

How to Write Measurable Objectives

When writing an objective for continuing education (CE) activities, it is important to address the change that is expected at the conclusion of the learning activity. Ask yourself: “What do I want the learner to walk away at the conclusion of this activity?” Do you want the learner to experience a change in knowledge, skills/strategy, or performance? For CE activities that address a more long term goal, are you hoping the result will be a change or improvement in patient outcomes?

Clear articulation of objectives serves as the foundation to evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. When creating an objective, the **action verb** is the descriptor of the knowledge, ability, skill, or behavior that the participant must be able to identify as a result of the activity. Words/verbs such as “understand,” “learn,” “appreciate,” “like,” “believe,” or “know” are not appropriate because they are not directly measurable. Bloom’s Taxonomy is a useful resource to access when creating measurable objectives.

More About Objectives

- When creating an objective, only one measurable verb should be used for each statement. For example, if your proposed objective statement says: (The learner) *will be able to describe and apply...*, you are actually asking them to address two different objectives. It is best practice to use one objective per statement.
- Objectives should address the knowledge, skills/strategy or performance that participants should achieve and can confirm upon successfully completing an activity.
 - One must take into consideration the amount of time within which the learning activity takes place so that the learning objective makes sense. For example, we may not want the learner to implement a major change in clinical practice after a brief one-hour educational event. In short, the statement should “make sense.”
- Objectives should focus on content and skills that are addressed within the activity.
- Objectives must be clearly stated in order to best guide the teaching, learning, and evaluation process in the activity.

- The simpler the objective, the more likely the learner will be able to understand it and thus, evaluate it appropriately.
- Evaluation of the objectives by the learner will help the learner – and faculty/planners - determine if they are achieving the desired result.
 - It may also help the planners determine “next steps” for content or skill development.
- For our purposes at Dartmouth Health, we suggest no more than three objectives be created for any learning activity. For activities that are one hour in length, one objective is sufficient.

Examples

- After participating in this activity, learners will be able to interpret appropriate clinical data in order to determine clinically significant indications for management of a patient with newly diagnosed angina.
- After participating in this activity, learners will be able to apply at least three recent changes in the evidence-based care plan of adult patients with newly diagnosed asthma.
- After participating in this activity, participants will be able to discuss at least three ways that embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in clinical practice can improve the overall patient experience.