

IMQ Tips to Writing Learning Objectives for CME Activities

A learning objective is a statement that describes the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that participants will gain from the educational activity. When developing objectives, ask these questions: What should the result of the educational activity be for participants? What should the participant be able to do? What should the participant know?

Why develop learning objectives?

CME activities use learning objectives to:

- Assist prospective participants determine whether this educational activity meets their needs or interests.
- Guide the sequence of and the best methodology for achieving the desired learning (objectives).
- Help identify the intended results in terms of **knowledge (facts and information) that help to build competence (knowing how to do something), and improve performance (what one actually does in practice)** and ultimately lead to improved patient outcomes.
- Serve as the lynch pin: When a learner is able to successfully achieve the stated objectives, it should satisfy the defined need and close or help to close the identified gap.

How to write a learning objective

For the purpose of CME activities, write learning objectives that:

- Are congruent with identified gaps and needs, and reflect your CME mission
- At a minimum, learning objectives should lead to improved competence
- Write each objective from the perspective of the learner (what they will learn), not from a faculty/presenter perspective (what you will teach)
- List each objective in measurable terms
- Focus on only one desired action or outcome per objective
- Sequence objectives to build the foundation of knowledge that is essential to develop competency or enhance performance.
- Each objective should begin with this statement: "Upon completion of this learning activity, the learner should be able to...."
- Consider the following verbs when formulating learning objectives. They are arranged progressively by Bloom's Taxonomy and by knowledge, **competence and performance.**

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Building competency and enhancing performance

| INFORMATION (knowledge) | COMPREHENSION (knowledge) | APPLICATION (competence) | ANALYSIS (competence) | SYNTHESIS (performance) | EVALUATION (performance) | SKILLS (performance) | ATTITUDE | AVOID THESE |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Cite | Associate | Adapt | Analyze | Arrange | Appraise | Diagnose | Acquire | Understand |
| Count | Classify | Apply | Appraise | Assemble | Approve | Empathize | Exemplify | Learn |
| Define | Compare | Calculate | Break down | Collect | Assess | Hold | Realize | Know |
| Describe | Compute | Chart | Categorize | Compose | Choose | Integrate | Reflect | Appreciate |
| Draw | Contrast | Complete | Compare | Construct | Conclude | Internalize | | Believe |
| Identify | Describe | Compute | Contrast | Create | Confirm | Massage | | |
| Indicate | Diagram | Demonstrate | Correlate | Design | Critique | Measure | | |
| List | Differentiate | Develop | Criticize | Detect | Diagnose | Palpate | | |
| Name | Discuss | Employ | Debate | Detect | Estimate | Pass | | |
| Point | Distinguish | Examine | Defend | Formulate | Evaluate | Percuss | | |
| Quote | Estimate | Generalize | Detect | Integrate | Evaluate | Project | | |
| Read | Explain | Illustrate | Diagram | Organize | Grade | Visualize | | |
| Recite | Express | Interpolate | Differentiate | Plan | Judge | | | |
| Recognize | Extrapolate | Interpret | Distinguish | Prepare | Justify | | | |
| Record | Interpolate | Locate | Experiment | Prescribe | Measure | | | |
| Relate | Interpret | Modify | Infer | Produce | Prioritize | | | |
| Repeat | Locate | Operate | Inspect | Propose | Rank | | | |
| State | Predict | Order | Inventory | Specify | Rate | | | |
| Tabulate | Report | Practice | Question | | Recommend | | | |
| Tell | Restate | Predict | Separate | | Revise | | | |
| Trace | Review | Prepare | Summarize | | Score | | | |
| Write | Translate | Produce | | | Select | | | |
| | | Relate | | | Test | | | |
| | | Report | | | Validate | | | |
| | | Restate | | | | | | |
| | | Review | | | | | | |
| | | Schedule | | | | | | |
| | | Sketch | | | | | | |
| | | Solve | | | | | | |
| | | Translate | | | | | | |
| | | Use | | | | | | |
| | | Utilize | | | | | | |