

Oklahoma Student Learning Objectives/ Student Outcome Objectives Frequently Asked Questions (SLOs/SOOs FAQ) 2014–15

The questions that follow reflect the most frequently asked questions at the train-the-trainer sessions conducted during the fall of the 2014–15 school year. Many of the answers reflect information found in the *Guidebook for District Decision Makers* (referred to as the *Guidebook*), which can be accessed at the Community of Practice (CoP) at <http://www.okslos.ning.com> under the Resources tab. Where appropriate, a page number or section of the *Guidebook* is noted. This document is divided into three sections:

Section 1: The *SLO/SOO overview*, which includes questions related to defining SLOs and SOOs, the process that happens as teachers develop their SLOs or SOOs, understanding how SLOs relate to Other Academic Measures (OAMs), and where additional resources can be located.

Section 2: *Capturing unique teaching situations and teacher and student transfers and absences*, which answers questions about who needs to develop an SLO, what the SLO process might look like in different teaching situations, and what some of the unique teaching situations are in Oklahoma.

Section 3: *Other questions* related to SLOs and SOOs in Oklahoma, including information about how SLOs fit in with the larger picture of teacher quality both in Oklahoma and across the country, the research related to SLOs, and some other questions related to SLO implementation in Oklahoma.

Section 1: SLO/SOO Overview

The SLO/SOO overview includes questions related to defining SLOs and SOOs; the SLO and SOO development process; understanding the connection between SLOs, OAMs, value-added measures (VAMs), and the qualitative measure used in Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE); and how to access additional training and development resources.

1.1 What is the difference between an SLO and an SOO?

An SLO is focused on *academic growth* relating to selected standards. An SOO is focused on *outcomes* (including behaviors) rather than academic growth. SLOs are designed to be used by classroom teachers, and SOOs are designed to be used by those in teacher-level positions who do not have a classroom of students (such as librarians, guidance counselors, and school nurses).

For more information on the differences between SLOs and SOOs, please refer to page 5 of the *Guidebook*.

1.2 How many standards should be selected for an SLO?

The number of standards selected depends on the scope of the SLO. Quality SLOs tend to focus on three to five overarching standards that represent the key learning that the selected student population should master by the end of the interval of instruction. Selecting which standards are covered depends on the individual teacher's situation and analysis of student needs.

1.3 What is the difference between an SLO/SOO and an OAM?

SLOs/SOOs and OAMs are both measures used in the quantitative portion of the TLE system. SLOs and SOOs are specifically covered under the Student Academic Growth (SAG) portion of TLE, which consists of 35 percent of a teacher's overall evaluation (beginning in 2015–16). OAMs consist of 15 percent of a teacher's overall TLE rating. Although the SLO/SOO model can be used by teachers for their OAMs, when used for this portion of the quantitative measure, there is some added flexibility in the model. For a specific comparison between the two quantitative measures, please refer to page 3 of the *Guidebook*.

For more specific information about OAMs, please refer to <http://ok.gov/sde/tle-quantitative-components>.

1.4 Can teachers use the same SLO/SOO for both their SAGs (35 percent) and their OAMs (15 percent)?

No, teachers need to have two distinct plans—one SLO/SOO and one OAM.

1.5 What does the district need to implement SLOs and SOOs in the 2014–15 school year?

Districts need to take several steps to be ready for SLO implementation. Appendix D: Decision-Making Guide in the *Guidebook* identifies the specific decisions that districts need to make as

well as a set of steps that districts need to take to implement SLOs and SOOs. For information about suggested implementation timelines, please refer to page 10 of the *Guidebook*.

1.6 What resources are available to help districts craft language and policy related to SLOs and SOOs?

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has provided suggested policy language in the *Guidebook*. Additional resources for drafting policy language are being drafted by other organizations, including the following:

- Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA) (<http://www.ossba.org/slo-soo>).
- Barlow Education Management Services (<http://www.barloweducation.com/>). As of November 16, no materials had yet been posted.
- Oklahoma Education Association (OKEA) (<http://okea.org/>). As of November 16, no materials had yet been posted.

