

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of numerous thin, wavy, light blue lines that flow from the top right towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

TASO

Annual
Conference:

How to Evaluate

#TasoCon24

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Evaluating interventions that aim to tackle ethnicity degree awarding gaps

Sarah Conner / Research Manager

#TasoCon24

Attendee hub



<https://taso.org.uk/taso-annual-conference-2024-attendee-guide/resources/>

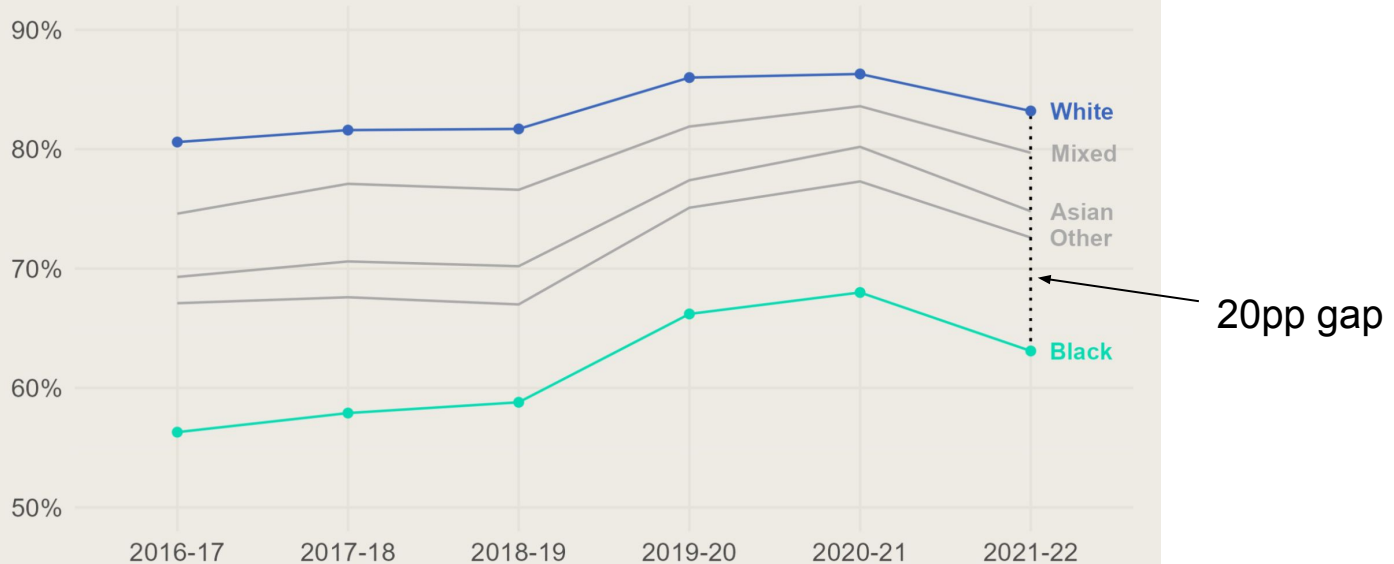
Overview of session

- 1 Introduction and scene setting
- 2 Evaluation: where to start
- 3 Moving from a theory of change to an evaluation plan
- 4 Q&A

The ethnicity degree awarding gap

Students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to graduate with a 2:1 or first class degree

Proportion of students achieving a first or upper-second class degree

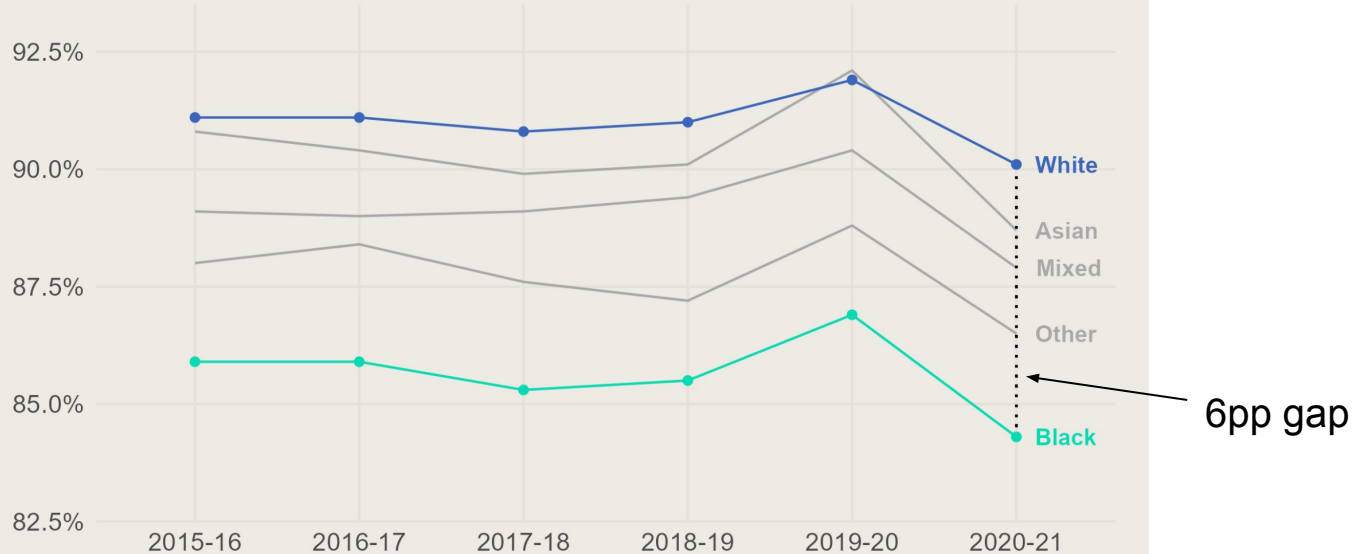


Source: OfS data dashboard

The ethnicity degree *continuation* gap

Students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to continue with their studies after first year

Proportion of students continuing after first year

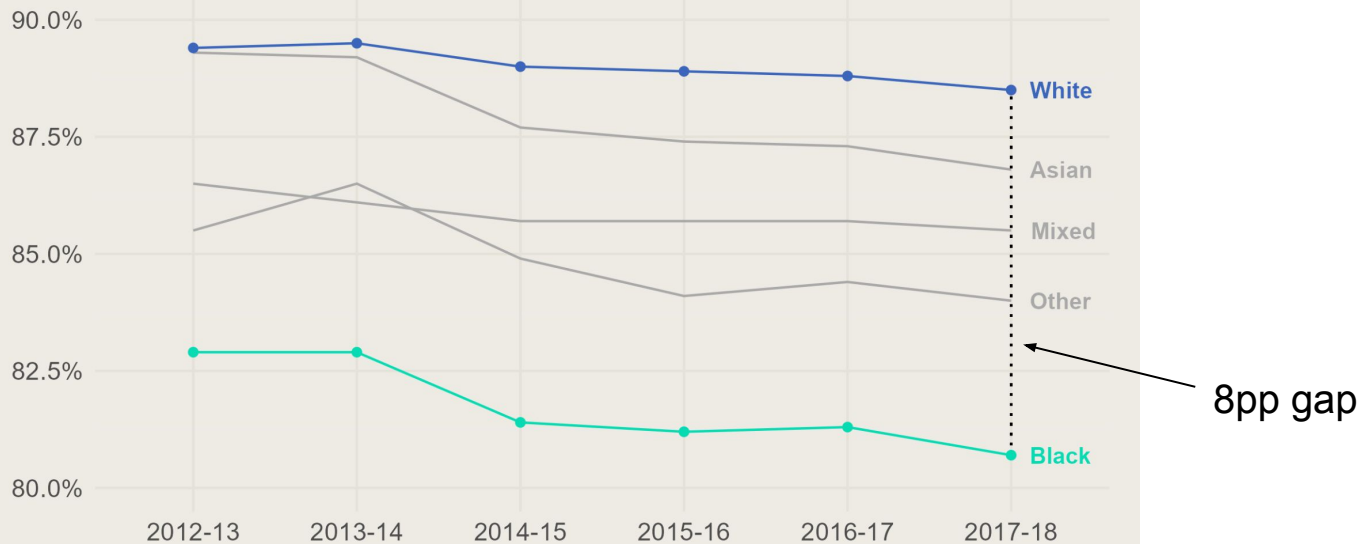


Source: OfS data dashboard

The ethnicity degree completion gap

Students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to complete their degree

