

A Two-tier Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Framework

Presentation at the “*3+3+4 Symposium*” on *OBE for the New 4-year Curriculum*
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Outline of presentation

- Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment [i-LOA] – What is it and why do it?
- Integrated two-tier learning outcomes assessment framework at PolyU
- Reflections
- Questions and sharing

What is i-LOA?

- Meaning of i-LOA:
 - ▶ A systematic process of collecting **broader evidence or data** about how well our graduates are achieving the **intended learning outcomes** aspired by the **institution**
 - ▶ with reference to a specified **standard**
 - ▶ and using the evidence to **improve** the **institution's effectiveness** in facilitating student learning
- Focus on evaluation of **overall institutional effectiveness** rather than assessing the performance of individual students (or teachers)

	Student Assessment	Learning Outcomes Assessment
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Performance and achievement of individual students	
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tests, exams, theses or assignments, practicum, etc.	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Screening, certification, determining award	

	Student Assessment	Learning Outcomes Assessment
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performance and achievement of individual students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Institutional effectiveness in achieving its stated mission and objectives
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tests, exams, theses or assignments, practicum, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A broader range of direct and indirect evidence
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screening, certification, determining award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To prove and improve institutional effectiveness

Subject grades

- Often inadequate as i-LOA measure:
 - ▶ **Seldom** assess **broader** outcomes that cut across subjects or require integration of learning from different subjects
 - ▶ Generic competencies often **not** assessed and reported **separately**, if at all
 - ▶ Reflect **short-term** learning rather than long-term learning outcomes or impact
 - ▶ Some outcomes (e.g. affective) are difficult to measure via conventional teacher-marked subject assessments

Award GPA or degree classification

- Also inadequate as i-LOA measure because:
 - ▶ Internally assigned
 - ▶ Unable to tell which of the i-LOs have or have not been achieved
 - ▶ Reflect overall performance rather than competencies at exit



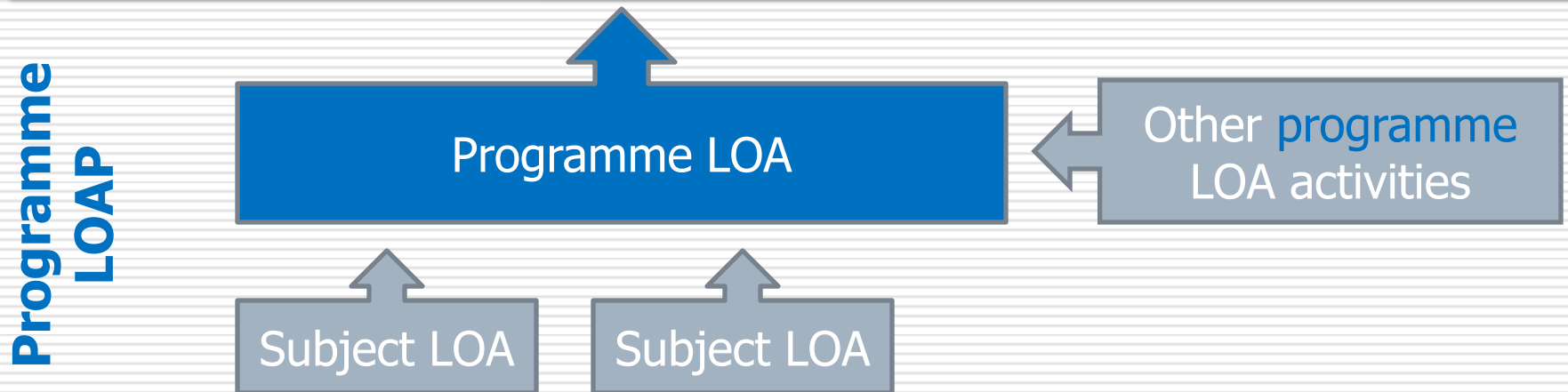
Institutional LOA has a **different purpose and focus** ... and thus

often requires **different processes**
to collect **different types of data**
for this purpose