1.7 Why do the SLO and SOO template and quality checklists say “sample” (Appendices A, B, and C)?

Although the template (Appendix A) and quality checklists (Appendices B and C) comply with state law on teacher evaluation, the specific components can be modified by districts. If districts choose to modify these resources, the only required aspect is to address the four guiding questions identified in the template and quality checklists.

1.8 What is the timeline for SLO and SOO implementation in the 2014–15 school year?

Data collected during the 2014–15 school year are used to generate an SLO and SOO score for teachers based on the percentage of students meeting their targets. These scores are applied to teachers’ overall TLE score for the 2015–16 school year. For this reason:

- Districts will need to develop and approve SLO and SOO policies, provide teachers and administrators trainings on the policies, and support teachers in the development of their SLOs during the second semester of the 2014–15 school year.
- Teachers will need to implement their SLOs and SOOs and collect student data during the second semester of the 2014–15 school year.

For more information about suggested timelines, please refer to page 10 of the *Guidebook*.

1.9 What are the OSDE deadlines related to creating and approving SLO and SOO policy?

There are no OSDE deadlines. OSDE has created suggested timelines to support districts in planning.

1.10 How does a teacher develop a quality SLO?

The five-step development process is described in the *Guidebook* beginning on page 11 and continuing through page 25. A district-approved SLO or SOO template should be used (a sample

template and sample quality checklists for approvers are provided in Appendices A, B, and C of the *Guidebook*).

1.11 How do administrators approve SLOs and SOOs?

OSDE has developed checklists for approving SLOs and SOOs. These checklists can be modified by districts but should align with the SLO/SOO template that is used by teachers. For specific guidance and tools that assist with the approval process, please refer to page 20 of the *Guidebook* (district Decision 8) and Appendices B and C.

1.12 How will summative teacher scores on SLOs be tracked?

Principals will certify and submit summative teacher scores on SLOs in a report to OSDE. This information, along with other TLE evaluation components, will be calculated into an overall TLE score for each teacher.

1.13 What is an appropriate assessment to use when collecting baseline/trend data or for use for final student scoring? Can you use a textbook company's (or other vendor's) preassessments and postassessments?

Districts determine what qualifies as appropriate assessments for use in SLOs and SOOs. For specific guidance on how districts can help ensure that assessments selected are appropriate, please refer to pages 16 and 17 in the *Guidebook* (and district Decision 6).

Vendor assessments are appropriate as long as they align to the standards being included in the SLO and SOO. For more specific guidance about selecting assessments, refer to page 16 in the *Guidebook*. Districts or teachers also can adjust a vendor assessment to align more closely with the standards, but any revised assessments should be reviewed by a content expert (colleague or district content expert).

1.14 Will Oklahoma develop assessments for all grades and subjects that teachers can use as baseline and summative tools? Can a district provide teachers with a set of common assessments for use with SLOs?

At this point, there is no plan for OSDE to create statewide assessments for use with SLOs. Districts may already have districtwide assessments and should encourage their use with SLOs.

1.15 Can the same assessment be used for an OAM and an SLO?

Yes, the same assessment can be used for both an SLO and an OAM if the teacher develops a second SLO as the OAM and if the focus area is different.

1.16 Can benchmark data from the beginning of the school year be used as pretest data for an SLO written in the second semester of the 2014–15 school year?

Yes, teachers should use the data that has been collected and available to make determinations about what skills and content students know at the beginning of the interval of instruction.

1.17 Can a principal require SLOs to be written in a specific content area(s) or with a specific content focus?

Districts can decide whether they will require districtwide or schoolwide content areas for SLO development. For more specific information about selecting standards, please refer to pages 11 and 12 in the *Guidebook* (district Decision 4).

Even when district policy does not specify a content focus, principals can help teachers develop SLOs that reflect schoolwide or districtwide academic focus areas. When developed in this way, SLOs and SOOs can ensure that overarching academic goals are being addressed by all teachers.

1.18 Where can additional training materials be found?

OSDE has made guidance and training materials available in two locations. The first is on this site (<http://www.okslos.ning.com>) under the Resources tab. Resources also can be found at the TLE portal (<http://ok.gov/sde/tle-quantitative-components>).

For examples of SLOs from other states and districts, select General Resources on the Resources tab. You will find links to a range of resources.