Proportion of students completing their degree




Source: OfS data dashboard

Equality of Opportunity Risk Register

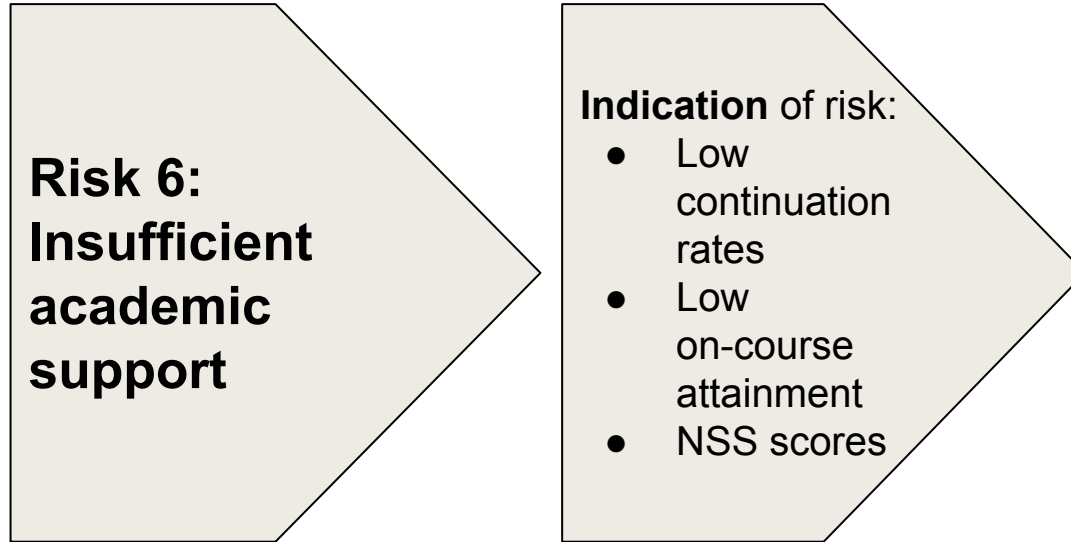
- Providers should consider the **various risks that different groups of students might face.**
- From this, they can consider how they can contribute to **reducing these risks.**

