**Goals and Objectives Activities**

**How does your institution define goals and objectives? Is the terminology consistent across schools and programs?** NO INSTITUTIONAL DEFINITION IS DEFINED AND THESE TERMS ARE OFTEN USED INTERCHANGEABLY. SOME EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE FROM OUR CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING TO SORT THESE OUT IN SUMMER COURSE REDESIGN SESSIONS.

**Take out a piece of paper and draw an image that best represents your definition and the relationship between goals and objectives. Label the image as needed.**

**Now that you have identified your institutional hierarchy, consider how your institutional goals align with the institutional mission. Can you articulate the relationship?**

UNIVERSITY MISSION

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

DEPARTMENT GOALS

COURSE OBJECTIVES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

OUR UNIVERSITY HAS A HORRIBLY WRITTEN MISSION THAT DOES NOT ADDRESS ACADEMIC GOALS THAT THE LAS PROGRAM HAS ARTICULATED. ALIGNMENT IS A SIZABLE CONCERN AT MY INSTITUTION BUT NOT ONE PEOPLE SEEM MOTIVATED TO CHANGE.

**Reflect on the following questions while considering your own institution. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**

* **What terminology do you use?**
* **Does the terminology vary across school or department?**
* **Do you understand the rationale for the choices being made with respect to the terms being used?**

1) I use “course objectives” on my syllabus and “objectives” on many of my assignment prompts (what I mean here is learning objectives, I guess).

2) I have limited access to what others put on their syllabus, but from the little I have seen, there’s not much frequency in mentioning “objectives” of a course and they often list specific assignments as objectives.

3) I’m not sure whose “rationale” the question refers to. If it’s my own, then yes, but mostly after taking the CTL Course Redesign summer session. If you mean my institution’s rationale, I don’t think one exists. At the program level, my colleagues rarely give official materials much thought as to how their verbiage can be our own, or the significance of calling something an objective rather than a goal or outcome, at least from what I’ve heard.

1. **Have you, when planning any event, focused on the details before considering the big picture? What hurdles did this approach present?**
2. **Starting with the big picture, what do you want your students to remember about your institution, your program, or your course upon completion?**

1) Not really. I have taken care of smaller details earlier in the process when it was easier to do so or I only had time for a smaller element than the larger, but even this was limited since small choices are often dependent on the big choices already being made.

2) From my program I would like my students to have a deep understanding of the written language including its history, grammar, style, and major genres. I would like my students to understanding how writing function as part of a larger mediascape and is related to other media like image, and sound.

**Considering your own institutional context, review your institutional mission and vision statements. Does your institution have goals or competencies defined and published?  If not, can you use your institutional mission to state the goals?  Record your institutional goals and/or competencies in the**[**Institutional Alignment Handout (PDF)**](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/content/enforced/170219-LEARN_ASESS/Instituional%20Alignment%20Handout.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=4UK1XuDTxvxHa1IDcOV3UdVtc&ou=170219)**.**

**How does your program align with the institutional goals?**

Here is all the University posts:

**University Mission, Vision and Values**

**Mission**

Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.

**Vision**

Fitchburg State University will be nationally recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning in current and emergent fields, for its commitment to transforming lives through education, and for its dedication to public service.

In order to achieve this, we will:

* Prepare students for a global society through curricular innovation and program development
* Achieve academic excellence by investing in our faculty and librarians in their pursuit of knowledge, professional competency, and scholarship
* Employ innovative uses of technology in the library and across our campus to maximize student learning
* Create a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community
* Build partnerships within our community to provide real-world opportunities for our students and collaborative solutions to community issues.

**Core Values**

**Accessibility**  
Offering equitable access to high-quality programs and services to people of varying cultural backgrounds living within and beyond our diverse community of North Central Massachusetts

**Affordability**  
Providing opportunities for students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue an affordable, quality education

**Community**  
Forging partnerships with businesses and community organizations within the region to enhance quality of life

**Enrichment**  
Sustaining a supportive campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and alumni in which all members can grow and excel in their personal and professional lives

**Excellence**  
Striving for excellence in academic programs and services through innovative teaching and professional practices

The content is an institutional promise of pragmatic factors and institutional support, not about learning objectives, goals, or outcomes. The most I can gain as far as a learning goal is to be an active, contributing member of our region of the state via civic and global awareness.