Section 2: Who develops SLOs or SOOs?

This section answers questions about who needs to develop an SLO, what the SLO process might look like in different teaching situations, and what some of the unique teaching situations are in Oklahoma.

2.1 Which teachers need to develop an SLO or SOO?

Any certified teacher who does not receive a VAM score needs to complete an SLO or SOO for the SAG portion of TLE. This includes teachers who would otherwise meet the requirements to receive a VAM score but who do not have 10 qualified student scores. Please refer to page 3 of the *Guidebook* for a chart that outlines which teachers receive a VAM score and which teachers need to complete an SLO or SOO.

2.2 How is the SAG (35%) component determined for the following scenarios?

Scenario 1: First-year teacher, new to the profession

Year 1 = Teacher will receive 100 percent of his or her TLE score from the qualitative component. This teacher will collect no SLO/SOO data or OAM data during this first year.

Year 2 = Teacher will receive 100 percent of his or her TLE score from the qualitative component. This teacher also will collect SLO/SOO data or OAM data during this second year to be used the following year.

Scenario 2: First year teaching in Oklahoma, previous experience in another state

Year 1 = Teacher will receive 100 percent of his or her TLE score from the qualitative component. This teacher will collect data for OAMs and SLOs/SOOs.

Year 2 = Teacher will receive 50 percent of his or her score from the qualitative component, 35 percent from the SAG component, and 15 percent from OAMs.

Scenario 3: First year teaching in an Oklahoma district, previous experience in another Oklahoma district

Year 1 = Teacher will receive 50 percent of his or her score from the qualitative component, 35 percent from the SAG component, and 15 percent from OAMs. These data will be available to the new district through the TLE Dashboard.

2.3 Do teachers in coteaching classrooms develop SLOs?

If the teacher is coteaching in a subject and grade level that does not receive a VAM score, the teacher would complete an SLO. The SLO would most likely be developed collaboratively with the cooperating teacher, and the teachers could have a common SLO with a similar focus, assessment, and baseline data, but they would adjust the growth targets and student population based on the students attributed to each of the teachers.

2.4 Do special education teachers need to develop an SLO?

If a special education teacher does not receive a VAM score, then the teacher would need to develop an SLO.

2.5 If a special education (or Title I teacher) works with a wide range of students in different subject areas and grade levels, how does the teacher select the student population and content focus for their SLO?

All teachers who teach different subjects and grade levels should consider which group of students they spend most of their instructional time with and focus their SLO on those students (and that grade level and content area). For example, teachers may choose to focus their SLO on students in one specific grade level, or they may choose students from different grade levels who all have similar instructional targets.

2.6 Do teachers who serve multiple roles, (e.g., someone who teaches in the classroom and is also the principal) develop an SLO or SOO or both?

Educators who serve in multiple roles should default to the “higher” role. In this example, the teacher/principal would be evaluated for the principal’s role. If the principal is receiving a VAM score, he or she would not need to complete an SLO for the course that he or she is teaching.

2.7 If a teacher teaches mostly non-VAM courses but has one course that receives a VAM score, would the teacher develop an SLO?

If a teacher or administrator receives a VAM for any of his or her courses, the VAM score accounts for the full 35 percent of the SAG portion of TLE.

2.8 Why do teachers who receive a VAM score need to learn about SLOs?

Teaching situations continually change (e.g., course or grade assignment changes, student populations change, etc.), so it is best practice for all teachers to understand the SLO and SOO process. If a teacher would like to develop an SLO as their OAM, he or she will need to know how to do this. SLOs and SOOs represent best practice for all teachers.

2.9 Do teachers of courses less than a full school year (e.g., a semester-long or quarter-long course) need to develop SLOs for each of their intervals?

OSDE does not require that teachers of semester- or quarter-long courses develop an SLO for each interval of instruction, just that teachers develop one SLO per year. Districts can determine their policies and timelines for semester- or quarter-long courses.

2.10 Do elementary or other self-contained teachers need to develop an SLO for every subject they teach?

No. Self-contained teachers would be expected to develop an SLO only for one subject. Although district policy can be more directive, the SLOs that teachers write should reflect schoolwide or districtwide goals.

