



Tips for students: using learning outcomes

The following suggestions for students may help them make better use of intended learning outcomes, as part of structuring their learning.

- 1 *Find the learning outcomes.* They are usually there somewhere. They should give you a reasonable indication of the shape of the curriculum, and of what is included (and not included).
- 2 *Think 'evidence'.* Look for information about how you will, in due course, be expected to show what you've learned, especially when it comes to formal assessments, not least written assessments such as exams, essays and reports.
- 3 *Find out as much as you can about past and present assessments.* See what kinds of things are being measured. See what eludes measurement. Your success depends on being able to provide those parts of evidence of achievement which are actually (likely to be) measured.
- 4 *Look for information about standards.* Think about what might be regarded as 'excellent' evidence of achievement of the outcomes, as opposed to 'passable' evidence, and so on.
- 5 *Prioritize.* Some learning outcomes are likely to be significantly more important than others; see if you can strike a sensible balance about how much time and effort to devote to particular learning outcomes.
- 6 *Seek clarification.* When in doubt, seek to find out 'what it really means', especially when the evidence of achievement is not sufficiently clear. Ask tutors, but also ask fellow students what they make of the descriptions of particularly elusive parts of evidence of achievement.
- 7 *Think timescales.* Seek to find out where and when you will need to be able to show that you've achieved learning outcomes by providing related evidence of achievement of them.
- 8 *Keep track of your own progress.* Tick off learning outcomes that you are happy to describe as 'fully mastered', and those 'needing more attention'.
- 9 *Don't get disheartened.* Some learning outcomes take time to achieve, and these can sometimes be the really important ones. Keeping in sight what you're aiming for is a good tactic to getting there sooner or later.
- 10 *Balance your act.* Only some of the evidence of achievement you're trying to master will in fact be measured, and some of your best achievements may never be measured. Simply aim to maximize the likelihood that your achievement will be seen to be successful.