Equality of Opportunity Risk Register

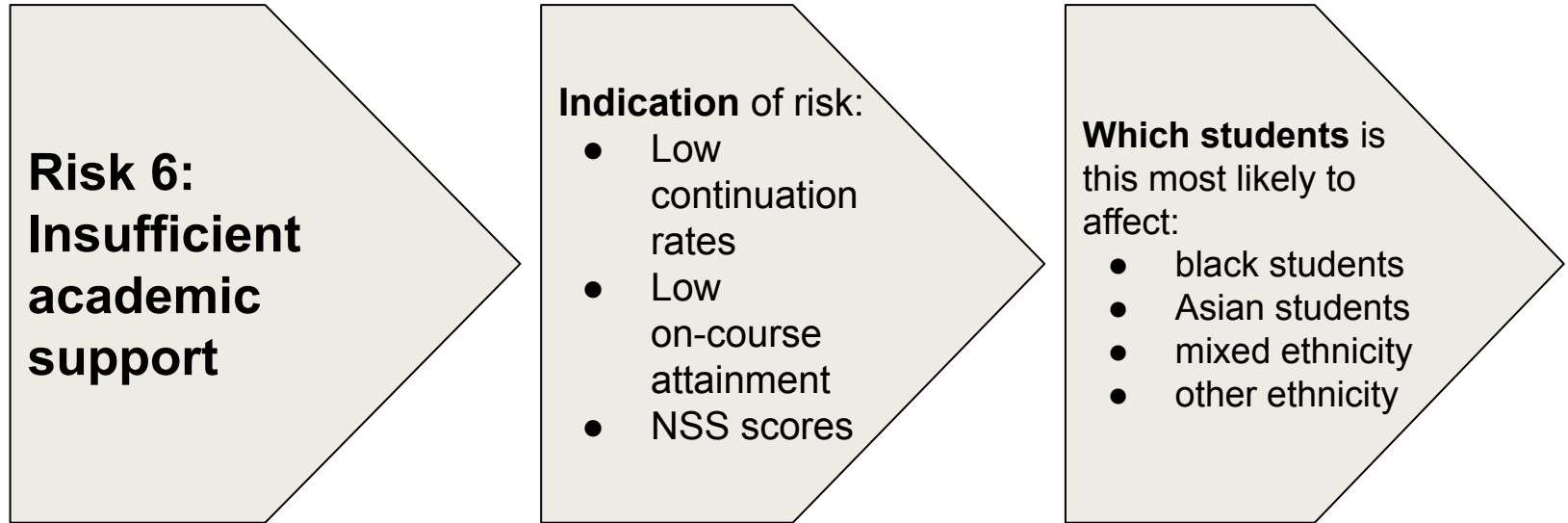


**Risk 6:
Insufficient
academic
support**

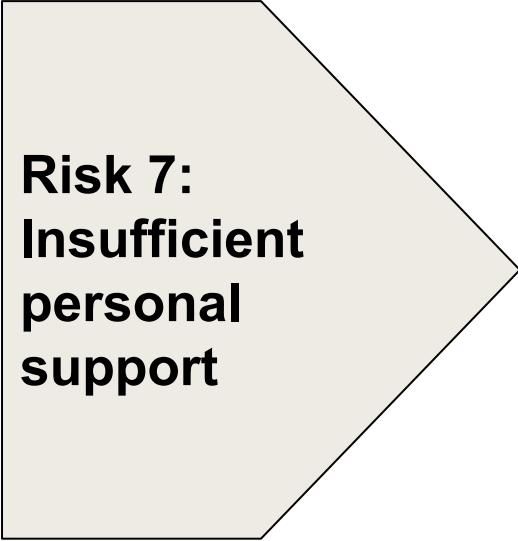
Equality of Opportunity Risk Register



Equality of Opportunity Risk Register

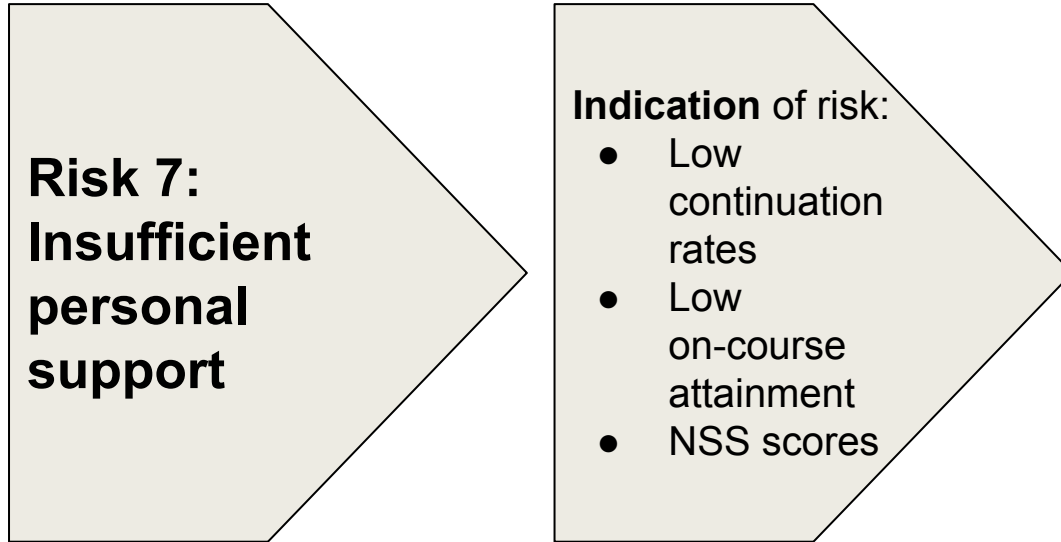


Equality of Opportunity Risk Register

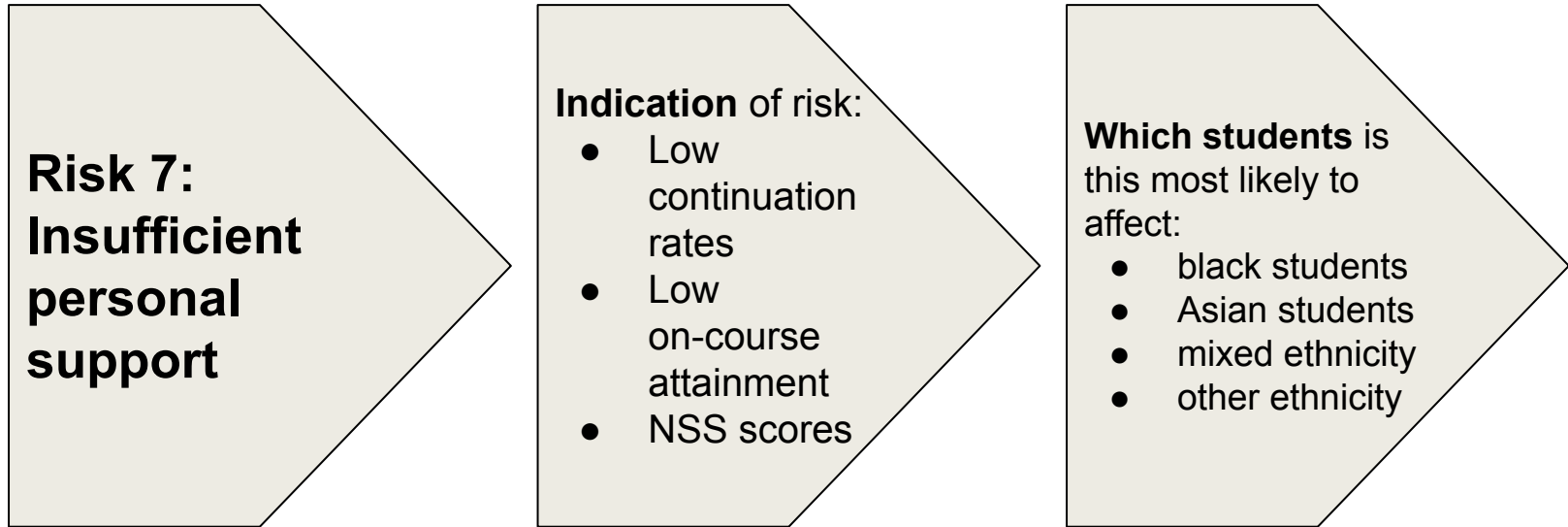


**Risk 7:
Insufficient
personal
support**

Equality of Opportunity Risk Register



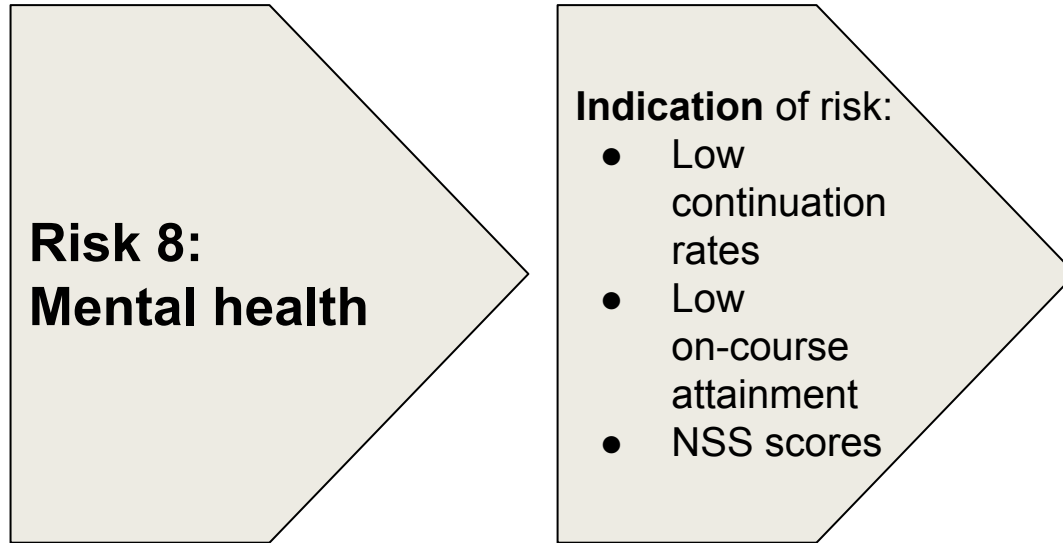
Equality of Opportunity Risk Register



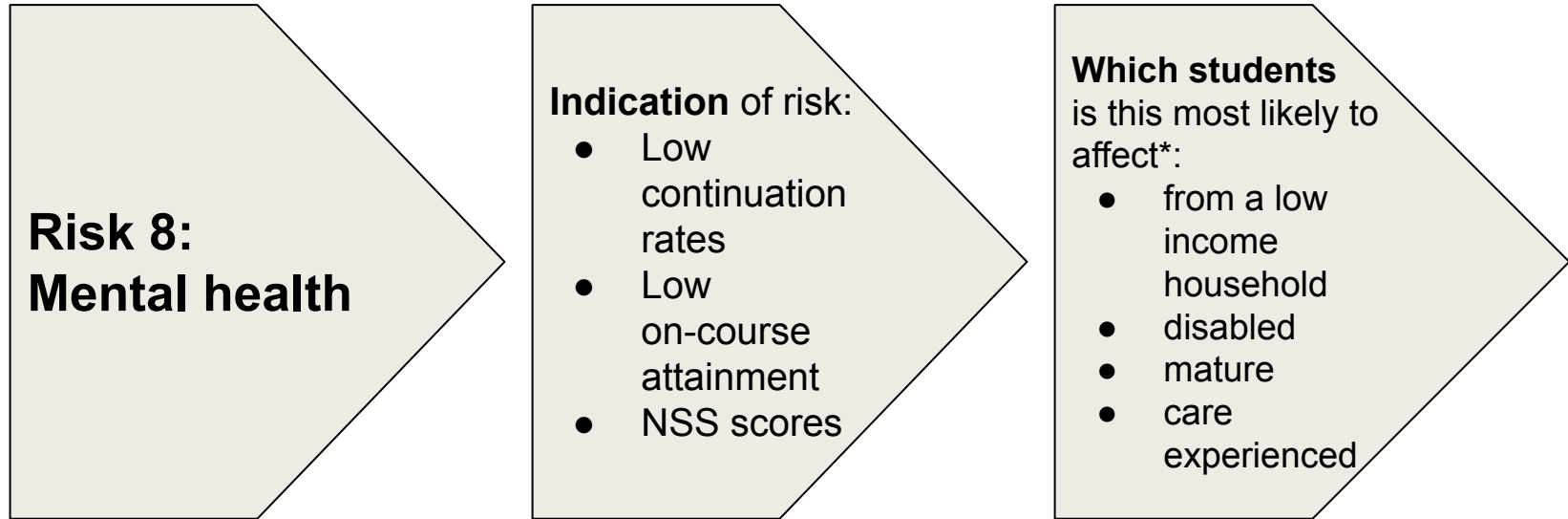
Equality of Opportunity Risk Register



Equality of Opportunity Risk Register



Equality of Opportunity Risk Register



What are providers
doing to tackle the
gap?

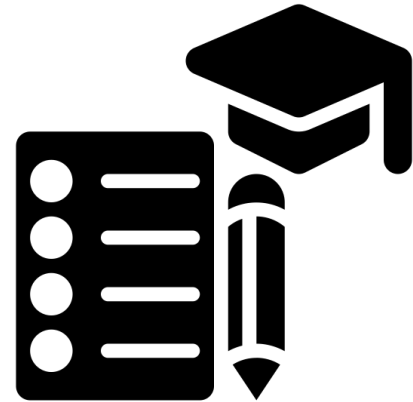


Initiatives to tackle the gap

- Previous TASO project (2023) to map the current approaches being delivered by HEPs
- Analysed 249 access and participation plans (APPs)
- Identified 16 broad intervention types

Most common interventions

- Curriculum changes (N = 92)
- Using learning analytics (N = 68)
- Providing student support (N = 43)
- Raising awareness (N=39)



Least common interventions

- Training students as allies (N = 2)
- Modifying leadership practice (N = 5)
- Recruiting staff (N = 9)
- Adapting structural processes (N = 10)



What works to close the gap?

Simple answer: we don't know*

(*enough, yet)



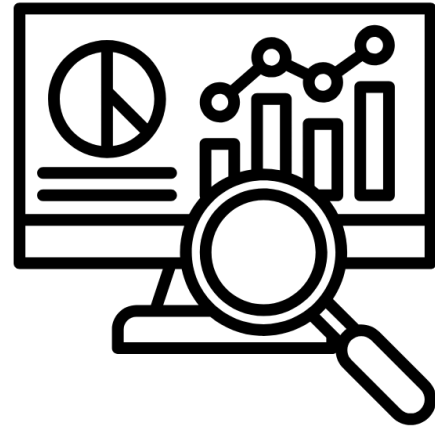
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Evaluation: where to
start



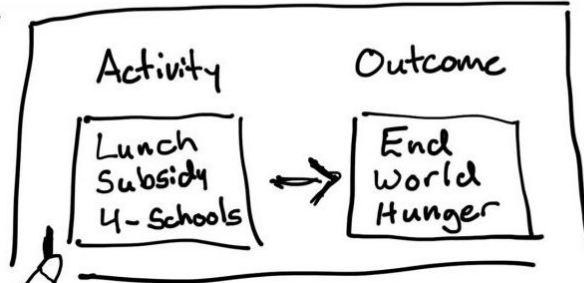
The importance of context

- Context is key
- Clear rationale
 - Data-driven approach



