

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	Formulate	Estimate	Pass		
Point	Distinguish	Examine	Defend	Integrate	Evaluate	Percuss		
Quote	Estimate	Generalize	Detect	Manage	Generalize	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						