



# Learning Outcomes & Staff Development

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## Workshop Aims

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To consider and discuss:

staff development issues in relation to the development and application of learning outcomes at tertiary level



# Workshop Learning Outcomes

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At the end of this session you should be more able to:

- discuss the role of learning outcomes in programme design, development & review
- identify staff development issues in relation to working with learning outcomes
- reflect on the types of outcome for which a university might aim.



# Learning Outcomes

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- Central to credit framework developments
- Form an 'educational currency'
- Contribute to better information, greater clarity and improved transparency for **all** stakeholders



# The Role of Learning Outcomes in Planning Courses of Study

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- Outcomes-based approach (learner centred) versus content-based approach (teacher centred)
- Provides a common format for the description and comparison of disparate forms of learning
- Can encourage the development of more innovative forms of assessment



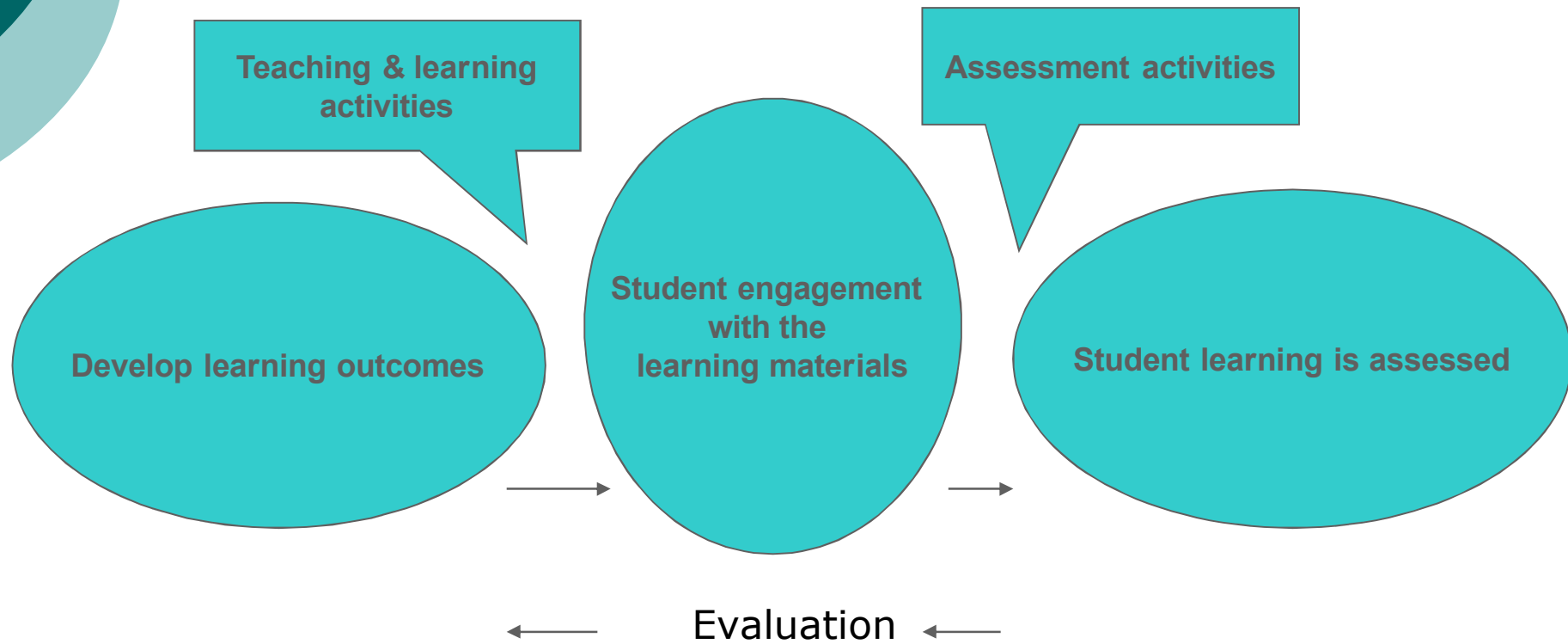
# The Aligned Curriculum

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- Define the learning outcomes
- *What do we want learners to be able to do?*
- Select appropriate assessment methodologies
- Select teaching & learning activities to support learners' achievement of the learning outcomes

