



Top of your game

The CISI's guide to your continuing professional development (CPD) scheme

The difference between learning outcomes and learning objectives

- Learning Objectives – set in advance of activity showing expectation of learning
- Learning Outcome – completed after activity showing reflection of what has been learnt

Objectives are important because they set out what you are expected to learn or gain as a result of participating in the learning. They are set in advance of the activity.

Learning Outcomes appear later in the process. They can only be created after the learning has taken place when it becomes possible for you to identify how you have benefitted personally from the learning. Learning is an individual experience and different issues will strike different chords and therefore it is highly unlikely the outcome will be identical for everyone.

How to structure a learning outcome

The answer to this question is likely to be in two parts. Firstly, what learning points were of particular relevance and help? Secondly, how can this learning be applied from this point forward?

So for practical purposes it is easier to create Learning Outcomes by responding to the following questions:

- What new learning was gained?
- How does this learning help me in my role?
- How do I expect to apply this learning to my work on a day-to-day basis?
- How will this learning benefit my clients and my firm's approach to business?

As an example, having attended a briefing session about recent regulatory changes, the Learning Outcome might be as follows:

This session clarified my understanding of the revised suitability criteria, which will enable me to demonstrate and record that the advice I am giving clients meets the enhanced requirements in all respects.

Identifying words that can be used when writing learning outcomes:

To assist you in constructing a learning outcome you can use some of the words listed below to construct your Learning Outcome:

For Knowledge	Define, describe, identify, label, list, outline, reproduce, select, recall, record, recognise, draw on..
For Application	Change, demonstrate, discover, modify, operate, predict, prepare, produce, relate, show, solve, use, illustrate.
For Analysis	Break down, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, appraise, illustrate, infer, analyse, calculate, question, contrast, compare.
For Synthesis	Categorise, combine, arrange, plan, assemble, prepare, construct, propose, elaborate, invent, develop, devise, design, rearrange, summarise, revise, rewrite, write, modify, organise, synthesise.
For Evaluation	Compare, conclude, contrast, evaluate, choose, rate, revise, estimate, measure, justify, interpret, relate, value, summarise.

What to avoid when writing a Learning Outcome

Avoid:

- Repetitive Learning outcomes
- Unclear Learning outcomes that do not show clear learning
- Learning outcomes that do not show relevance to your job role
- Replicating the learning objective

Every Learning Outcome you produce should always reflect your personal view and be unique. Although the Learning Outcomes from similar events taking place at different times may well be similar, they will never be identical as the circumstances in which the events take place will always be different.

Similarly, it is never sufficient to copy and paste standard learning objectives as our personal learning outcome. As standard learning objectives can never be sufficiently individual and cannot predict how the learning can be taken and used in practice within a working environment eg in dealing with clients.

Examples:

I have attended a workshop

Acceptable

Learning Objective

The aim of attending this workshop is to gain a better understanding of how the FCA rules on CASS Client Assets affect specific areas of my work.

Learning Outcome

On completing this workshop I was able to establish what client assets and client money (CASS) is and the importance of protecting them. The FCA's rules on CASS, including an overview of general provisions, custody rules and mandates, enabling me to interpret the rules correctly and follow them when managing my clients investments. I was also able to manage certain CASS issues and prepare CASS resolution packs.

Reason

The learning outcome is clear and specific, showing how the knowledge will be applied within the workplace.

Unacceptable

Learning Objective

The aim of attending this workshop is to gain a better understanding of how the FCA rules on CASS Client Assets affect specific areas of my work.

Learning Outcome

I have a better understanding of CASS rules.

Reason

The learning outcome does not list any specific detail demonstrating what has been learned.

I have undertaken an exam

Acceptable

Learning Objective

To gain an understanding on advising on packaged products with the planning skills for financial protection, pensions and retirement, building on the core knowledge gained from the FCA Regulation & Professional Integrity and Investment, Risk & Taxation units.