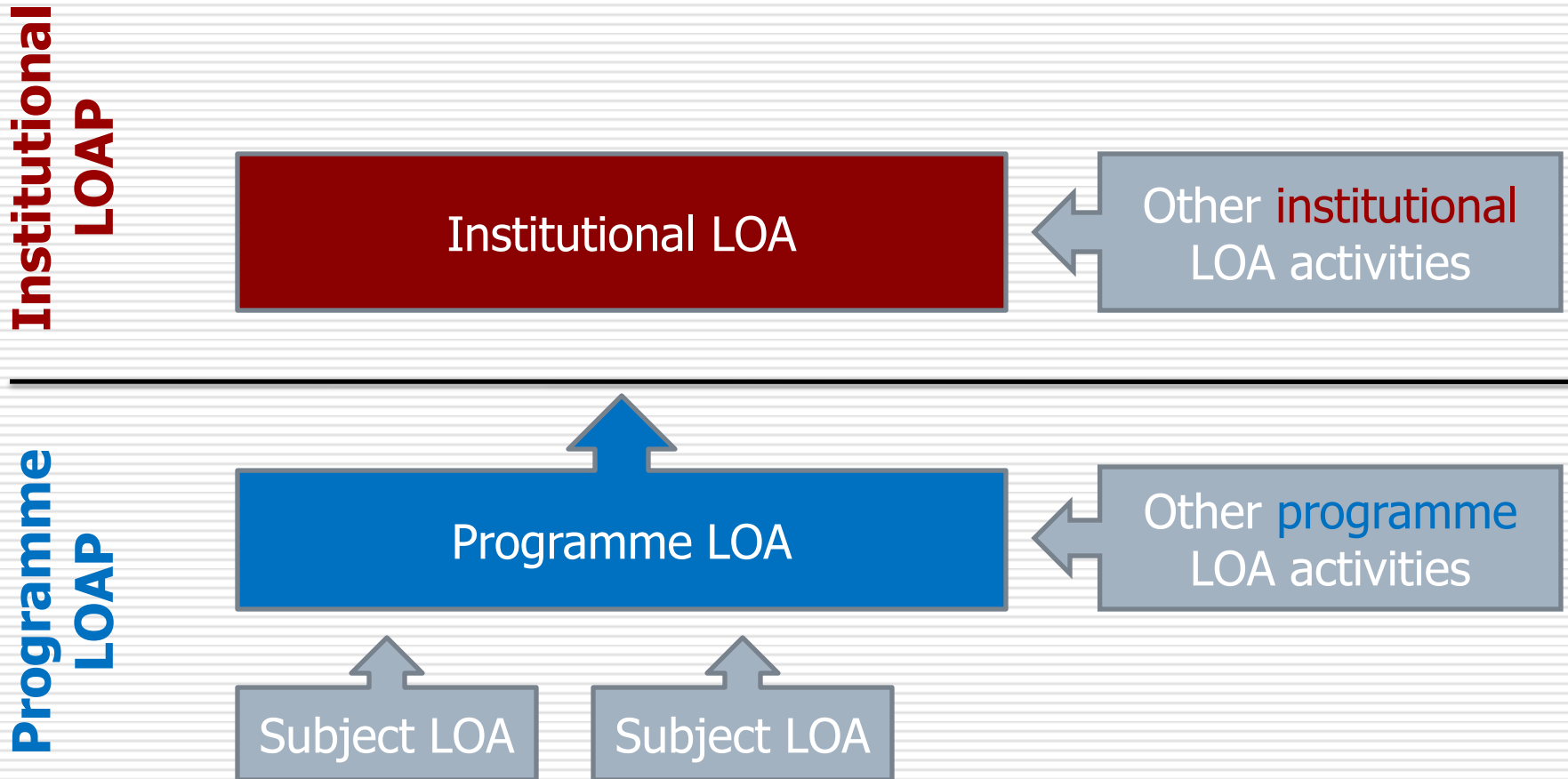
Why we do it?