Theory of change

So what you're saying is that your low budget school lunch subsidy program will eventually end global hunger?



Well, every big idea looks silly when you put it down on paper.



Theory of change

- **Why** is the intervention being run?
- **What** are the important elements in your intervention?
- **Who** is the intervention for and who are the key stakeholders?
- **How** is it delivered and how can you ensure it is mobilised effectively?

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Enhanced theory of change

ENHANCED THEORY OF CHANGE UNDERPINNING NARRATIVE
<p>VERSION</p> <p>Add version number/date here and any notes on updates/changes</p>
<p>NAME</p> <p>Provide the name or a phrase that describes the intervention.</p>
<p>WHY IS THE INTERVENTION BEING RUN?</p> <p>Describe any rationale, theory, or goal of the elements essential to the intervention.</p>
<p>WHO IS THE INTERVENTION FOR?</p> <p>Describe the participants or beneficiaries</p>
<p>WHAT IS THE INTERVENTION?</p> <p>Materials: Describe any physical or informational materials used in the intervention, including those provided to participants or used in intervention delivery or in training of intervention providers. Provide information on where the materials can be accessed (e.g. online appendix, URL).</p> <p>Procedures: Describe each of the procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention, including any enabling or support</p>

Top tips for ToC development

Top tips for ToC development

- Useful for old or new interventions
- Different elements for different purposes
- Diverse representation
- An iterative process
- Make use of examples!

