
Certificate in E-Learning Course Development (United Kingdom)

Learning Objectives And Outcomes

Action Verbs

Related terms: Bloom's Taxonomy, measurable objectives

Definition: Specific verbs that describe observable student behavior, such as "analyse," "design," or "evaluate." They anchor learning objectives in actions that can be assessed.

Example: Instead of stating "understand e-learning principles," an objective would read "explain the core principles of e-learning."

Practical application: When drafting module objectives, select verbs from the cognitive, psychomotor, or affective domains to match the intended level of mastery.

Challenges: Instructors may over-generalise objectives with vague verbs like "learn" or "know," which hinder clear assessment design.

Alignment

Related terms: constructive alignment, curriculum mapping

Definition: The systematic matching of learning objectives, teaching activities, and assessment tasks so that each component supports the others.

Example: A course on instructional design aligns a project-based assessment with objectives that require students to create a storyboard.

Practical application: Use alignment matrices to verify that every learning outcome is addressed by at least one learning activity and one assessment item.

Challenges: Maintaining alignment across multiple modules can become complex, especially when external accreditation requirements evolve.

Affective Domain

Related terms: Bloom's Taxonomy, learning outcomes

Definition: The part of learning that concerns attitudes, values, and emotions, ranging from receiving to characterising by a value or commitment.

Example: An objective in the affective domain might state "demonstrate a professional attitude toward online learner privacy."

Practical application: Include reflective journals or peer-feedback sessions to assess affective outcomes.

Challenges: Measuring affective change is less straightforward than cognitive achievement; reliable rubrics are needed to capture nuance.

Authentic Assessment

Related terms: performance tasks, real-world contexts

Definition: Evaluation methods that require learners to apply knowledge and skills in realistic situations, mirroring professional practice.

Example: Students develop a full e-learning module for a simulated client and present it to a panel.

Practical application: Design assessments that integrate multimedia production, stakeholder

communication, and usability testing.

Challenges: Authentic assessments can be resource-intensive, demanding time, technology, and expert feedback.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Related terms: action verbs, cognitive domain

Definition: A hierarchical classification of learning objectives that moves from lower-order thinking (remember, understand) to higher-order thinking (analyse, create).

Example: An objective using "design" targets the "create" level, encouraging synthesis of knowledge.

Practical application: Map each course objective to a taxonomy level to ensure a balanced distribution of cognitive demands.

Challenges: Over-reliance on the taxonomy may lead to neglect of affective and psychomotor outcomes, which are essential in e-learning contexts.

Cognitive Domain

Related terms: Bloom's Taxonomy, knowledge acquisition

Definition: The dimension of learning that involves mental skills and the acquisition of knowledge, encompassing remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating.

Example: An objective stating "apply instructional design models to develop a micro-learning segment" addresses the "apply" level.

Practical application: Use scenario-based questions to test higher-order cognitive skills.

Challenges: Designing activities that truly assess the upper levels (evaluate, create) requires sophisticated task design and clear rubrics.

Constructive Alignment

Related terms: alignment, learning outcomes

Definition: An educational design principle where learning activities and assessment tasks are deliberately constructed to achieve the stated learning outcomes.

Example: If the outcome is "critique multimedia resources," the learning activity includes peer-review of video tutorials, and the assessment requires a written critique.

Practical application: Draft learning outcomes first, then select teaching methods and assessments that directly support those outcomes.

Challenges: Misalignment often occurs when legacy assessments are reused without revisiting the underlying objectives.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Related terms: program outcomes, measurable objectives

Definition: Statements that describe what a learner will know, do, or value by the end of a specific course, expressed in observable terms.

Example: "Develop an accessible e-learning interface that complies with WCAG 2.2 guidelines."

Practical application: CLOs guide syllabus development, inform instructional strategies, and form the basis for assessment design.

Challenges: Over-broad CLOs dilute focus; overly narrow CLOs may limit creativity and interdisciplinary

integration.

Curriculum Mapping

Related terms: alignment, program outcomes

Definition: A visual representation that links learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessments across a program or course sequence.

Example: A matrix that shows how each module contributes to the overall competency of “designing learner-centred e-learning solutions.”

Practical application: Use spreadsheet tools to create a map, enabling quick identification of gaps or redundancies.

Challenges: Maintaining an up-to-date map requires continuous collaboration among faculty and curriculum designers.