1. **Do you have a Program Mission?**
2. **Is it aligned with your Institutional Mission and Goals?**

*Enriched creative and intellectual life:*

• Responsible and reflective citizenship

• An enlarged worldview

• Incentive for life-long learning

• Flexibility of mind

*Preparation for careers:*

• Education and certification as secondary teachers of English

• Classes and internships for professional writers

• Collaborative group work

• Knowledge of sources and how to use and evaluate them

• Computer literacy

*Awareness of and respect for our literary heritage:*

• An appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity

• Commitment to human values embodied in works of literature

*Learning and caring about literature:*

• Reading on varied levels

• Writing to create new meaning

• Speaking effectively with a variety of audiences

• Listening critically and analytically

**Concentration Objectives:**

*Literature Concentration: Students will*

• Demonstrate and communicate why literature matters;

• Demonstrate a solid understanding of diverse literary traditions;

• Develop the skills for the critical evaluation of texts, identities, genres, and cultures;

• Demonstrate mastery of the use of primary and secondary textual and electronic resources.

*Initial Licensure: Along with the goals listed above, students will*

• Develop the ability to do long-range planning, including curriculum mapping and unit planning;

• Use instructional strategies that help them explore and relate personal experience and develop interpretive skills in creating lesson plans and teacher work samples

(TWS);

• Develop a clear understanding of the history and structure of the English language;

• Understand reading and writing processes and be able to teach them to their students;

• Develop instruction and curriculum thought the use of media and technology;

• Develop the knowledge, skill, caring, and ethics, per the Conceptual Framework.

*Professional Writing: Students will*

• Demonstrate competency in writing and producing works for publication in a variety of formats;

• Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards and practices in electronic and print media;

• Demonstrate ability in interviewing, as well as in presenting ideas to a variety of audiences.

Here are the program goals posted in our 2012 program review. These are not available on our website or other “public” location. Because the university does not really have goals/objectives or an academic nature, these program goals do not align with the institution’s mission.

**As you fill in the pyramid with your program goals, consider these questions:**

1. **Can these statements be rewritten as intended goals for your program graduates?**
2. **Are these statements in alignment with your institutional and program missions?**
3. **Can you start each of your statements with “upon completion of this program, students will understand (or know)"?**

**If you answered yes to all of the above, you are on your way to articulating your intended goals. If not, edit the statements, as needed.**

1) Yes

2) No

3) Yes

**Question: Are the program outcomes in alignment with your institutional and program missions, and your program goals?**

There are no separate “program outcomes” but the goals did have some items listed that were more like outcomes than objectives. We could separate these out and develop learning outcomes together and I hope the Professional Writing concentration will in the coming year.

1. **Are the course goals in alignment with your institutional and program missions, your program goals, and program objectives/outcomes?**
2. **Are the course outcomes in alignment with your course goals?**

*ENGL 3840*

1. Students will write in a range of styles in response to diverse rhetorical situations
2. Students will write engaging, tight, stylistically aware prose
3. Students will develop independent research in support of freelance writing
4. Students will craft, hone, and pitch stories worth telling

Here are course objectives from one of my classes. Apparently I should be calling this goals though or outcomes. The last is more like an outcome, actually. I do not write outcomes on my syllabus and have started to add them to assignment prompts for some of my courses. I haven’t done that for this course yet, but I imagine they’d include

1. Writing multiple pitches for the same subject
2. Producing successful query/cover letters for story ideas

As a start.

Then I came upon this page and did not know what to do with these links since the first referenced a video and there hasn’t been on in this module. All the exercises I’ve come across I’ve added to this file.