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Top tips for ToC development

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- An iterative process
- **Make use of examples!**

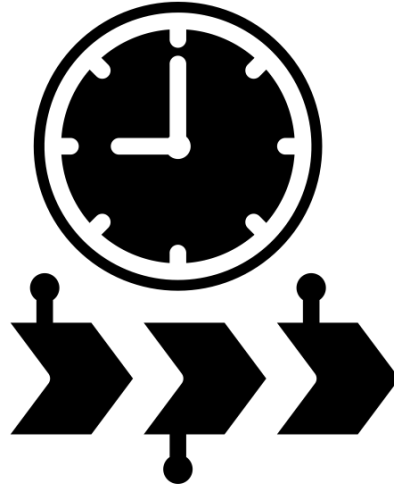
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Identifying outcomes



Back to the gap: identifying outcomes

- Short-term
- Intermediate
- Long-term

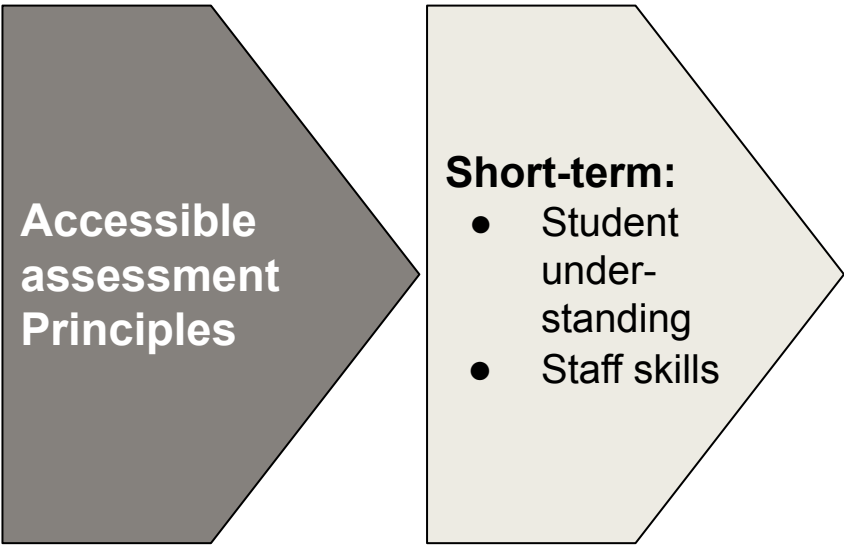


Identifying outcomes - examples

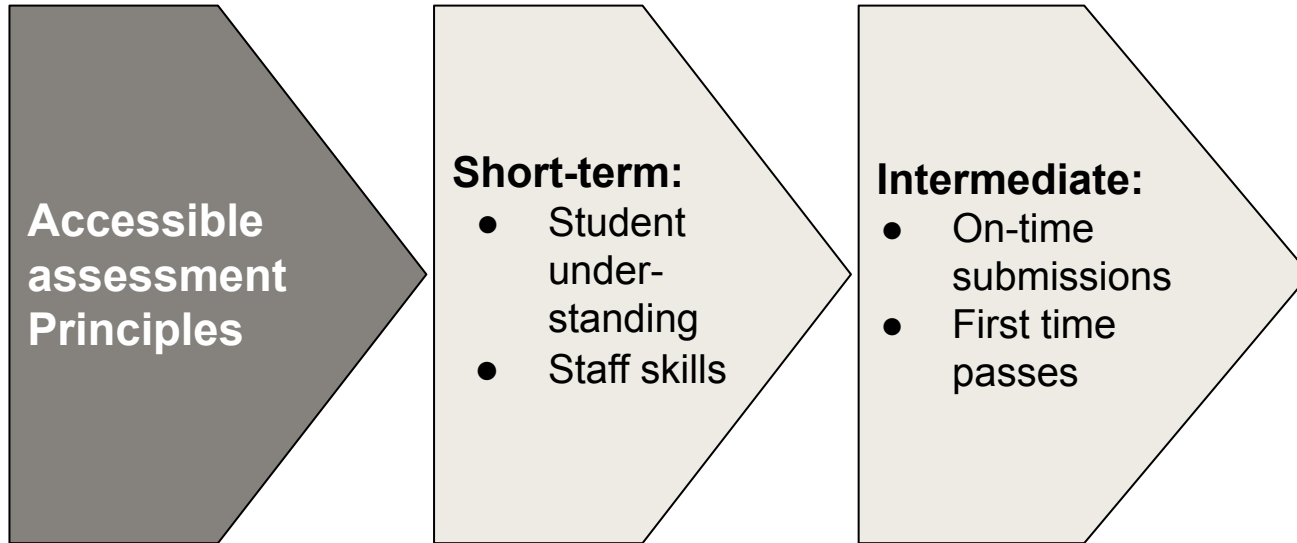


**Accessible
assessment
Principles**

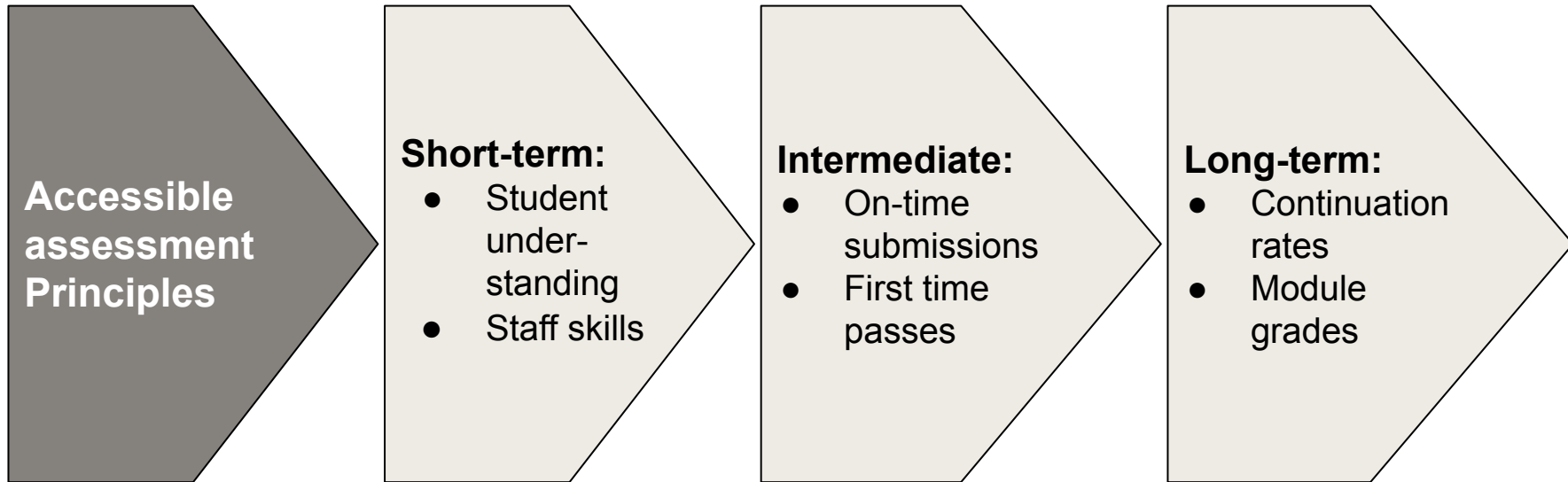
Identifying outcomes - examples



Identifying outcomes - examples



Identifying outcomes - examples

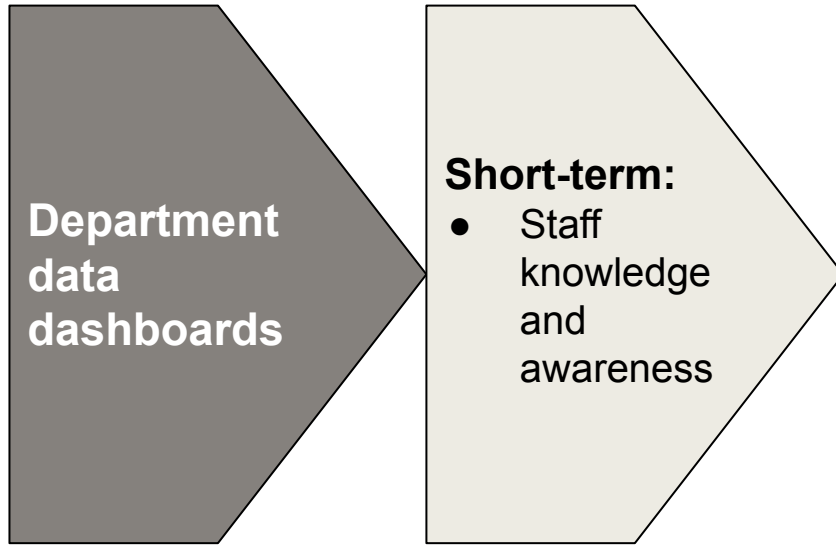


Identifying outcomes - examples

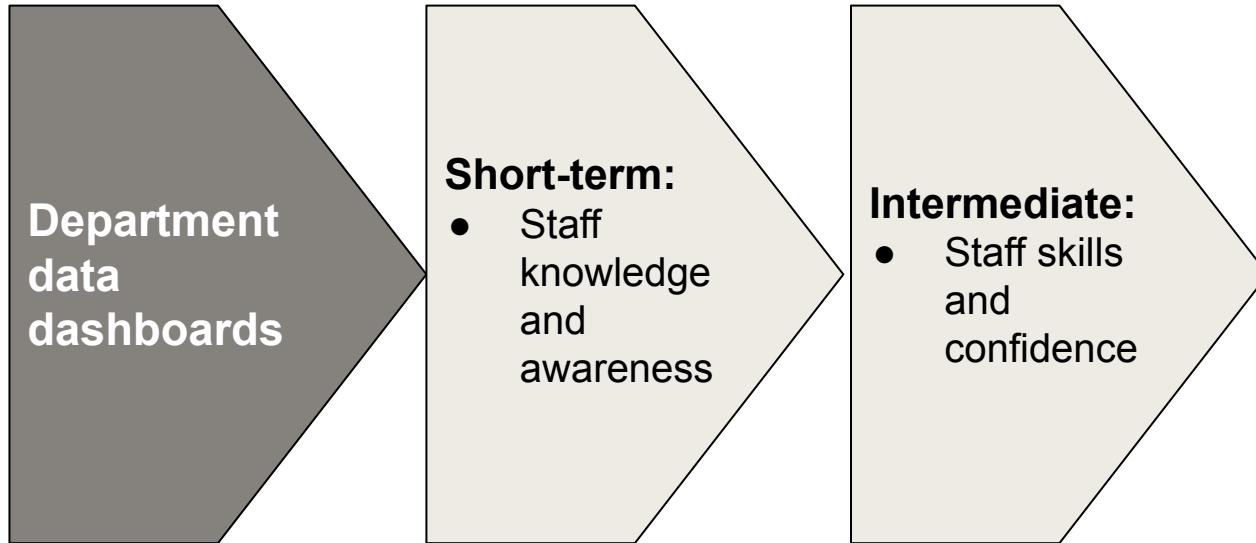


Department
data