2.11 Do teachers who teach multiple grade levels of the same subject need to include all grade levels in their SLOs?

Not for the 2014–15 school year. Teachers may select one section of the course they teach and include only that course in their SLO. For 2015–16, this may change. The intent of SLOs is that they cover the majority of students taught. Please refer to your district’s policy for clarification.

2.12 Are classes with high numbers of individualized education program (IEP) students negatively impacted by the SLO process? Can students with IEPs be excluded from a teacher’s SLO?

No, teachers cannot exclude any subgroups from their SLO or SOOs. To account for varying needs of students, teachers might develop tiered growth targets that differentiate growth for students in subgroups. For more information about growth targets, see page 18 of the *Guidebook*.

2.13 How do noninstructional staff like school nurses, guidance counselors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, etc., measure student growth?

Noninstructional staff measure their contributions to student growth, not necessarily student growth in an academic subject. For this reason, these educators develop SOOs that focus on specific student behaviors or outcomes. Sample SOOs can be found in the General Resources section under the Resources tab.

2.14 What measure of SAG do teachers use if they teach in a VAM-tested subject but have fewer than 10 eligible students on their roster?

For a more detailed explanation of which teachers are eligible, refer to the TLE website and review the information on roster verification (<http://www.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Roster%20Verification-In%20a%20Nutshell.pdf>). The following table provides additional information about how to calculate the number of students on a roster. Here are a few notes on what this means:

- An “eligible” student is one who has a prior year’s Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) test score in the same subject in Oklahoma.
- Teachers must have at least 10 eligible students to get a VAM score.
- At least five eligible students must be in the same grade. Here are a few examples that help illustrate this:

Number of Students in First Class	Number of Students in Second Class	Receives a VAM?
4 sixth-grade mathematics	6 seventh-grade mathematics	No
4 sixth-grade mathematics	10 seventh-grade mathematics	Yes—only for seventh grade
5 sixth-grade mathematics	5 seventh-grade mathematics	Yes—combined sixth and seventh grade

Section 3: Other Questions Related to SLOs and SOOs

This section answers other questions related to SLOs and SOOs, including information about how SLOs fit in with the larger picture of teacher quality both in Oklahoma and across the country, the research related to SLOs, and some other questions related to SLO implementation in Oklahoma.

3.1 Are other states using SLOs as part of teacher evaluation/effectiveness?

Currently, approximately 30 states and district are using SLOs and/or SOOs as a measure of student growth. For a detailed review of the sites, please review <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=380>.

3.2 What does the research say about the impact of using SLOs on teacher practice or on student outcomes?

Early research indicates a positive impact on teachers' instruction practice; however, data on the impact of SLOs on student outcomes are still being collected. Research also shows that no single measure in an evaluation system can adequately capture and evaluate the complex work that teachers and school leaders do. Shifting toward a multiple measure system allows evaluators to capture a more complete picture of the work that educators do. By using SLOs as one of the measurement tools, the Oklahoma TLE system is valuing the work that so many of Oklahoma's schools already engage in—targeted growth target setting, targeted teaching, and the measuring of the impact of our educators.

Further research indicates the following:

- Teachers reported increased focus on student achievement and data use and increased use of evidence-based practices as a result of the SLO goal-setting process (Community Training and Assistance Center, 2013; What Works Clearinghouse, 2009).
- Teachers using SLOs valued the opportunity to analyze data and plan instruction as part of the SLO process and reported feeling “empowered” and taking a more active role in their evaluation after SLOs were implemented (Donaldson, 2012; The New Teacher Project, 2012).
- Some positive correlations have been found between the quality of SLOs and student achievement and between the number of objectives met by teachers and student achievement, but mixed results point to a need for more research (Austin Independent School District, 2010; Community Training and Assistance Center, 2013).

3.3 Why is the timeline so short between the SLO train-the-trainer sessions and the required SLO implementation?

OSDE is required to implement the State Board and state legislature decisions. OSDE was not directed to implement SLOs until March 2014. Funding to support the planning and development of SLO guidance and training was made available in July 2014. Once funding was made available, OSDE worked quickly with AIR to develop materials and to confirm logistics for trainings beginning in early October.