Learning Outcome

By obtaining this qualification I was able to demonstrate that I have the ability to identify clients' needs and provide solutions to those needs. This contributed towards gaining an understanding of:

- retail market factors and trends
- protection planning and relevant factors in selecting appropriate solutions
- suitable financial planning

Reason

Learning Outcome is clear and specific, showing a better understanding of the subject.

Unacceptable

Learning Objective

To gain an understanding on advising on packaged products with the planning skills for financial protection, pensions and retirement, building on the core knowledge gained from the FCA Regulation & Professional Integrity and Investment, Risk & Taxation units.

Learning Outcome

I passed.

Reason

Learning Outcome does not list any specific detail or show what has been learned.

I have watched an elearning module

Acceptable

Learning Objective

To examine what constitutes ethical behaviour and how to act with integrity in my workplace.

Learning Outcome

On completing this module, I was able to evaluate the importance of ethical behaviour at both corporate and individual level and the importance of maintaining the trust of one's customers and how to recognise situations where trust may be at risk. I am now better able to thoroughly access and embed fairness and honesty in my daily role when dealing with my clients.

Reason

Learning Outcome is clear and specific, showing what has been learnt.

Unacceptable

Learning Objective

To examine what constitutes ethical behaviour and how to act with integrity in my workplace.

Learning Outcome

I have examined what constitutes ethical behaviour and how to act with integrity in my workplace.

Reason

Learning Outcome is a duplicate of the Learning objective and does not show what has been learnt.

I have developed others by presenting at a meeting

Acceptable

Learning Objective

The objective is to develop others' understanding and ability in the area of portfolio construction and enable me to enhance and maintain my own professional competence.

Learning Outcome

Presenting at this meeting, I was able to develop others' understanding of portfolio construction, covering appropriate asset allocation, portfolio weightings and diversification. On receiving feedback from attendees, I was also able to develop my knowledge in these areas and take back new effective techniques to enhance my role.

Reason

The learning outcome is clear and specific, showing what was taught and how further learning was contributed from attendee feedback.

Unacceptable

Learning Objective

The objective is to develop others' understanding and ability in the area of portfolio construction and enable me to enhance and maintain my own professional competence.

Learning Outcome

Points given and acted on by the attendees.

Reason

The learning outcome is unclear and does not list any specific detail, showing what was developed.

I have read (unstructured reading)

Acceptable

Learning Objective

To read about the performance and potential of several investment funds that the company wants me to understand, with the aim of advising several appropriate clients.

Learning Outcome

On reading this material, I was able to analyse the performance and potential of several key investment funds, including (name of fund) which has seen a rise in profitability, that the company wanted me to gain a good understanding of. I am now in a position to advise several appropriate clients on the suitability of the funds and the likely investment risk.

Reason

The learning outcomes is clear and specific, showing what was read and how this learning will be applied.

Unacceptable

Learning Objective

To read about the performance and potential of several investment funds that the company wants me to understand, with the aim of advising several appropriate clients.

Learning Outcome

I updated myself on the current financial state of these investment funds.

Reason

The learning outcome does not list any specific detail or show what has been learnt.

I have attended a company briefing/meeting

Acceptable

Learning Objective

Meeting with a portfolio manager to obtain an update on the funds' performance, underlying investments, strategy and to get better understanding of the Asian markets including the potential returns, and risks involved, as well finding out information on other funds available in emerging markets.

Learning Outcome

I found this meeting to be a good opportunity to learn more about the current prospects and risks of investing in the Asian Market Fund from an experienced Portfolio manager. I was able to enhance my knowledge on the specific objectives and asset allocation characteristics of the fund which will enable me to make more informed decisions when accessing my clients' portfolios. I also increased my knowledge of both the potential returns and risks involved in investing in emerging markets generally.

Reason

The Learning Outcome is clear and specific showing what has been learnt on how this learning will be used.

Unacceptable

Learning Objective

Weekly company briefing and update on funds.

Learning Outcome

I updated my knowledge on the funds discussed.

Reason

The learning outcome does not list any specific detail or show what has been learnt.