professor who teaches the course.
- Objectives, often termed the input in the course, state the purpose and goals of the course.
- Objectives focus on content and skills important within the classroom or program.  
Objectives may describe what the staff and faculty will do.
- Objectives can often be numerous, specific, and detailed. Assessing and reporting on each objective for each student may be impossible.

## Outcomes

- Student Learning Outcomes catalog the overarching "products" of the course and are the evidence that the goals or objectives were achieved.
- Learning Outcomes are statements that describe or list measurable and essential mastered content-knowledge—reflecting skills, competencies, and knowledge that students have achieved and can demonstrate upon successfully completing a course.
- Outcomes express higher-level thinking skills that integrate course content and activities and can be observed as a behavior, skill, or discrete useable knowledge upon completing the course.
- Outcomes are exactly what assessments are intended to show – specifically what the student will be able to do upon completing the course.
- An assessable outcome can be displayed or observed and evaluated against criteria.
- Outcomes are clear and measurable criteria for guiding the teaching, learning, and assessment process in the course.

Source: [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#) Office of the Provost