Writing your Learning Outcomes for your placement experience
Learning outcomes are descriptions of the changes that have taken place in the individual as a result of going through a learning process. The University recognises that some learning outcomes may be acquired as a result of experiences and/or training other than in the traditional classroom/lecture situation i.e. through a placement. In order to complete your Placement Request Form you must describe your intended learning in terms of outcomes.

The purpose of this guide is to help you to write the learning outcomes for your Placement Request Booklet

What are learning outcomes?
Learning outcomes reflect the changes which have taken place in you as an individual as a result of going through a learning process, in this case your placement.

Learning outcomes fall into one of two main types:

☑ Subject based outcomes;
Knowledge and comprehension, the ability to apply knowledge (relevant to your course) in different situations and the processing skills acquired through the application and synthesis of knowledge.

☑ Personal outcomes;
Including interpersonal skills such as teamwork, leadership and negotiation, and interpersonal qualities like motivation, initiative and critical self-reflection.

The most important thing to remember when writing your intended learning outcomes is that they must be clearly described and capable of valid and reasonable assessment (this will probably be assessment by you, via reflection, but could also include evidence from others).

Writing learning outcomes
Learning outcomes need to be broken down into the individual pieces of knowledge or skill that a student completing a placement could be expected to acquire on that placement - i.e. the outcomes of the learning process.

The learning outcome statements normally comprise of

1. The behaviour that demonstrates your learning
2. The complexity of the situation
3. The degree of independence/autonomy
4. How well the learning should be demonstrated
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**THIS SECTION LOOKS AT EACH OF THOSE ELEMENTS IN TURN**

One of the most convenient ways to approach this is to use Bloom's well established taxonomy of learning (1956). This provides us with a ready-made list of verbs but, equally importantly, gives us a framework to cope with some aspects of the problem of academic level.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of knowledge</th>
<th>Increasing complexity</th>
<th>Possible academic level</th>
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<td>Knowledge</td>
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Obviously the complexity of the subject, the performance demanded and so on will also affect the level of any particular learning outcome. Remember that your placement is at L5 so most of the verbs that you use should be in either the 'Application' or 'Analysis' sections below. But you may aim to develop further into L6 areas of Synthesis and evaluation. REMEMBER - It is hardly ever as simple as the table above suggests however - each level has a number of dimensions.

**Learning outcome statements should normally start with the phrase: By undertaking this placement, I (the student), will be able to...** followed by a descriptive verb. For example: apply .....or.....contrast .....etc.

Bloom’s categories or ‘levels’ of knowledge are further expanded and this can help with the task of describing behaviour. The following tables of verbs are associated with these categories and can be very useful in describing learning outcomes at different levels.
## Knowledge - Remember

**What do you know?**

- The terminology of the industry?
- Specific facts?
- Conventions?
- Classifications and categories?
- Methodologies?
- Principles and generalisations?
- Theories and structures?

### Useful verbs for describing knowledge

- recall
- record
- list
- define
- repeat
- name

## Comprehension - Understand

**How you can convey what you understand?**

- Can you translate what you know?
- Can you interpret what you know?
- Can you extrapolate from what you know?

### Useful verbs for describing comprehension

- restate
- identify
- discuss
- locate
- recognise
- review
- explain
- clarify
- express
Level 5 - Application - Apply

How can you apply your knowledge and skills?

Useful verbs for describing application
- demonstrate
- schedule
- operate
- sketch
- apply
- employ
- intervene
- practise
- illustrate

Level 5 - Analysis - Analysis

How can you analyse what you know?

Useful verbs for describing analysis
- distinguish
- make inventory
- investigate
- analyse
- appraise
- inspect
- differentiate
- calculate
- debate
- test
- relate
- compare
- contrast
- question
- criticise
- examine

Synthesis/Evaluate

How can you synthesise what you know?
- Can you produce a unique communication in this field?
- Can you develop a plan or a proposed set of operations?
- Can you derive a set of abstract relationships?

Useful verbs for describing synthesis
- compose
- assemble
- organise plan
- collect
- manage
- propose
- construct
- prepare
- design
- create
- formulate
Evaluation/Create

Can you evaluate?
- Can you make judgements based on internal evidence?
- Can you make judgements based on external evidence?

Useful verbs for describing evaluation
judge    appraise    revise    select    evaluate    choose    rate    assess
compare    estimate    value    measure

The context in which you are able to demonstrate your learning

The context and the nature of situations can be important in defining outcomes to describe your learning. Clearly there is a difference between applying knowledge to a simple, unambiguous problem and applying it to an unstructured, ill-defined problem or using your skills in one particular setting that you are familiar with, as opposed to a variety of unpredictable settings.

As an illustration of this, think about a child learning to ride a bicycle. Once she has grasped the skills and concepts involved you might expect her to ride the bicycle round the garden or in the park. But you would not expect her to ride down a main road into the city centre at 8.30am on a Monday morning! This would involve a much higher level of achievement in bicycle riding.

The same is true in academic achievement. As a learner progresses through levels we expect as well as an ability to cope with different kinds of problems, we expect an increased capacity to deal with conceptual complexity and ambiguity. At L5 the student is expected to demonstrate learning for example apply a particular theory to practice - see the verbs above.