- Evidence-based improvement
- External accountability
- Showcasing quality

PolyU's integrated two-tier framework

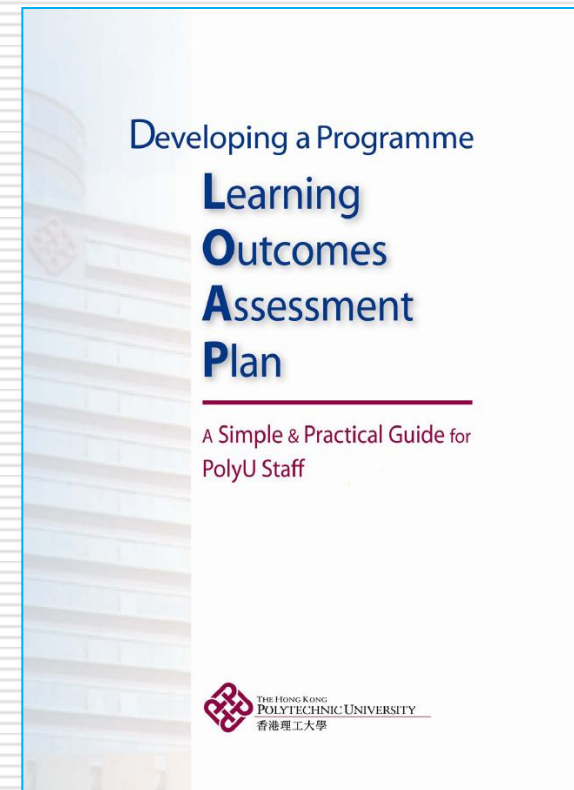


PolyU's integrated two-tier framework

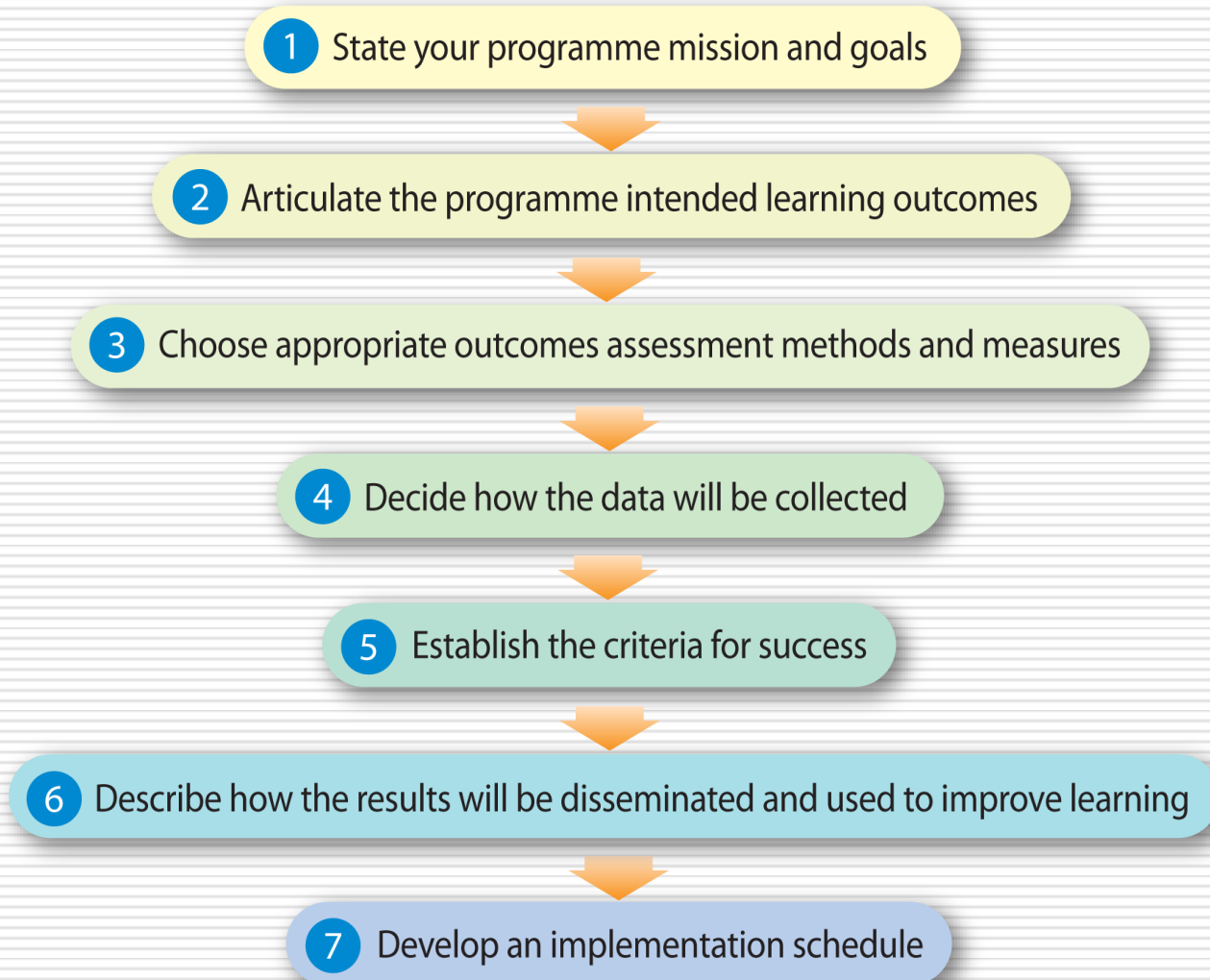


How we do it?

- Disseminate plan to staff with clear explanation of why, what, when and how
- Practical guide for staff
- Open-to-all and in-department workshops and seminars
- Consultation and feedback
- Endorsement by Faculty Boards



Recommended 7-step approach



Suggested template for P-LOAP

Department/School/Faculty:

Name of Programme:

Programme Mission/Goals ⁽¹⁾:

Part I: Programme learning outcomes assessment methods and procedures

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes ⁽²⁾	LOA methods and measures ⁽³⁾	How the data will be collected ⁽⁴⁾	Criteria for success ⁽⁵⁾	How the data will be disseminated and used for improvement ⁽⁶⁾
1				
2				
3				
4				

Part II: Implementation schedule and responsibility

LOA methods or activities	Implementation schedule ⁽⁷⁾			Person(s) responsible
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
1				
2				
3				
4				

Source: *Developing a Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan: A Simple & Practical Guide for PolyU Staff* [Appendix 2]

PolyU's institutional LOAP

- Programme LOAPs as cornerstone
- Institutional surveys or data:
 - ▶ Graduate employment survey
 - ▶ Alumni survey
 - ▶ Employer survey
 - ▶ Students' Self-Assessment of All-Round Development on entry and at exit
 - ▶ Other evidence (e.g. student engagement in and learning gain from academic exchange, non-local placements, work-integrated learning,...)

Three pilot projects

- Use of Collegiate Learning Assessment [CLA] for benchmarking generic competencies