dashboards

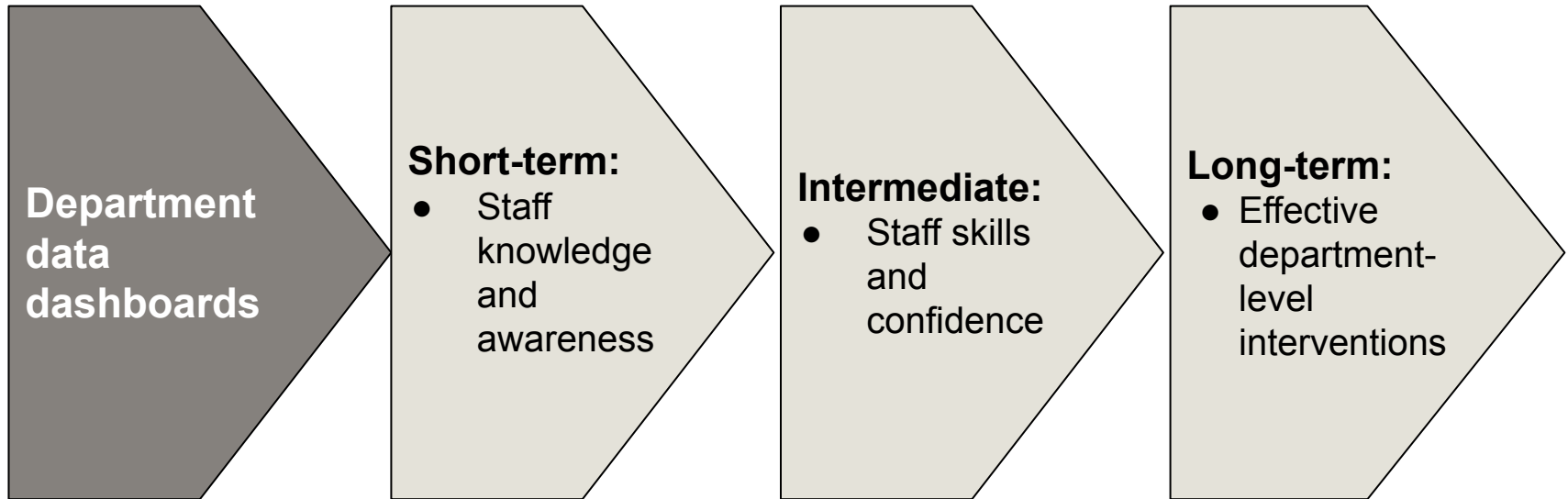
Identifying outcomes - examples



Identifying outcomes - examples



Identifying outcomes - examples

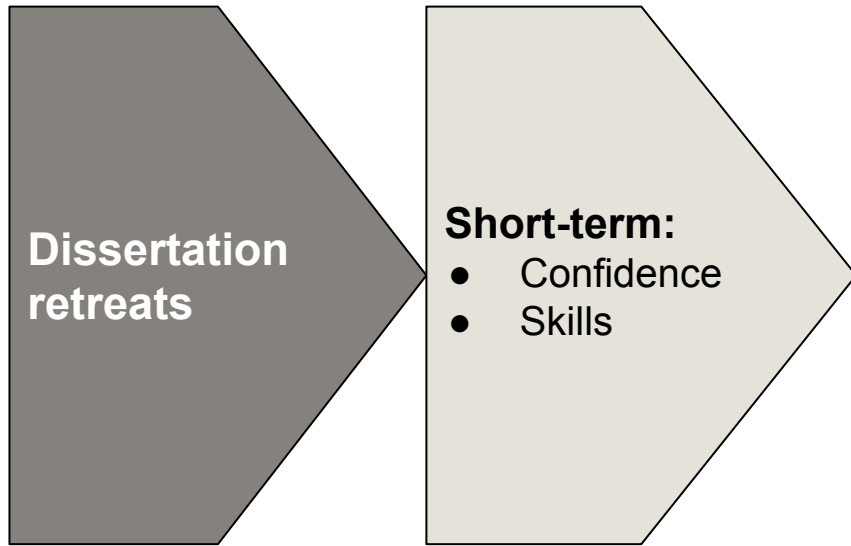


Identifying outcomes - examples

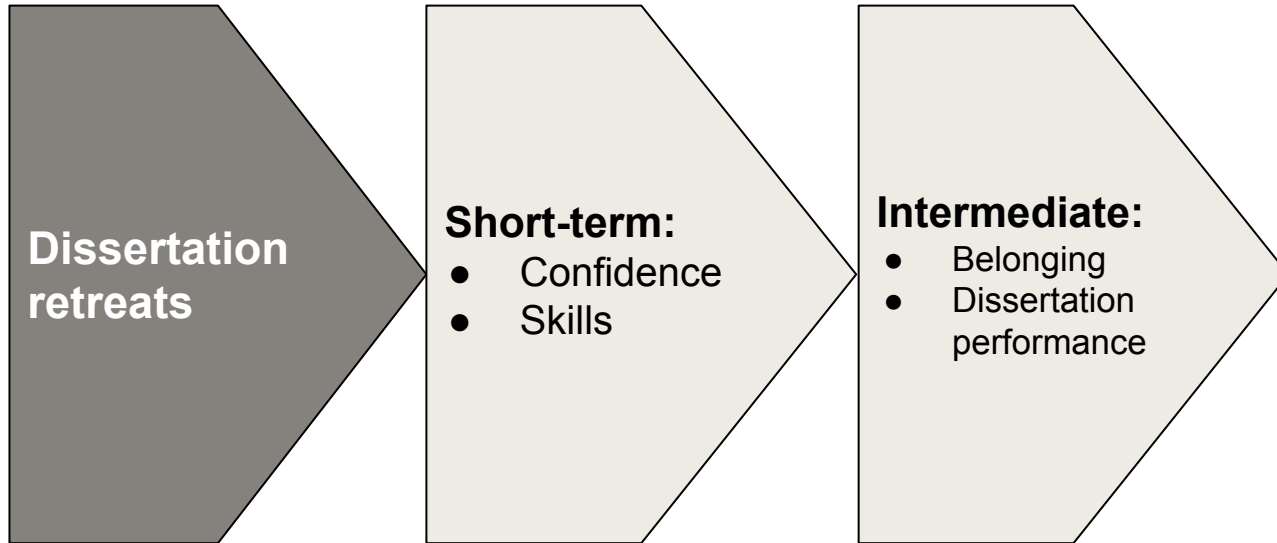


Dissertation
retreats

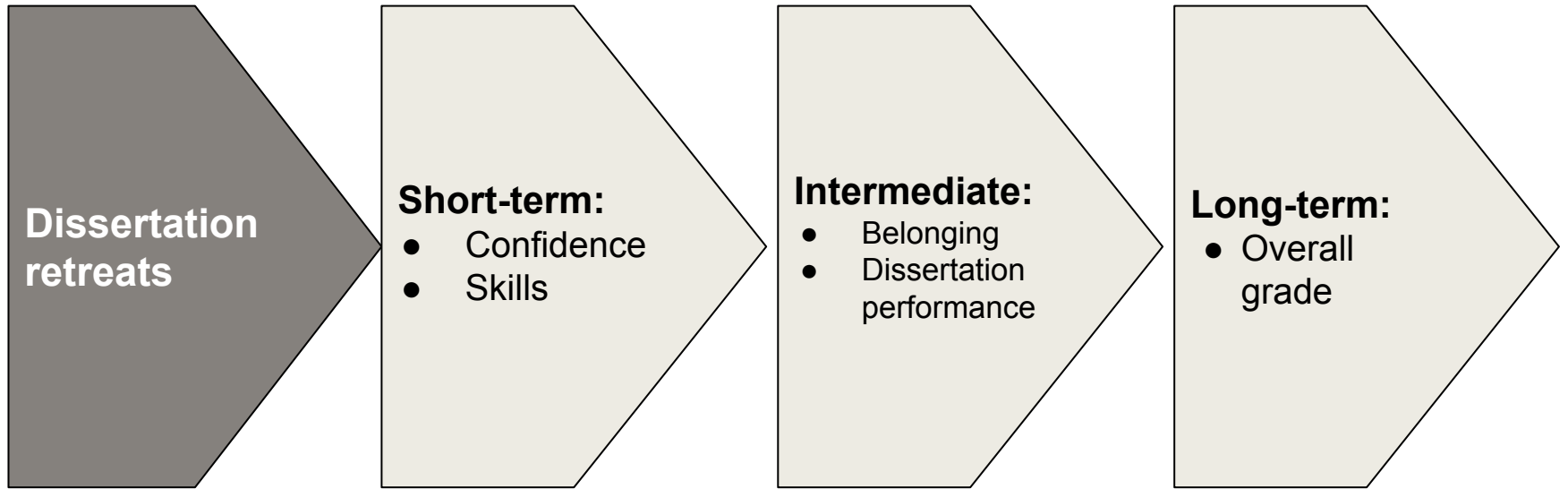
Identifying outcomes - examples



Identifying outcomes - examples



Identifying outcomes - examples

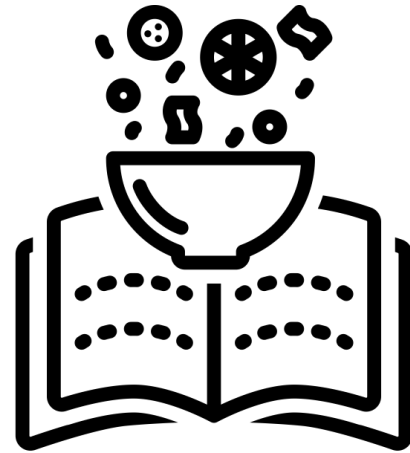


Identifying outcomes - over to you

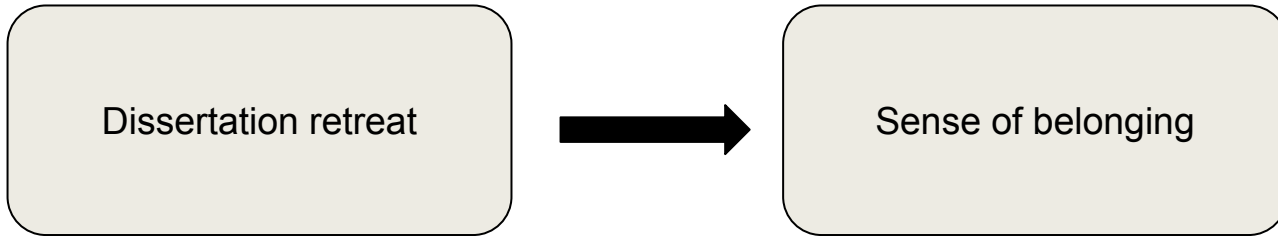
Identify some key
short, intermediate
and **long-term**
outcomes that you
could measure as part
of your intervention

Change mechanisms

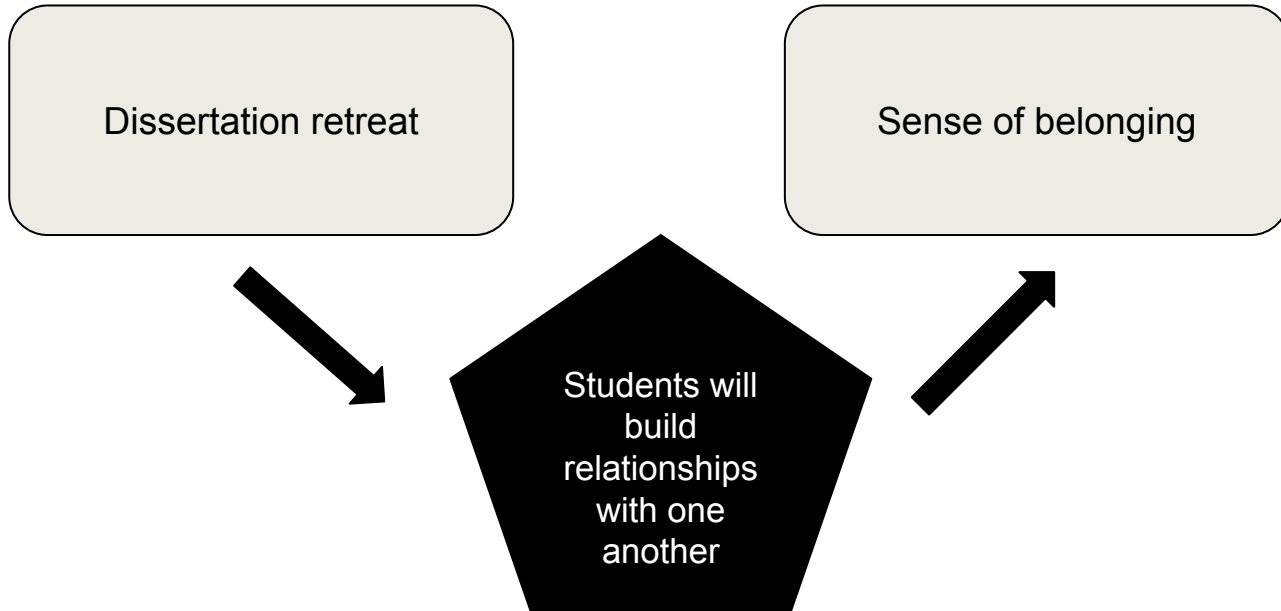
The '**active ingredient**' which enables your activity to lead to your outcome