**Defining, revising, and revisiting goals and objectives can be very powerful. Write a short paragraph reflecting on your journey to better understanding goals and objectives. Consider the following questions:**

* **Did you find it difficult to clearly articulate goals and objectives?**
* **Was it difficult to understand the differences between goals and objectives?**
* **How can you share the information you have learned today to better improve assessment processes?**

I did find articulating the difference between goals and objectives simple enough, but the hierarchy between them is often not easy to separate out since sometimes the objectives seem more crucial or difficult than the goals which seems counter intuitive to the hierarchy. What I did find is that it’s fairly simple to write your own course goals and objectives, but successful alignment requires that everyone at your institution is invested in clarifying their objectives and goals. Without an institutional goal or a public and active engagement with a program goal, my course goals feel like they lead to nowhere in particular beyond my own class.

**Write as many benefits to having defined course goals & outcomes and learning objectives as you can think of in 30 seconds.**

**Were you able to come up with more than five? Are these benefits things you have experienced or just read about?**

A direction to go with your assignments for a course

A view of how this course fits into the curriculum

Clear communication with your students about what they’ll accomplish

Easier to define what you’ll grade your students on

I came up with 4 in 30 seconds and three of these I’ve experienced. How a course fits in a curriculum requires more conversation with colleagues that don’t happen.

**After watching the video,** [**write reflective responses to**](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=170219&type=discuss&rcode=MGHIHP-805224)**, or with colleagues discuss the following questions:**

1. **What were some of the key themes that you heard/saw in the videos?**
2. **Which benefits on your list were also mentioned by the faculty and administrators in the video?**
3. **Which benefits mentioned in your video were not on your initial list? Did these benefits surprise you? If so, why?**
4. **What differences did you notice in how the different types of positions (director of assessment, chair, and faculty member) communicated benefits from goals and learning outcomes? How did they use outcomes similarly or differently?**

**If you have generated additional ideas after watching and reflecting on the video, please add them to your initial list from the warm up exercise.**

1) The objectives clarify the point of education and the specific gains a student should make. They’re about being explicit about what one will teach/learn and why. It’s hard to do anything that we do without having objectives in mind and coordinated with others.

2) You mean the warm-up activity? All of what I listed was discussed in the video.

3) Nothing stood out as surprisingly missing.

4) Scale of the issue again, but this time I saw directors talking about specific courses and faculty talking about their place in the larger institution, so apparently it seems easier to imagine this when talking about curriculum and objectives rather than assessment. I wonder why that is?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Audience | | | |
| Level | Faculty | Department chair | Administration | Director of Assessment |
| Course | Faculty can focus coursework on the actual goals | Can more clearly map the curriculum and its effectiveness | Know what students experience | Know what students experience |
| Program | Faculty would know how their work fits into the larger program | Can keep these and course goals aligned by consistently reevaluating them | Have a clearer view of what learning actually happen in a major | Provide informed help on how to relate these goals with course and institution level goals |
| Institution | Faculty could reinforce objectives of the LAS and the major together | Have a clear defense and explanation of the department’s role on campus | Examine gaps and strengths in the university’s academics for improved communication to potential students and partners | Help shape effective assessment measures based on goals determined by faculty. |

**Next, cross-check your matrix with some of our thoughts in the sample provided.**

**What similarities do you see?**

* **What differences do you see?**
* **How has this exercise made you think differently about learning objectives/outcomes?**

1) The example makes more frequent mention of assessment gains while my responses talk about a deeper awareness of what educators are doing and how administrators can support and communicate those goals

2) Some people see defining objectives as a process of standardization for ease in assessment while others think of objectives creation as a process of self-discovery. This reminds me that while it can be a helpful process on the individual level, it can also be a normalizing process that could contribute to the problem of administrative bloat on college campuses.

**Now that you have spent more time thinking about how learning objectives can improve assessment, what are some additional realizations?**

**Name one action you can do to facilitate to improve the development and implementation of learning objectives.**

Learning objectives can focus assessment and since they drive the culture of the campus, they need to come up from faculty and faculty need to keep control over the assessment process and objectives creation. One thing I can do is advocate for more faculty allotted time to complete assessment and objectives projects for programs and departments so that they’re authentically done and remain in control of departments and faculty.