Design-Based Research (DBR)

Related terms: iterative design, educational innovation

Definition: A methodological approach that integrates the design of learning interventions with systematic investigation, aiming to generate both practical solutions and theoretical insights.

Example: Developing a prototype adaptive learning system, testing it in a live course, and refining the design based on learner data.

Practical application: Align DBR cycles with learning outcomes to ensure each iteration targets specific objectives.

Challenges: Balancing rigorous research protocols with the fast-paced demands of e-learning development can be demanding.

Evaluation Criteria

Related terms: assessment rubrics, performance standards

Definition: The set of standards or benchmarks used to judge the quality of learner work against the intended learning outcomes.

Example: A rubric that assesses “usability testing report” on clarity, depth of analysis, and actionable recommendations.

Practical application: Publish criteria at the start of the module so learners understand expectations.

Challenges: Vague criteria can lead to inconsistent grading and student confusion.

Feedback Loop

Related terms: formative assessment, continuous improvement

Definition: The process by which information about learner performance is returned to the learner (and sometimes the instructor) to guide future learning actions.

Example: Automated quiz feedback that highlights misconceptions and directs learners to remedial resources.

Practical application: Incorporate immediate, specific feedback after each activity to reinforce learning objectives.

Challenges: Providing timely, personalised feedback at scale may require sophisticated analytics or AI support.

Formative Assessment

Related terms: feedback loop, low-stakes testing

Definition: Ongoing assessments used to monitor learner progress and inform instructional adjustments, without contributing heavily to final grades.

Example: A draft storyboard submitted for peer review before the final submission.

Practical application: Use polls, short quizzes, and reflective prompts to gauge understanding of each learning outcome.

Challenges: Instructors may undervalue formative data, treating it as optional rather than integral to course design.

Learning Analytics

Related terms: data-driven instruction, predictive modeling

Definition: The collection, measurement, and analysis of learner data to improve teaching and learning processes.

Example: Tracking time-on-task for each module to identify objectives that may be too complex.

Practical application: Align analytics dashboards with specific learning outcomes to spot gaps early.

Challenges: Data privacy concerns and the need for robust interpretation skills can limit effective use.

Learning Outcomes

Related terms: learning objectives, competency statements

Definition: Broad statements describing the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values that learners will demonstrate after completing a learning experience.

Example: "Critically evaluate the effectiveness of blended learning strategies in diverse contexts."

Practical application: Draft outcomes using action verbs and measurable criteria; ensure they are observable.

Challenges: Outcomes that are too generic ("understand e-learning") lack the specificity needed for assessment design.

Learning Objectives

Related terms: learning outcomes, instructional goals

Definition: Specific, measurable statements that articulate the intended achievements of a lesson or activity, typically framed with an action verb, a condition, and a performance standard.

Example: "Given a case study, design a 10-minute micro-learning module that aligns with adult learning principles."

Practical application: Write objectives before developing content to guide the selection of media, activities, and assessments.

Challenges: Over-loading a single objective with multiple actions reduces clarity and assessability.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Related terms: course outcomes, accreditation standards

Definition: High-level statements that capture the essential competencies a graduate of a program should possess, often linked to professional standards.

Example: "Demonstrate expertise in creating inclusive, accessible e-learning environments."

Practical application: Map each course's CLOs to relevant PLOs to ensure program coherence.

Challenges: Aligning diverse course outcomes with a limited set of PLOs can be a complex negotiation among faculty.

Psychomotor Domain

Related terms: skill acquisition, hands-on practice

Definition: The aspect of learning concerned with physical movement, coordination, and the use of motor skills. In e-learning, this often involves software manipulation or multimedia production.

Example: "Configure a learning management system to set up automated enrolment rules."

Practical application: Include lab-style activities, screen-recorded tutorials, and step-by-step tasks.

Challenges: Providing adequate practice opportunities in a virtual environment may require virtual labs or simulated interfaces.

Rubric

Related terms: assessment criteria, grading scales

Definition: A scoring guide that delineates levels of performance for each criterion linked to a learning outcome.

Example: A four-point rubric assessing "instructional narrative" on relevance, clarity, engagement, and alignment with objectives.

Practical application: Share rubrics with learners at the start of the activity to clarify expectations.

Challenges: Developing rubrics that are both detailed enough to differentiate performance and simple enough for consistent use can be time-consuming.

Scalable Assessment

Related terms: automated grading, peer assessment

Definition: Evaluation methods that can be efficiently applied to large numbers of learners without compromising reliability.