- Course-embedded assessments
- Student (e)portfolios

Progress to date

- Programme level:
 - ▶ P-LOAP developed and endorsed for all UG programmes
 - ▶ Start to pilot implementation 2009/10
- Institution-level:
 - ▶ Pilot study on CLA completed
 - ▶ Other 2 pilot projects still in progress
 - ▶ Review and rationalisation of institutional surveys in progress

Some reflections

- Staff concern and buy-in
 - ▶ Difficult if still skeptical of OBE in general
 - ▶ Yet another bureaucratic chore?
 - ▶ All pain, no gain?
 - ▶ Workload
 - ▶ Know-how

Some reflections [2]

- Need for strong leadership and support
 - ▶ Clear purpose and direction
 - ▶ Staff development and support
 - ▶ Recognition of contribution

Some reflections [3]

- Preferably as few new additional processes as possible
- Preferably already embedded with other properly aligned existing processes
- Preferably integrated with a common LMS platform
- Preferably as automated as possible
- Compared to subject-based and programme-based outcomes assessment, i-LOAP could be made more transparent to front-line teachers and students

Some reflections [4]

- Learn from international best practice
- Learn by doing
- Mindful of marginal utility
- Expect a long-drawn process of change

Useful references

- California Assessment Institute Resources
<http://cai.cc.ca.us/Resources/index.htm>
- Allen, M. (2004). *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*. Anker Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Walvoord, B.E. (2004). *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. Jossey-Bass.

Thank You

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Suggestions?
- Experience to share?