**Do you notice any discrepancies? Do you need to re-work some of your learning objectives? Do the learning objectives clearly connect with at least one goal? Don’t worry if you need to make some adjustments but are unclear how. We will walk through the necessary steps during this module.**

Discrepencies between goals and objectives in the grid? No. I think when I do write learning objectives on assignments, they are clear, but I don’t write them on all my assignments, so I could improve there. When I write assignment learning objectives, they do match the goals (I call them objectives) on my syllabus.

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| **Pick one of the approaches from the previous page. Consider these questions as you draft your statement:**   * **In what ways do I want students to be changed as a result of my program/course?** I WANT STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND WRITING AS A MEDIUM WITH FLEXIBLE STYLES AND CONVENTIONS * **What abilities do I want students to have as a result of my program/course?** I’D LIKE TO SEE STUDENT BE ABLE TO WRITE FOR A BROAD RANGE OF PUBLICATIONS AND AUDIENCES RATHER THAN A TINY NICHE. I’D LIKE TO SEE THEM CHALLENGE THEIR LIMITS AND THINK INNOVATETIVELY ABOUT COMMUNICATION. * **What perspectives, ideas and information do I want students to be able to use as a result of my program/course?** KNOW THE CONVENTIONS OF WRITING (GRAMMAR AND GENRE) BUT ALSO THE SOCIAL/CULTURAL IMPACT OF WRITTEN WORK AND HOW THEY CAN BE RHETORICALLY EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS * **How will my students be able to communicate what they have learned as a result of my program/course?** THEY WILL BE ABLE TO WRITE AND SPEAK PROFESSIONALLY AND FOR A RANGE OF PURPOSES. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CRAFT STORIES THAT RESONATE WITH AUDIENCES AND CONTEXTS * **In what ways will this program/course change students’ behavior as members of their communities?** THEY’LL BE ABLE TO AFFECT CHANGE BY COMMUNICATING THE FACTS AND EXPERIENCES OF PROBLEMS IN THEIR COMMUNITY. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE AND COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS TO PRODUCE GROUP MESSAGES THAT UNITE PEOPLE.   **Once you have written your goal statement, use this checklist to cross-check your work:**  **Questions:**  **Are your goals…**  **●        Broad and state general intentions?** YES, BUT PERHAPS TOO SPECIFIC WITH THE THIRD BULLET  **●        Consistent with your description?** WHAT DESCRIPTION ARE YOU REFERRING TO?  **●        Reflecting successful student performance/behaviors?** YES  **●        Aligned with accrediting agency competencies?** NOT SURE.  **Draft 3 learning objectives for a course. Identify in each statement the 4 components required in a learning outcome statement: audience, behavior, condition, and degree.**  **Drafting complete learning objectives takes more time than most initially think. With experience and practice, drafting complete statements does become easier.**   1. Students in Feature and Magazine writing will pitch at least 4 stories on the same subject that demonstrate flexible, audience specific angles 2. Students in Feature and Magazine writing will identify when non-verbal content enhances a story and integrate multiple media in their stories 3. Students in Feature and Magazine writing will craft stories according to conventions of at least three different feature genres   **After completing the activities, reflect on your final product by responding to the questions below. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**   1. **Did you find it difficult to write a complete learning objective with all 4 components?** 2. **Did you find particular components you historically (unintentionally) leave out? Can you see the value in including them moving forward?** |

1) No

2) I don’t typically quantify the number of times a student will participate in an activity. I don’t see much value in this level of specificity for my purposes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Review this list of common issues and concerns related to learning objectives. Which ones resonate most with you?** |

“How can I identify the acceptable level of performance of my students?” resonates most with me especially because I seem to grade more harshly than my colleagues.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **After completing the activity, review your own learning objectives. Use** [**the learning objective checklist**](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/content/enforced/170219-LEARN_ASESS/Learning%20objective%20checklist.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=4UK1XuDTxvxHa1IDcOV3UdVtc&ou=170219) **for each statement. How well did you do? Consider working through this checklist with a colleague and exchanging learning objectives for review purposes.** |

What activity are you talking about ? The three objectives I wrote? I think they turned out fine.

