ABCD Outcome Writing Model

You may wish to consider using the ABCD Outcome Writing Model (Henrich et al., 1996), especially if you are new to outcome writing. ABCD is an acronym whereby "A" represents audience, "B" represents behavior, "C" represents condition, and "D" represents degree of mastery. Audience is concerned with to whom the outcome pertains. Behavior is shorthand for what you expect students/stakeholders to know, be able to do, value or experience. Condition identifies the circumstances under which the learning or experience to occur. Degree of mastery connotes how much will be accomplished and to what degree.

According to the model, ABCD are the four parts of a well-written outcome. Below is the ABCD intended outcome statement template (Caretta and Rice, 2010).

> **A**   **Students/stakeholders will…**
> **B**   **<know/be able to do/value/experience what>**
> **C**   **<under these circumstances/conditions>**
> **D**   **<to this level of competency/effectiveness/satisfaction>.**

Below are three sample intended outcome statements where the ABCD portions of the statement have been colored coded to correspond to the colors used in the template above (color code concept from Penn State Learning Design Community Hub, n. d.).

Example 1	**Resident Assistants participating in Behind Closed Doors role playing Resident Assistance training will recognize most policy violations.**
Example 2	**Given a set of common rocks and minerals, students in the Mineralogy and Petrology courses should be able to provide the name and classification of each, and explain how and where each typically occurs with high accuracy.**
Example 3	**University Center visitors that use dining services will be highly satisfied with the condition of the physical facilities.**

Of Note	While this ABCD Outcome Writing Model prescribes that the degree of competency/achievement be included in the intended outcome statement, it is acceptable to include that only as the criterion for success in the methodology description. For more on assessment methodology, see page 28.

Intended Outcome Sample Statements

Example 1 (Undergraduate Learning Outcome)	*Upon graduation, English majors will demonstrate the ability to analyze a text critically.*
Example 2 (Undergraduate Learning Outcome)	*Graduating seniors in the Department of Modern Languages will demonstrate cultural awareness associated with the language of their major.*
Example 3 (Undergraduate Learning Outcome)	*Undergraduates will demonstrate organizational skills in formal presentations.*

Example 4 (Graduate Learning Outcome)	*Masters students will be able to determine methods of testing a hypothesis.*
Example 5 (Graduate Learning Outcome)	*Students will be able to present the results of their research.*
Example 6 (Graduate Learning Outcome)	*Graduate students will be proficient in the use of the scientific method for original research.*
Example 7 (Research)	*External dollars generated by faculty in the department will increase.*
Example 8 (Service)	*The departmental faculty will be involved in programs aimed at disseminating information to community organizations.*
Example 9 (Development)	*Financial contributions to the College, resulting from increased development efforts in support of scholarship, research and teaching will increase.*

Of Note	Advising must be assessed by the Academic Unit if it is not assessed at the College/School level.

Example 10 (Advising)	*Students will be aware of the range of career opportunities for those with a liberal arts degree.*
Example 11 (Advising)	*Students will receive accurate, timely and useful academic advising that enhances students' success and facilitates degree completion.*
Example 12 (Advising)	*Students will be satisfied with the advising services they receive from the department.*
Example 13 (Administrative)	*The number of positive news stories regarding UTA in the Dallas Morning News, specifically, and in the national news media in general will increase.*
Example 14 (Administrative)	*Administrators who request information/assistance from IRPE will receive accurate, timely, and useful information.*
Example 15 (Administrative)	*UT Arlington faculty and staff will be satisfied with Facilities Management's response time on service requests.*

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Works Cited

Carretta, P. & Rice, R. (2010, June). CAS's New Learning Domains: Using Them in Your Assessment Work. Presentation at the meeting of the NASPA International Assessment and Retention Conference, Baltimore, MD.

Heinrich, R., Molenda, M., Russell, J.D., Smaldino, S.E. (1996). *Instructional Media and Technologies for Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

Penn State Learning Design Community Hub. (n. d.). *Writing Objectives*. Retrieved from http://ets.tlt.psu.edu/learningdesign/objectives/writingobjectives.