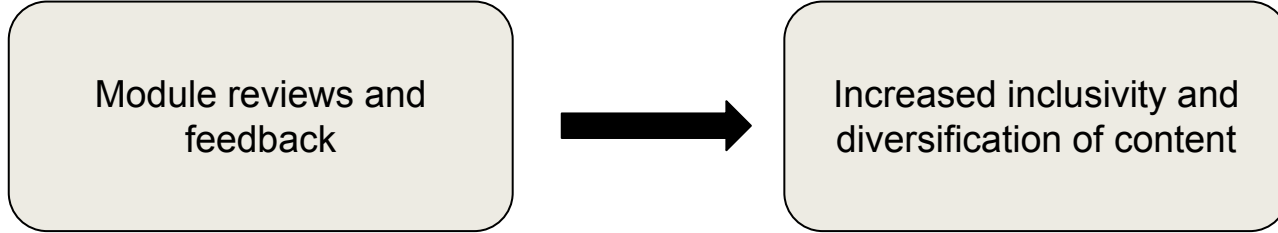
Change mechanisms - examples



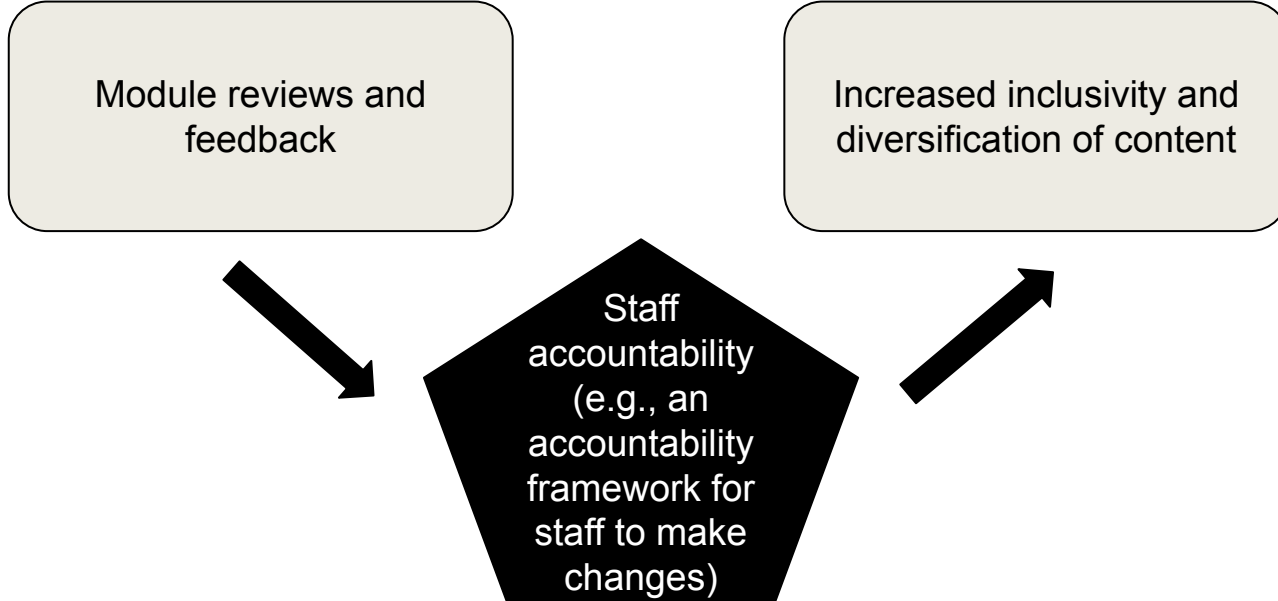
Change mechanisms - examples




Change mechanisms - examples



Change mechanisms - examples



Change mechanisms - over to you



Identify **one change mechanism** for your activity and one of your outcomes

Moving from a theory of change to an evaluation plan



Theory of change → Evaluation plan

- Things to consider
 - Evaluation aim and questions (scope)
 - What data do you have?
 - What methodology can you use?

Also note: resourcing, capacity, buy-in and reporting

Evaluation plan

Evaluation plan template

Project name

This is a comprehensive document that outlines the overall strategy and approach for evaluating an intervention. It is designed to align with and be linked to an Access and Participation Plan (APP) where relevant and appropriate, and to give accountability to relevant staff and stakeholders within higher education providers (HEPs).

The evaluation plan should be developed collaboratively to ensure relevant perspectives are considered and will therefore involve input from practitioners, evaluators, and faculty staff, and should be signed off by a senior lead. It has been designed to inform the development of a research protocol - a detailed and specific document outlining a step-by-step guide to how each aspect of the evaluation will be carried out, including an analytical strategy. An example research protocol can be found [here](#) which details an evaluation of a curriculum reform intervention to address the ethnicity degree awarding gap. Depending on capacity at individual HEPs, this evaluation plan may be shared internally or externally to support the development of the research protocol in order to conduct the evaluation.

Date:	
Evaluation Manager (or appropriate staff member):	

Evaluation plan template

1. Intervention
2. Evaluation design
3. Evaluation resources and timeframe
4. Evaluation governance

Evaluation plan template

Project name

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Date:

Evaluation
Manager (or
appropriate
staff member):

Evaluation aim

- This could vary depending on the scope:
 - To understand the overall efficacy of the intervention
 - To unpack a specific change mechanism or element of the intervention
 - To understand how an intervention has been implemented

Evaluation aim - examples

- **Accessible assessment principles**
 - To understand whether and to what extent the intervention increases **module attainment** and course **continuation rates** in Black and Asian students.

Evaluation aim - examples

- **Dissertation retreats**
 - To understand whether the intervention improves **dissertation and degree awarding** for Black students

Evaluation aim - examples

- **Department data dashboards**
 - To understand whether the intervention enabled the 'pilot department' to **develop and plan data-driven activities** to address the awarding gap.

Evaluation questions

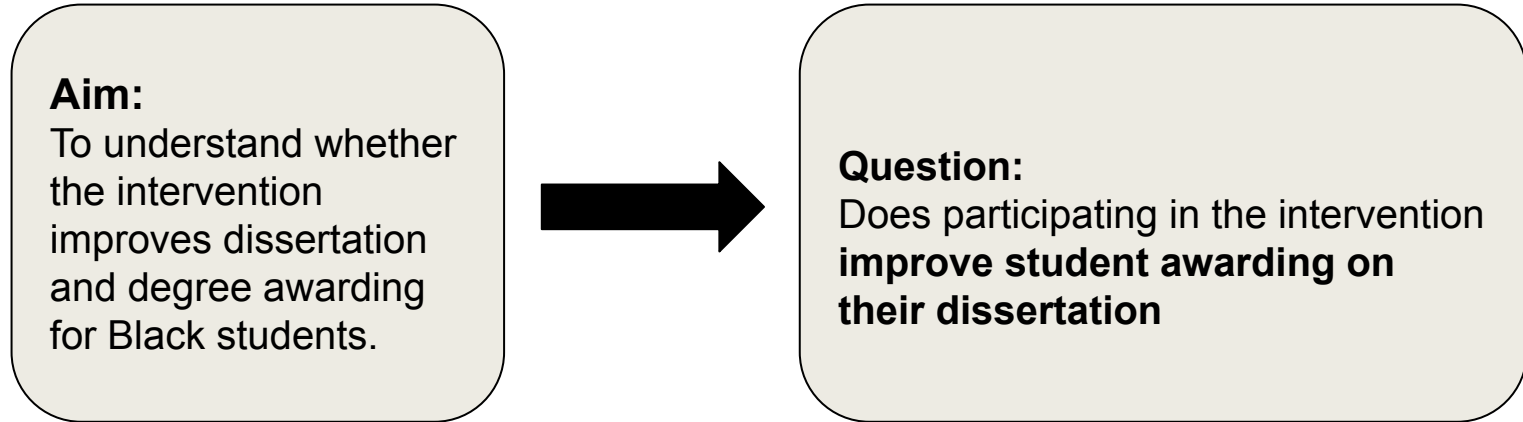
- Stem from your evaluation aims

Aim:

To understand whether the intervention improves dissertation and degree awarding for Black students.

Evaluation questions

- Stem from your evaluation aims



Evaluation questions

- Stem from your evaluation aims

Aim:

To understand whether the intervention improves dissertation and degree awarding for Black students.

**Question:**

Does participating in the intervention **improve student awarding on their dissertation** (compared to their previous awarding / academic trajectory and to students who did not attend the dissertation retreats)?

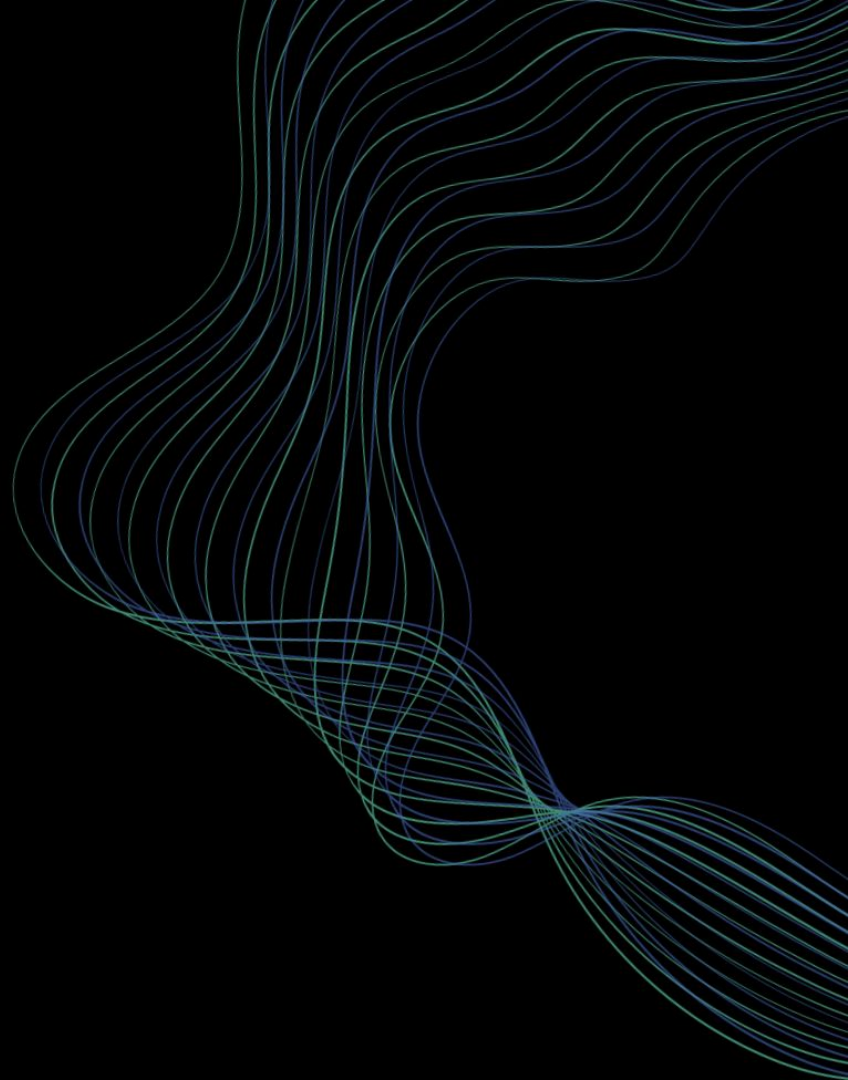
Evaluation aim and questions - over to you

Rapid task:

- Outline the **aim (scope) of your evaluation** - are you interested in overall efficacy or a specific element?
- What **questions** do you want to answer through your evaluation?

