

# Ouch!! My Outcomes are Killing Me!!

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# Why the Title?

- ❑ The quality of the outcomes you write has a HUGE impact on your Assurance of Learning effort
  - ❑ You are stuck with them for maybe 5 years.
  - ❑ They may be easy to assure or impossible to assure. That determines the resources you have to put in.
  - ❑ They may or may not reflect what you are actually doing – they may be more or less disconnected with the actual programme – making alignment more or less difficult



# The Purpose of This Session?

- To reflect and feedback on the issues which arise in writing outcomes/ learning goals
- To discuss a set of criteria for writing outcome statements



## Step 1: Define Programme Learning Goals

- How many to have?
  - In Business AACSB says “normally 4 to 10”
  - At the same time “learning goals should help the student to choose a program”
    - Is there tension here?
- Where do they come from?



# How many goals?

- ❑ PARSIMONY .....has obvious advantages and is often recommended
  - ❑ Easier to assure
- ❑ BUT .....if we opt for a very small number, everyone will have:
  - ❑ Critical and Creative Thinking/  
Communication/Ethics/ Working with  
People/Global Outlook
- ❑ AND ....these generic goals are shared by Business, Engineering and Nursing programs!!



# How many goals?

- ❑ If Business students are told that the goals for their program are entirely generic, they may be unmotivated.
- ❑ Entirely generic learning goals provide no guidance to program content, and no guidance for student choice
- ❑ Faculty members find it more difficult to identify and 'get behind' purely generic goals.



# How many goals?

- ❑ You need to find a balance between:
  - ❑ defining goals which really express what your program is trying to do, signaling your content, and your differentiation AND:
  - ❑ Having too many goals to assure effectively





# How many goals?

- ❑ In our case, in Business at PolyU, we have 13 goals for our BBA. Are we over-burdening ourselves? We hope not, because 6 or 7 of them are essentially 'business content' goals, addressed, assessed and assured in traditional way
- ❑ Find the way that suits you best





# Where do the goals come from?

- Your Faculty Mission, of course, which should be consonant with the Mission of your University.
  
- We have different levels of goals/outcomes; therefore, consistency and coverage are difficult to achieve:
  - University-level
  - Program-level
  - Subject-level



# Where do the goals come from?

- ❑ From University goals to program goals may be easy or difficult, depending on how specific they are and how consonant your Business School is with the Uni as a whole
- ❑ Going from program level goals to subject level is difficult.
  - ❑ Do the subject goals simply repeat the program goals?
  - ❑ Are faculty members able to write subject level goals which are achievable and at the same time reflect program goals? This is a skill which many do not have.



# Criteria for Good Learning Goals

- ❑ **AUTHENTIC** – what your programme REALLY wants to achieve
- ❑ **ACHIEVABLE** – no more 'motherhood and apple pie' or grandiose expectations
- ❑ **ALIGNABLE** - can be assessed through assessment tasks directed specifically onto the outcome – and can have a reasonable % of the time directed towards them!!!!



# Criteria for Good Learning Goals

- CLEAR –students will know what they mean
- “MEASURABLE” – can be subject to evidence – without being dumbed down
- DIFFERENTIATED – one from each other
- SINGULAR – not multi-dimensional
- WORTHWHILE – of course

