Institutional Learning Objectives

FAQ
Draft

1. What are Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs)?

   It is a list of what students should know, do, and value by the time they graduate.

2. Why should we do this?

   a. Most directly, to promote student success and to maintain accreditation.

      Creating such objectives is an important way of constructing an educational vision of what we expect our students to achieve and to become as a result of their experience here. This process helps us formulate an educational experience that is meaningful and relevant.

   b. Additionally, WASC requires that we have institutional learning objectives (ILOs) in order to retain our accreditation. Accreditation is needed in order for students to receive financial aid and for faculty to apply for federal and other grants.

3. What is lost if we don’t have ILOs?

   We miss out on an opportunity to communicate to students, parents, employers, and other stakeholders the value of a UH Mānoa undergraduate degree.

   ILOs are increasingly part of the accreditation process so at the very least we need to establish what we consider our institutional learning objectives to be in order to remain in good standing with our accreditation agencies and the public.

4. Who came up with these ILOs?

   A faculty working group constituted by the Mānoa Faculty Senate has produced a set of draft ILOs to be discussed by the entire community. The final versions will be based upon comments and suggestions by UH faculty and student representatives.

5. What is UH Mānoa being asked to do?

   All universities accredited by WASC must develop institutional learning objectives for undergraduate education. These learning objectives encompass the whole student experience and include those things we believe students should know, value and be able to do upon completion of a bachelor’s degree from UH Mānoa. Importantly, they are meant to be achieved by the whole of a student’s experience at UH Mānoa, not merely by completing coursework.

   Once we agree as a campus on a set of ILOs, departments can determine if there are ways they can further support student learning in these areas.
6. Does our department have to address every ILO?

No. Because the ILOs encompass the UH Mānoa experience as a whole—academic and co-curricular—it is understood that some departments may not address all the ILOs. It is through the combined efforts of general education, the major, electives, and co-curricular programs that students are afforded opportunities to meet ILOs.

7. I think ILOs are meaningless; why should we participate?

Objectives-based learning cannot be the be-all and end-all of a university education, especially given that at the end of the day it is up to students to participate in their own learning. However, ILOs can provide a space within which we can think collectively about what we believe ought to be learned in a college and the future directions in which we would like to see education move.

8. Will it slow graduation?

Because ILOs are things the faculty already value, most already exist in the current curriculum. In many ways the proposed ILOs formalize what is already happening in undergraduate education.

9. What happens after we adopt ILOs?

After we adopt ILOs, faculty will use them as a guide to inform student learning activities and make the learning objectives for our students more visible and clear. Faculty groups, and not external organizations, retain control for assessing the extent to which students have achieved the ILOs. Faculty will use assessment results to improve the undergraduate experience.