# Curriculum Development - Process

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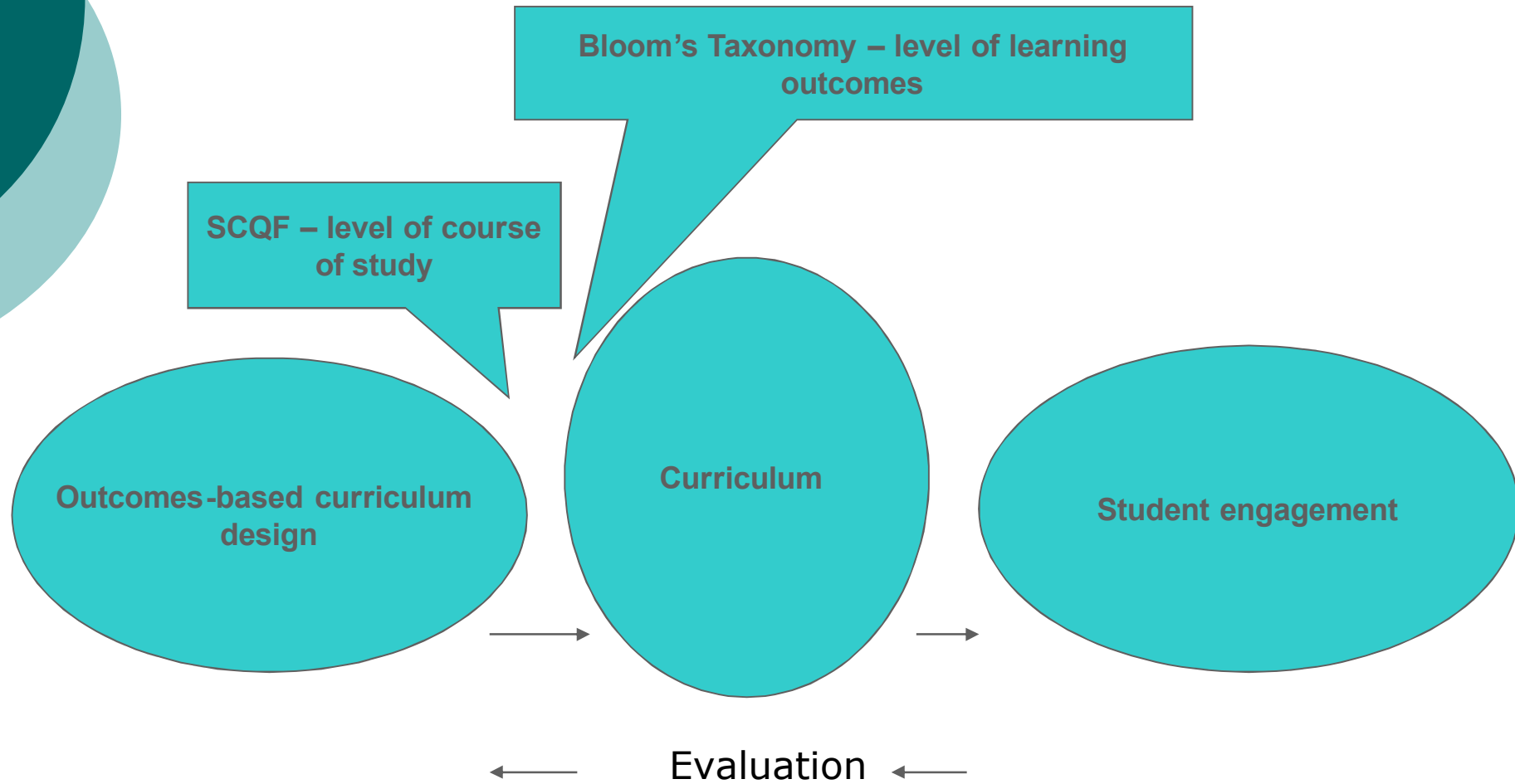
# Tools to Use in Creating Learning Outcomes

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- Subject Benchmarking  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp>
- SCQF <http://www.scqf.org.uk/index.asp>
- Bloom's Taxonomy  
<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/bloomtax.htm>

# Curriculum Planning

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# Subject Benchmarking

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- Statements set out expectations for subject areas
- Attributes, skills and capabilities
- Written by academics and specialists – owned by the sector



# SCQF

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- Defines the **level** of the learning outcomes from level 2 (Access2) to level 12 (doctorate)
- Generic statements describing the characteristics and context of learning expected at each level
- Five areas within each level: knowledge & understanding; practice; generic cognitive skills; communication, ICT & numeracy; autonomy, accountability & working with others



# SCQF

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- Defines the **volume** of the learning outcomes (in credit points) related to the amount of time that an average learner might take to complete them
- Notional student effort (NSE)
- 10 hours NSE = 1 credit



## For example ò

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Pg Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education programme at Dundee

- Master's **level** (level 11 on the SCQF)
- 60 **credit** programme (comprised of three 20 credit modules)
- NSE = 600 hours overall/200 per module (learning, teaching & assessment activities)



