Hello English,

In the past year or so I’ve kept hearing at different times in our English meetings that our Core English course SLOs were “too similar” and that we needed to change them.  Since we are currently in the process of revising them, I decided to investigate this further, so **I contacted the Curriculum chairs and we now have a clear answer to this question which is that having the same SLOs but distinguishing by level is acceptable and appropriate.** See more details below:

**MY QUESTION:**Hello Jessica and Adam,

At our English March meeting we are going to reassess the SLOs for the Core English courses.  One thing I keep hearing is that our SLOs at each level for our core English courses need to be "more notably" different from one another.  However, from basic skills to advanced comp, we teach the same skills but just at different levels of sophistication.  This is why the SLOs are "similar" but vary in sophistication as the levels progress.

Every time this has come up, who is giving this directive is vague.  Also, if a non-English person is giving us this directive, I think we need to have a longer conversation with this person or people explaining how in our discipline of English, this is appropriate.  We should be teaching the same skills at each level as composing an essay does not change depending on your level of English.  I asked Mary and Chris to guide me towards someone who could help us answer this question and Mary said to contact you.  When you get a chance, can you let me know if you have any history or knowledge about this core English course SLO question?

I'm also listing the essay SLOs here from each core English course so you get a better sense of what I am asking:

ENGL 828:  A. ESSAYS: Write focused, organized, well-developed, and text-based essays **appropriate to the basic skills level** using effective paragraphs, which support a clear thesis statement, and demonstrate competence in standard English grammar and usage.

ENGL 846: A. ESSAYS: Write focused, organized, well-developed, and text-based essays **appropriate to the developmental level** using effective paragraphs, which support a clear thesis statement, and demonstrate competence in standard English grammar and usage.

ENGL 100/105:  A. ESSAYS: Write focused, organized, well-developed, and text-based essays **appropriate to the college transfer level** using effective paragraphs, which support a clear thesis statement, and demonstrate competence in standard English grammar and usage.

ENGL 110/165:  A. ESSAYS: Write focused, organized, well-developed, and text-based essays **appropriate to the advanced college transfer level** using effective paragraphs, which support a clear thesis statement, and demonstrate competence in standard English grammar and usage.

**CURRICULUM RESPONSE:**
Windham, Adam

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Today, 10:08 AM

Hello Rachel,

I think the root of this comes from the state, where “each course must be distinct and have different student learning outcomes for each level or variation” (State Chancellor’s Office,*Credit Course Repetition Guidelines*, 2013, p. 26). To ensure compliance with this guideline, I typically ask faculty to ensure that their SLOs are meaningfully distinct between different courses, even when they are courses in a sequence or family.

With that being said, I understand that SLOs for related courses are often very similar. I would expect that your program has a PSLO on essay writing: these course SLOs are the course-level reflections of this PSLO across the program. It makes sense to have the SLO largely repeated across multiple courses, so that consistent and meaningful assessment can take place throughout the program.

**The balance between these two (the Chancellor’s Office guideline and consistency with a PSLO) has usually been struck exactly the way you have done it, by adding some course-specific language (“… appropriate to the \_\_\_\_\_ level …”) to a more generic PSLO. This has been done in leveled courses (like in athletics or music), and also in sequenced courses (like physics), with the blessing of both Karen Wong and the Curriculum Committee.**

I’m not sure where this “directive” is coming from to alter your current course-level SLOs in English, but it should not be coming from anyone in our committee. If one of your curriculum committee division representatives or SLO Coaches are giving you information contrary to what I’ve stated above, please put them in contact with me, so I can ensure we are providing consistent feedback to faculty. Otherwise, I will leave it to you (armed with the information above) to resolve this within your department.

Thanks for checking; please let me know if I can provide further assistance in this matter.

-Adam