

# Service Area Outcomes (SAO) Quick Guide

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## What Is a Service Area Outcome?

A Service Area Outcome (SAO) is a measurable statement describing the quality and/or impact of a service provided by a non-instructional department. SAOs explain what students, employees, or community members experience, receive, understand, or are able to do as a result of a service interaction. SAOs focus on the impact of services, not just the tasks performed.

## Why SAOs Matter

- Improve services and processes
- Support student success and equity
- Identify strengths and gaps
- Inform planning and resource needs
- Demonstrate effectiveness
- Meet accreditation expectations

As part of meeting ACCJC accreditation standards (Standard 2.9), the college is required to conduct “systematic review and assessment to ensure the quality of its academic, learning support, and student services programs and implement improvements and innovations in support of achievement for all students.”

## Creating a Measurable SAO

To create a Service Area Outcome (SAO), begin by identifying the core services and activities your area provides. Determine what your users should experience, know, receive, or be able to do as a result of those services. Write the SAO as a measurable, user-centered statement that focuses on the impact or benefit of the service rather than the activity itself.

**Formula:** Target User + Action = Outcome

- Target User: Who is receiving the service (e.g. students, faculty, staff, community member)
- Action: What the target user will do, experience, receive or demonstrate
- Outcome: The intended result, impact, or quality of the service

**Example:** Students using Admissions and Records services will experience timely and accurate assistance to successfully complete course registration.

## Blooms Taxonomy

| Common Measurable Action Verbs  | Verbs to Avoid Using  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access</li><li>• Connect</li><li>• Participate</li><li>• Utilize</li><li>• Request</li><li>• Demonstrate awareness</li><li>• Identify resources</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand</li><li>• Learn</li><li>• Know</li><li>• Appreciate</li><li>• Become aware of</li><li>• Be familiar with</li></ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage</li> <li>• Complete</li> <li>• Navigate processes</li> <li>• Communicate needs</li> <li>• Develop plans</li> <li>• Apply strategies</li> <li>• Seek assistance</li> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Experience</li> </ul> |  |
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## Service Area Outcome (SAO) Assessment Process and Timeline

Below is a recommended timeline for completing the assessment process. Final SAO reports must be submitted in CurricUNET by July 15th.

### 1. Identify the Outcome (Summer)

Develop and/or select the Service Area Outcome you want to assess and confirm what users should experience, receive, know, or be able to do.

### 2. Determine the Assessment Method and set a timeline (Summer)

Choose how you will measure the outcome using tools such as surveys, usage data, observations, response times, or feedback forms and when you will conduct the assessment

### 3. Collect Data (Fall)

Gather evidence during the assessment period.

### 4. Review and Analyze Results (Fall)

Examine the data to determine whether the outcome was achieved and identify trends, strengths, or gaps. Record on SAO assessment worksheet.

### 5. Discuss Findings (Fall)

Meet with staff to reflect on results, equity impacts, and areas needing improvement.

### 6. Create an Action Plan (Fall)

Decide what changes, training, resources, or process improvements are needed based on findings.

### 7. Write Up Assessment (Spring/Summer)

Complete the Service Area Outcome Report and submit in Curriqnet by July 15th.

### 8. Implement Improvements (Spring/Summer)

Put the planned changes into practice.

### 9. Reassess the Outcome (Fall)

Assess again in the next cycle to determine whether changes improved results.

## Additional Resources

1. [Academic Senate for California Community Colleges \(ASCCC\)- Strategies for Collecting Outcomes Data in Student Services](#)  
This presentation provides guidance and examples for developing meaningful assessment methods and collecting measurable outcomes data within student services and non-instructional areas.
2. [Cornell University – Bloom’s Taxonomy](#)  
Provides Bloom’s levels, definitions, and sample action verbs in a straightforward format from a respected teaching center.
3. [ACCJC – 2024 Accreditation Standards](#)
4. [ACCJC – Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation](#)