

In Focus: Credential Validation Service Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs)

1. A description of what the graduate will be able to DO (Action Verb)
2. The task that will be performed by the graduate (Learning/Product)
3. The context for evaluating the performance (Context/Condition/Criteria)

Theme/dimension (1+2): key responsibilities /duties based on hard skills and knowledge

First things first!

Will your program be based on a code that is aligned to a Program Standard or a Program Description?
To find out go to [College program standards](#) at Ontario.ca and type in the MTCU code you have selected as the basis for your application.

Remember... If a selected MTCU code has a Program Standard, the VLOs must remain the same as they appear in the published standard. Additional VLOs may be added as needed and must be added to support a title modifier. *For more information and an example, refer to Appendix D of the *CVS - Credential Validation Guidelines 2023/2024* at ocqas.org.

Writing VLOs that align to Program Descriptions

Using Program Descriptions as a starting point in new program development allows colleges the flexibility to modify the language of the VLOs. The college must ensure that it is aligning at minimum to the existing program themes/dimensions (intent). Additionally, a rationale should be provided for any base VLOs that are not included in the New Program Proposal.

The following are some principles of well-constructed VLOs:

- ✓ VLOs should be written to complete the stem:
"The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to..."
- ✓ VLOs are statements that describe what the learners will know and be able to do upon graduation.
- ✓ VLOs describe performances that integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary and significant for college graduates to be effective in their vocational pursuits.
- ✓ VLOs are vocational. They describe what the **employer** would ask a graduate to do in the workplace.
- ✓ VLOs are not so specific that the references could become obsolete.
- ✓ VLOs are written at an equal or higher level of learning required by the credential.
- ✓ If there is a specific reason to have an EES outcome in the VLOs, then it must specify the vocational or situational application.
- ✓ VLOs are measurable, observable, and action oriented. To improve measurability, avoid using the following verbs: understand, demonstrate, ensure, and learn.

Remember... when reviewing base VLOs, you want to identify the statement's main theme/dimension. In other words, what is the INTENT of this outcome?



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Let’s look at a few examples from some common themes/dimensions

| Base VLO Example | CVS Notes & Suggested Revision |
|---|--|
| Communicate with others clearly and expressively, in both written and oral forms. | Theme/dimension: Communication CVS Notes: Notice that the base VLO is too generic and reads more like an EES. Additionally, it does not include a clear context/condition/criteria. Suggested Revision: Communicate with a variety of internal and external partners to make recommendations and support the completion of an engineering design project. |
| Collaborate in a team based, mobile development project. | Theme/dimension: Collaboration CVS Notes: Notice that the Base VLO is missing the context/condition/criteria. In other words, what is the standard or basis on which this will be evaluated? For what purpose? Against what measure? Suggested Revision: Collaborate with team members during the project lifecycle to facilitate communication and achievement of project deliverables. |
| Reflect on lifelong learning requirements to support career growth and development as a nurse in Ontario. | Theme/Dimension: Professional Development/Professional Currency CVS Notes: What will students be able to DO upon graduation? This reads as something students will do within the program as opposed to what an employer would ask of a graduate. Suggested Revision: Develop and apply strategies for professional development to enhance work performance and maintain currency within the healthcare sector. |
| Apply critical thinking skills to constructively investigate, evaluate and problem solve. | Theme/Dimension: Problem-solving CVS Notes: This VLO is too generic and is not written from an employer’s perspective. Suggested Revision: Assess information and question as needed, using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies, when analyzing and interpreting laboratory results. |
| Implement and document quality processes to ensure conformance to international quality standards. | Theme/dimension: Quality assurance CVS Notes: You will notice that the base VLO has the three components of an effective outcome statement. It does, however, repeat the term “quality” twice making it redundant. Suggested Revision: Implement and document quality processes to ensure conformance to international standards. |
| Resolve security issues of the communication networks using a top-down approach through analyzing overall networks and their interconnected components. | Theme/dimension: System security CVS Notes: This VLO contains information not needed and is unclear from the reader’s perspective. The question that arises is “What is the task that a graduate would need to be successful in terms of system security?” Additionally, the base VLO has no context/condition/criteria. In other words, to what end? Suggested Revision: Analyze vulnerabilities in networks and integrated systems to identify and recommend potential solutions to security issues. |
| Use project management skills effectively to complete projects on time. | Theme/dimension: Project management CVS Notes: The base VLO is not written vocationally and reads similar to an EES. Additionally, it repeats the term “project” twice. Suggested Revision: Implement project management tools to monitor resources, timelines, efficiencies, and expenditures in relation to building automation systems. |

Lastly... remember writing Vocational Learning Outcomes is both a science and an art. Once you understand the science behind writing VLOs, there is a lot of room for creativity!