Example: Using AI-driven plagiarism detection to assess originality of e-learning project reports.

Practical application: Combine automated quizzes for lower-order outcomes with peer-review for higher-order design tasks.

Challenges: Ensuring fairness and validity when human judgement is reduced requires robust design and calibration.

SMART Objectives

Related terms: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound

Definition: A framework for writing clear and attainable learning objectives that facilitate tracking and assessment.

Example: "Within two weeks, produce a storyboard that meets the five criteria of the instructional design model."

Practical application: Review each objective against the SMART checklist during curriculum planning.

Challenges: Over-emphasis on the time-bound element may pressure learners and compromise depth of learning.

Summative Assessment

Related terms: final exam, portfolio evaluation

Definition: High-stakes evaluation administered at the end of a learning period to determine whether learners have achieved the intended outcomes.

Example: A capstone project that requires students to integrate all course objectives into a complete e-learning solution.

Practical application: Align summative tasks directly with the most critical learning outcomes to ensure coverage.

Challenges: Summative assessments that do not reflect authentic practice may fail to capture real-world competence.

Taxonomy Mapping

Related terms: Bloom's Taxonomy, learning objectives

Definition: The process of aligning each learning objective with a specific level of a taxonomy to ensure appropriate cognitive demand.

Example: Mapping "analyse learner data" to the "analyse" level of Bloom's hierarchy.

Practical application: Use a spreadsheet to list objectives and their corresponding taxonomy levels for quick reference.

Challenges: Mis-mapping can lead to assessments that are either too easy or too difficult relative to the intended outcome.

Technical Standards

Related terms: WCAG, SCORM, xAPI

Definition: Established specifications that define interoperability, accessibility, and quality for e-learning content and platforms.

Example: Ensuring a module complies with WCAG 2.2 Level AA for visual contrast.

Practical application: Include technical standards as part of learning outcomes for courses on e-learning development.

Challenges: Rapid evolution of standards may require continuous professional development for instructors.

Transferable Skills

Related terms: soft skills, employability competencies

Definition: Abilities that can be applied across various contexts, such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Example: "Collaborate effectively in a virtual design team to produce an e-learning prototype."

Practical application: Embed collaborative projects and reflective activities that highlight these skills.

Challenges: Measuring transferability often relies on self-reporting or indirect evidence, which can be less reliable.

Validity

Related terms: assessment alignment, construct validity

Definition: The extent to which an assessment accurately measures the intended learning outcome.

Example: A quiz on multimedia principles is valid if it tests knowledge required for creating accessible content.

Practical application: Conduct expert reviews to verify that assessment items align with objectives.

Challenges: Achieving high validity may require extensive item-writing expertise and iterative refinement.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Related terms: LMS, e-learning platform

Definition: A digital space where learners access course materials, interact, and submit assessments.

Example: Moodle, Canvas, or Blackboard used to deliver the Certificate in E-Learning Course Development.

Practical application: Configure the VLE to mirror the structure of learning outcomes, enabling easy navigation for students.

Challenges: Technical glitches, limited customization, and accessibility compliance can impede the learning experience.

Weighted Scoring

Related terms: grade calculation, outcome prioritisation

Definition: Assigning different point values to assessment components based on their importance relative to learning outcomes.

Example: The final project may be weighted at 50 % of the overall grade because it addresses multiple high-level outcomes.

Practical application: Communicate weighting schemes clearly to students to align effort with outcome significance.

Challenges: Over-weighting a single assessment can increase stress and may not reflect continuous learning.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Related terms: placement, industry partnership

Definition: Learning experiences that combine academic study with real-world work, allowing students to apply outcomes in professional settings.

Example: A student completes a six-week placement designing e-learning modules for a corporate client.

Practical application: Align WIL objectives with program outcomes to ensure relevance and assessment consistency.

Challenges: Coordinating placement sites, ensuring quality supervision, and aligning schedules with academic timelines.

Write-Back Feedback

Related terms: automated feedback, adaptive learning

Definition: Immediate, system-generated responses that not only inform learners of correctness but also provide corrective guidance and resources.

Example: After a quiz, the system highlights the misconception and links to a short tutorial on instructional design principles.

Practical application: Integrate write-back feedback for lower-order objectives to reinforce foundational knowledge.

Challenges: Developing nuanced feedback for higher-order tasks often requires sophisticated AI or extensive authoring time.