

## Understanding Mission, Goals and Learning Outcomes

**Mission:** A mission statement should explain an organization exists and what it hopes to achieve in the future. It articulates the organization’s essential nature, its values and its work.

**Goals:** Program goals are general statements about knowledge, skills, attitudes and values expected in graduates of the program. Goals are written to align with the holistic vision of the mission. Typically, multiple goals are drawn from the mission statement.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Program level student learning outcomes are clear, concise statements that describe how students can demonstrate their mastery of program goals. Learning outcomes should be thoughtfully developed in consideration of the mission and the goals of the program. Outcomes are more specific than goals, and there are usually multiple learning outcomes for each goal.

### Examples of Mission, Goal and Outcome Statements

*From Psychology*

From the Psychology department <b>mission</b> :	<i>Through a comprehensive education in the science of psychology, the Psychology Department seeks to educate the whole person, pursue academic excellence, advance scholarship, promote service and justice and encourage life-long learning.</i>
One of the <b>goals</b> drawn from this mission:	<i>Students should use, respect, and value skeptical inquiry, critical thinking, and the scientific approach to understanding behavior.</i>
Some of the <b>outcomes</b> drawn from this goal:	<i>Demonstrate an ability to apply critical thinking in order to evaluate scientific research, including research presented in the media.</i>  <i>Demonstrate an increased appreciation and understanding of the importance of a scientific approach to understanding human behavior.</i>  <i>Demonstrate an ability to apply psychological principles, including the consideration of ethics and social justice, to contemporary problems/issues.</i>

*From Art History*

From the College of Communication and Fine Arts <b>mission</b> :	<i>The College of Communication and Fine Arts creates an environment conducive to understanding the complex phenomena of art and art making as well as human communication in all its diverse forms.</i>
One of the department <b>goals</b>	<i>Students will have a full understanding of the historical, spiritual, and</i>

drawn from this mission:	<i>cultural context of works.</i>
Some of the <b>outcomes</b> drawn from this goal:	<p><i>Students will analyze works of art and architecture within the appropriate historical, social, religious and cultural contexts.</i></p> <p><i>Students will think critically and articulate clear ideas about art and its historical and contemporary significance.</i></p>

*From Recording Arts*

From the School of Film and Television <b>mission</b> :	<i>Students will develop critical discernment and be equipped with the technical, theoretical, and aesthetic means to communicate their insights effectively to an audience.</i>
One of the department <b>goals</b> drawn from this mission:	<i>Students will understand the theoretical and practical elements of sound recording, reproduction and design.</i>
Some of the <b>outcomes</b> drawn from this goal:	<p><i>Students will be able to effectively edit and process sound for film and television media.</i></p> <p><i>Students will be able to create technically competent and aesthetically pleasing mixes for those media.</i></p>

Program assessment plans begin with a clear articulation of the mission, goals and desired student learning outcomes of the program. These statements indicate what you would like graduates of your program to know, be able to do, and value by the time they graduate. Assessment of student learning outcomes will help you to determine if you are accomplishing what you set out to, and keep you focused on continual improvement.

Adapted from Loyola Marymount University, [www.lmu.edu](http://www.lmu.edu)