In summary - when writing your learning outcomes you should remember that you will:

- always need a verb to describe the behaviour which demonstrates the learning; what you will do (that demonstrates your learning)
- sometimes need an indication of the supervision required in applying your learning;
- always need a description of the context in which you can apply your learning
- sometimes state how well the student will have to demonstrate their learning

E.g. Organise and deliver a coaching session that will teach topic x to y number of people over z time using the stated resources.
AND FINALLY…

The verbs above are very much concerned with intellectual skills. Your attitudes and values could also be important in the area of your claim. You could include these in your learning outcomes although they may be difficult to evidence and will potentially deal with your feelings or the observations of others.

E.g. Organise and confidently deliver a coaching session that will teach topic x to y number of people over z time using the stated resources.

The written account of learning which forms your assessment will provide an opportunity to explore these qualitative outcomes of experience.

CHOOSING A SUITABLE VERB (LINKED TO BLOOM)

**Knowledge**: The student would show knowledge if s/he were able to: Define, describe, identify, label, list, match, name, outline, reproduce, select, state, recall, record, recognise, repeat, draw on, or recount.

**Comprehension**: Students show understanding if they are able to: Convert, defend, distinguish, estimate, explain, extend, generalise, give examples, infer, paraphrase, predict, rewrite, summarise, clarify, judge, restate, locate, recognise, express, review, or discuss.

**Application**: Students can use what they learned in new or concrete situations by being able to: Change, compute, demonstrate, discover, manipulate, modify, operate, predict, prepare, produce, relate, show, solve, use, schedule, employ, sketch, intervene, practise, or illustrate.

**Analysis**: Students show analysis when they are able to: Break down, make a diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, appraise, test, inspect, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, select, investigate, analyse, make an inventory, calculate, question, contrast, debate, compare, or criticise.

**Synthesis**: Students synthesise when they are able to: Categories, combine, compose, arrange, plan, assemble, prepare, construct, propose, start, elaborate, invent, develop, devise, design, plan, rearrange, summarise, tell, revise, rewrite, write, modify, organise, produce, or synthesise.

**Evaluation**: Students show they evaluate by being able to: Appraise, compare, conclude, contrast, criticise, discriminate, judge, evaluate, choose, rate, revise, select, estimate, measure, justify, interpret, relate, value, or summarise.
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BASED ON KNIGHT AND YORKE (2004) 39 ASPECTS OF EMPLOYABILITY

A. PERSONAL QUALITIES
1. Malleable self-theory: belief that attributes (e.g. intelligence) are not fixed and can be developed
2. Self-awareness: awareness of own strengths and weaknesses, aims and values
3. Self-confidence: confidence in dealing with the challenges in employment and life
4. Independence: ability to work without supervision
5. Emotional intelligence: sensitivity to others’ emotions and the effects they can have
6. Adaptability: ability to respond positively to changing circumstances and new challenges
7. Stress tolerance: ability to retain effectiveness under pressure
8. Initiative: ability to take action unprompted
9. Willingness to learn: commitment to on-going learning to meet the needs of employment and life
10. Reflectiveness: the disposition to reflect evaluatively on the performance of oneself and others

B. CORE SKILLS
11. Reading effectiveness: the recognition and retention of key points
12. Numeracy: ability to use numbers at an appropriate level of accuracy
13. Information retrieval: ability to access different information sources
14. Language skills: possession of more than a single language
15. Written communication: clear reports, letters, etc., written specifically for the reader
16. Oral presentation: clear and confident presentation of information to a group
17. Computer literacy: ability to use a range of software

C: PERSONAL SKILLS
18. Self-management: ability to work in an efficient and structured manner
19. Critical analysis: ability to ‘deconstruct’ a problem or situation
20. Creativity: ability to be original or inventive and to apply lateral thinking
21. Listening: focused attention in which key points are recognized
22. Explaining: orally and in writing

D. PROCESS SKILLS
23. Commercial awareness: understanding of business issues and priorities
24. Global awareness: in terms of both cultures and economics
25. Political sensitivity: appreciates how organisations actually work and acts accordingly
26. Ability to work cross-culturally: both within and beyond UK
27. Ethical sensitivity: appreciates ethical aspects of employment and acts accordingly
28. Prioritizing: ability to rank tasks according to importance
29. Planning: setting of achievable goals and structuring action
30. Applying subject understanding: use of disciplinary understanding from HE programme (e.g. marketing, finance, human resource mgmt. etc.)
31. Coping with ambiguity and complexity: ability to handle ambiguous and complex situations
32. Problem-solving: selection and use of appropriate methods to find solutions

E. OTHER QUALITIES
33. Acting morally: has a moral code and acts accordingly
34. Influencing: convincing others of the validity of one’s point of view
35. Arguing for and/or justifying a point of view or a course of action
36. Resolving conflict: both intra-personally and in relationships with others
37. Decision making: choice of the best option from a range of alternatives
38. Negotiating: discussion to achieve mutually satisfactory resolution of contentious issues
39. Teamwork: can work constructively with others on a common task