

## **Learning Objective Development<sup>1</sup>**

(excerpt from CEPH Competencies and Learning Objectives)

### **Developing Learning Objectives**

- should be specific, measurable, and written in behavioral terms
- framed to reflect progressively higher-level functioning
  - critical thinking
  - problem solving
  - examples of terms to use “analyze”, “evaluate”, and “design”
- stated in terms of student outcomes and clearly define what the student will do to demonstrate learning
  - example of expected outcome, “develop a basic risk assessment for an environmental health hazard”
- specify an observable learning outcome
  - describe what the student will do when he understands or grasps a concept
  - can the student perform the task
  - did student address components adequately and come to an appropriate conclusion

### **Course Objectives**

These objectives should be found on course syllabi and describe the knowledge and skills that a student is expected to demonstrate upon completion of the course. Ideally, each of these objectives relates, in some discernable way, to the learning objectives for the overall program of study. A combination of course-specific objectives is usually necessary to achieve the broader program objective. An example is given in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Example Course Objective**

#### **Program Competency**

Apply statistical methods of estimation and hypothesis testing and explain the basics of correlation and regression for the purposes of analyzing the health of populations.

#### **Course Objective**

Perform a correlation and regression analysis using SAS

#### **Course Outcome Measure**

Identify a public health issue, collect data on the demographics of the population of the area, and prepare a correlation and regression analysis using SAS to describe the population most affected by the health issue.  
Describe the significance of your findings.

## **Program Objectives**

Criteria 2.5 of the CEPH accreditation manual requires that each degree program and area of specialization within each program have clearly stated competencies that guide the development of educational programs.<sup>2</sup> This includes all professional, academic, and dual degree programs as well as concentrations or specializations within a degree program. Thus, there would be learning objectives that are common across degree programs and a complementary set that is specific to the concentration or specialization. Learning objectives at this level should describe what every graduate who completes that track of study should know and be able to do. These are the desired outcome measures or professional competencies. Some examples are given in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 – Examples of Program Competencies**

**Program Competency**

Evaluate critically, organizational structures, processes, and performances in managerial terms

**Program Competency**

Apply epidemiological methods to the measurement of disease rates, prevention of infectious diseases, and the development of health programs and policies.

**Program Competency**

Analyze and predict the influence of major social structural divisions such as neighborhood, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, social capital, or education/literacy on health, health behavior and the treatment of illness.

**Program Competency**

Apply statistical methods of estimation and hypothesis testing and explain the basics of correlation and regression for the purposes of analyzing the health of populations.

<sup>1</sup>Information is taken directly from the CEPH website document *Writing Clear and Measurable Learning Objectives* at the website below.

<sup>2</sup>From the CEPH *Accreditation Criteria: Schools of Public Health, Amended June 2005*.

For further information refer to the CEPH website:

<http://www.ceph.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3368>