

What Constitutes Good Learning Outcomes and Assessment?

Learning outcomes describe what students should **know** and be able **to do** in a demonstrable way by the end of a teaching session or module or programme. They are related to, but different from, teaching aims, which instead describe broadly what the session or module or programme is about and its overall purpose. In order to evidence that students have earned their degree, all learning outcomes must be taught and tested.

[Subject Benchmark Statements](#) provide guidance on the content of teaching and assessment within a subject and are written by other academics. It is helpful to link the content or scope of a module to these. Teaching should be more challenging as a student progresses. These expectations are set out in the [QAA Qualifications Frameworks](#) and are useful in determining how to teach and assess each module.

Writing learning outcomes can help you plan your teaching, for example, by prioritising key learning points for the session or module and thereby enabling you to plan your approach to teaching across a session or programme. There is already some guidance on writing learning outcomes available on the [Bangor University website](#). You will need to bear learning outcomes in mind when planning your assessment strategy. Learning outcomes should be shared with students at the start of each module as it will help them to understand what it is that they are meant to be learning and what they should know and do at each stage.

There are many helpful articles on the inter-relationship between assessment and the use of assessment in achieving good learning outcomes. Easy-to-follow examples include:

- [Assessment for Learning \(Education Development Trust\)](#)
- [Creating Learning Outcomes \(Stanford University\)](#)

In developing your programme of study, you should consider different levels of learning outcomes (usually increasing in complexity as the programme progresses from the first to final year) and then incorporate different assessment methods to test if learning has been achieved. In practical subjects, learning by doing, is often regarded as a good way of testing a student's learning as they should be able to demonstrate that they have the skill or competency which is being taught. Learning by doing is also sometimes also referred to as "Active Learning". There are a wide range of different learning outcomes of which, learning by doing is an example of, but not the only option. The University will encourage different types of learning outcomes according to what's best suited to the course. Details and examples regarding the benefits of learning by doing can be found [online](#).

You should also consider how the learning outcomes relate to Bangor's Graduate Attributes: Challenge, Application, Inquiry, Self-direction, and Collaboration. Using these terms can help students link the module content and the employability skills they are developing.

Typically, all learning sessions (lecture, tutorial, practical session etc.) will have learning outcomes. These may be assessed using a formative approach (an assessment not carrying a mark) e.g. by using in-class live feedback by a [clicker system](#). This method of formative assessment has the benefit of a session leader being able to measure in real time, what

proportion of the class or group are understanding the key concepts and ideas which a tutor is presenting.

Summative assessments should also be used during or at the end of a period of study to evaluate student learning and performance. Results from these assessments are measured against the assessment criteria which are used to judge the associated learning outcomes of a module or programme, established using national benchmarks. There should be a good balance between these two assessment methods within programmes and modules.

Combining all the learning outcomes together from all the teaching sessions in a course gives the overall learning outcomes. Often completing a mapping exercise of module learning outcomes provides clarity around achieving the overall programme learning outcomes. This can be a useful check and balance to ensure that all the desired learning outcomes have been assessed. Bear in mind that this will need to be completed retrospectively in [Worktribe](#).

It is good practice to **use different assessment methods** to test these overall learning outcomes e.g. written submissions, practical tests, exams etc. It is also good practice to try to [optimise assessments](#) to suit the nature of the subject and where possible utilise IT.

Finally, the University's [Teaching and Learning Strategy](#) explains that the amount of assessment should be related to the number of credits awarded e.g. a 15-credit module would have a lower number of assessments than a 30-credit module.

Resources:

[Bangor University Assessment Framework](#)

[Bangor University Learning Outcomes Guidelines](#)