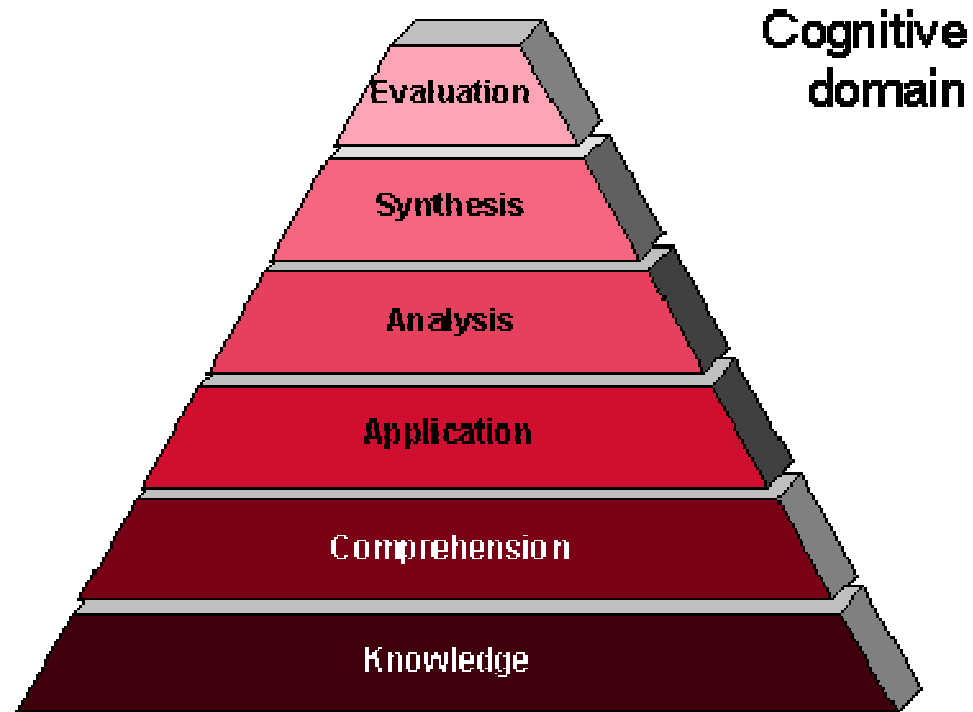
# BloomsqTaxonomy

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- Classifies thought processes in the **cognitive**, affective & psychomotor domains at different levels
- Moves from low level, shallow learning to deeper level, advanced learning
- Six areas/levels: Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation

# Bloom's Taxonomy

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# Writing Learning Outcomes

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- Bloom's taxonomy provides a guide to writing learning outcomes
- What learners should be able to do more effectively at the end of the period of study
- Must be written in language which can be understood by the learners
- Must include an **action verb**
- Should be SMART



## For example ò

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A learning outcome which relates to Bloom's 'knowledge' area of the cognitive domain could be:

*At the end of this module you should be more able to describe the experiences of workers in the jute mills of 19<sup>th</sup> C Dundee.*



## For example ò

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A learning outcome which relates to Bloom's 'analysis' area of the cognitive domain could be:

*At the end of this module you should be more able to compare and contrast the experiences of male & female employees in the jute mills of 19<sup>th</sup> C Dundee.*



## The Role of Learning Outcomes in Validation & Review

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- Maintains standard of delivery across several cohorts
- To evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum – scope, level etc.
- Ensure that course/module complies with standards



# Programme/Module Specifications

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- Concise description of the intended learning outcomes for a specific course of study and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated
- Foundation for quality assurance for all stakeholders
- Allow courses of study to be related to the national qualifications framework



# Learning Outcomes for which a University Might Aim

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Linked to:

- Subject specialisms eg PSBs
- Employability profiles  
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/employability/disciplines>
- Specific foci of individual institutions eg professionalism & employability at Dundee



# Issues for Staff

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- What's the difference between 'objectives' and 'outcomes'?
- How many learning outcomes are enough?
- Do we assess all learning outcomes?
- What do they look like?
- Does an outcomes-based approach too narrowly define student learning?



## Varieties of Learning Outcome

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- **Intended** learning outcomes – linked to credit, must be achieved and will be assessed
- **Emergent** learning outcomes – linked to personal learning, may or may not emerge, unanticipated and learner-specific



## Engaging staff

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- Move from subject/content focus (teacher-centered) to outcome/learning focus (learner-centred)
- Can be used to structure any teaching input
- Can be used to evaluate teaching



# References

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- ATHERTON J S (2005) *Learning and Teaching: Bloom's taxonomy* [On-line] UK: Available: <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/bloomtax.htm> Accessed: 19 February 2008
- SCQF Handbook (2007)