**After you have explored one or more of the above sites, jot down one takeaway that you think should be considered as you focus on developing goals and objectives that are in alignment with your university/college mission and program and course goals and objectives.**

Only the AAC&U document link worked. From skimming that document, it dawns on me that programs need to spend much more time on their objectives and goals than they do and make that work public rather than cached in program reviews. Why don’t we have our goals and objectives online? Why aren’t there retreats and course releases to build robust curriculum maps? If this is so important, then where is the institutional funding to do it well?

1. **Students learn about the process of identifying real-world ethical problems.** COURSE OBJECTIVES
2. **Students understand how deeply held beliefs may hinder ethical decision-making.** COURSE GOAL
3. **Seeks to develop ethical and responsible leaders committed to . . .** UNIVERSITY MISSION
4. **Apply a solution to problem X from 3 different perspectives.** PROGRAM OUTCOMES
5. **Identify and acknowledge one’s own beliefs and assumptions** PROGRAM GOALS

**After completing the activities, consider the following questions. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**

1. **Were you able to see a clear alignment? If not, consider who, on your campus, is responsible for embedding alignment into the assessment process.**
2. **How would you convince the stakeholders that alignment is integral to the process of assessment?**

FIRST OF ALL, THE ACTIVITY YOU ASKED WAS ONE I DID PIECEMEAL THROUGHOUT THE MODULE, SO IT DOES FEEL REPETITIVE HERE.

1) There was more alignment between the course and program than to the institution, mostly since the institution only has only hinted academic goal that has to do with civic learning.

2) I would remind them of all the frustrated work that has been done at the program level that gets no cohesion at the institution level and that without more time for program level work, course level work will always be specific to a faculty member and done with minimal knowledge of what is happening elsewhere. We’re wasting time and money if we don’t do it right the first time and set institutional goals around academic and give MUCH more time for program level work that faculty can do in place of teaching for short periods of time.

**Reflect and respond to the questions below. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**

1. **How are goals and objectives defined at your institution?** THEY ARE NO FORMALLY DEFINED
2. **Why is it important to have clear learning goals & objectives?** THEY PROVIDE THE ROADMAP OF THE WORK A STUDENT WILL DO AND THE ACADEMIC GAINS S/HE SHOULD MAKE.
3. **What would you say is the most important goal for graduates of your University?** MY STUDENTS WOULD SAY HAVING A GOOD PAYING JOB. THEY’RE PRAGMATICALLY MOTIVATED.
4. **How might you use your hierarchy to review and revise your institution’s goals and objectives/outcomes?** THE UNIVERSITY NEEDS A MISSION AND GOAL STATEMENT THAT ADDRESSES ACADEMICS, SINCE IT DOES NOT HAVE ONE. THAT IS HONESTLY QUITE EMBARASSING.
5. **Why is it important to align course, program and institutional goals and objectives?** SO THAT ALL THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER TO A COHESIVE EFFECT OF A WELL EDUCATED STUDENT.
6. **Are your goals stated in broad terms and your objectives specific and measurable?** FOR THE MOST PART, THOUGH I DID MISTAKENLY CALL MY COURSE GOALS COURSE OBJECTIVES ON MY SYLLABUS.
7. **Which stakeholders can you engage with to acquire the necessary information?** OTHER FACULTY, INSITTUTIONAL RESEARCH, MY CHAIR AND DEAN
8. **Does your department(s) report into accrediting agencies? How much are you able to change based on their approval system?** IT DOES. I DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEAN BY YOUR SECOND QUESTION THOUGH.
9. **Do you need to submit changes to an institutional committee for approval?** FOR APPROVAL OF WHAT? THE RESPONSE CHANGES DEPENDING ON WHAT YOU MEAN TO CHANGE.