Assessing Learning Outcomes Achieved Through The "Undergraduate Experience"

- **A facilitated discussion session**

The assessment of learning outcomes is normally viewed as a problem for academic programs. Even in the context of the three-year degree, this perspective can leave out the role of key learning experiences outside programs but directly related to broader competencies and personal development. This narrow approach also places an inappropriate burden on academic assessments. These problems will be greater for four-year degrees, where students' programs-of-study will be more flexible and built-up from different components.

This facilitated discussion session is intended to explore the problem of assessing learning outcomes achieved through students' overall undergraduate experience.

The key areas for our discussion today are:

- Defining the relevant sites for assessment – academic courses, co-curricular, extra-curricular experiences …
    - Academic courses, final-year projects, campus activities, internships, and so on, all represent opportunities for assessment of outcomes: what are the challenges for each of these sites?
    - How can work and responsibility be assigned across the organization?
    - How can the burden be fairly distributed?
    - How is communication and administration facilitated?
- Defining the relevant moments for assessment – on graduation, at the end of year one...
    - Setting outcomes and/or outcome standards for key transition/decision points in the undergraduate students' experience
    - Spreading the assessment load for students and assessors
    - Using penultimate year assessments for some "graduate" outcomes
    - How do we assure assessment is kept manageable while maintaining validity and reliability?
- Defining the relevant assessment activities
    - For courses and programs – re-purposing embedded assessments?
    - For co-curricular?
    - For extra-curricular?
    - Sampling versus assessment of all students
    - Students' self-assessment: where does the notion of 'student claimsmaking' of learning (e.g. via eportfolios) fit into this?
- Turning multiple assessments into a coherent "assessment plan"
    - Do we assess for added-value, as well as outcome standards?
    - What/who are we assessing? The student? The program? The institution?
    - How often: on a single cycle, or different cycles for different sites?
    - A role for external input?
    - How is the assessment loop closed?