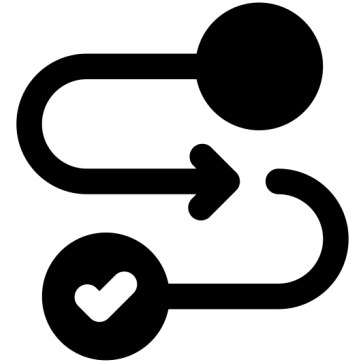
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Evaluation methodology

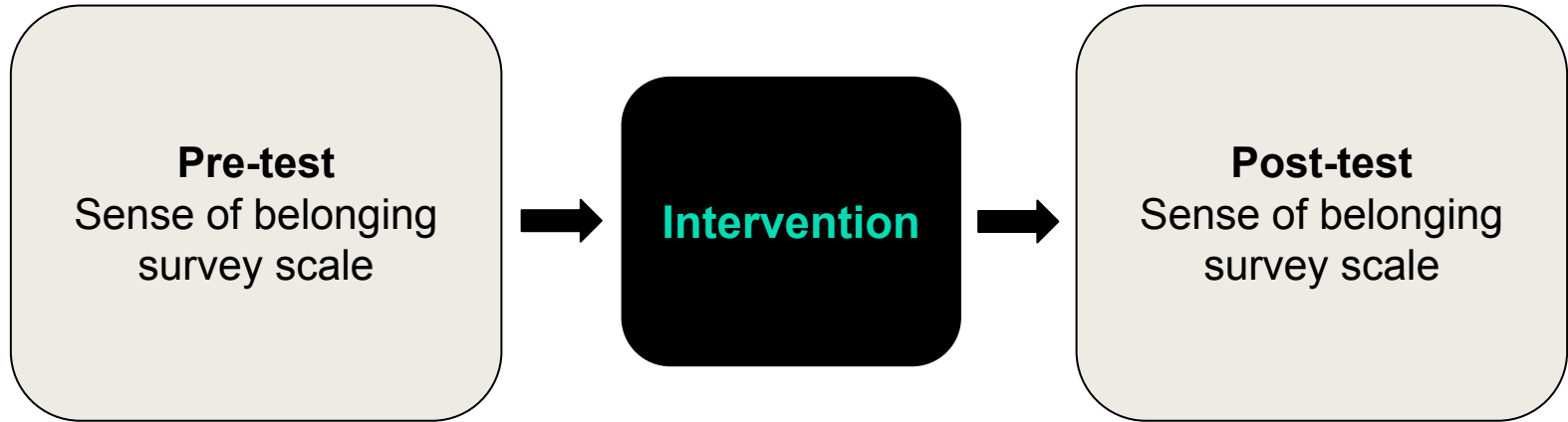


Evaluation methods

- Depending on the methodology, you could show:
 - An **association** between your intervention and positive student outcomes
 - That your intervention **causes** positive student outcomes



Type 2 evidence: association

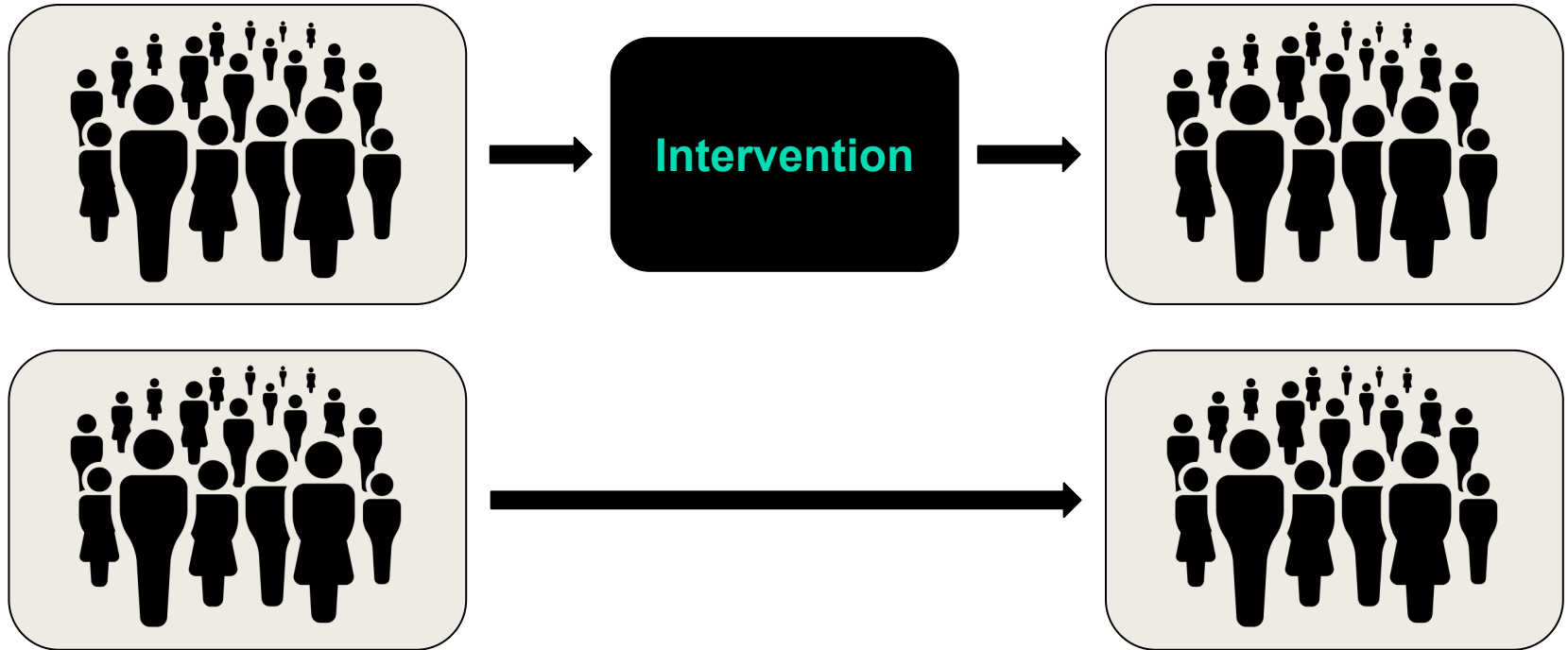


Type 3 evidence: causation

Type 3 evidence: causation

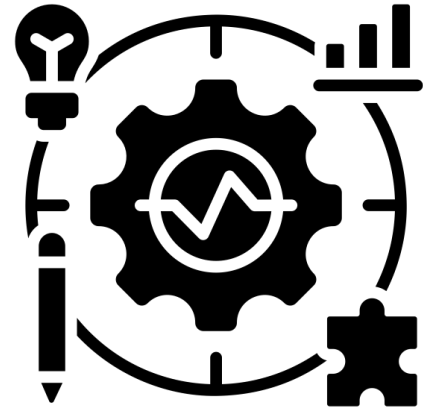


Type 3 evidence: causation



Which methodology?

- Dependent on:
 - Selection onto the intervention
 - Outcome data
 - Outcome measures
 - Data available
 - Sample



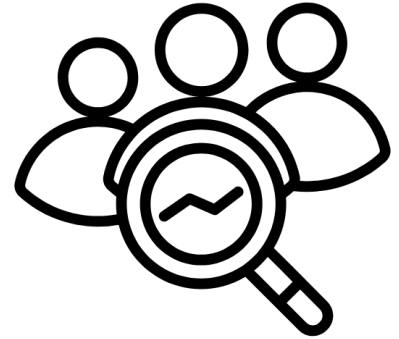
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Outcome measures and data collection



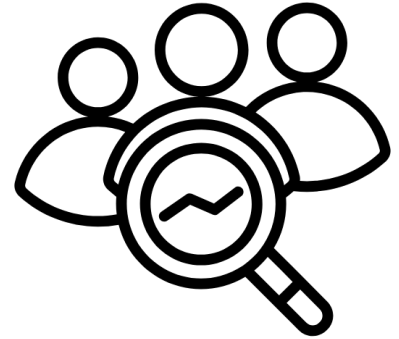
What data do you need to measure your outcome?

- Administrative data
 - Attainment, continuation
- Survey data via validated scales
 - Sense of belonging, confidence
- In-depth reflections via interviews / focus groups
 - Student / staff views and understanding



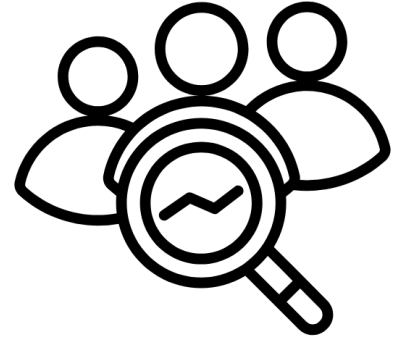
What data do you need to measure your outcome?

- Administrative data
 - Attainment, continuation
- Survey data via validated scales
 - Sense of belonging, self-efficacy
- In-depth reflections via interviews / focus groups
 - Student / staff views and understanding



What data do you need to measure your outcome?

- Administrative data
 - Attainment, continuation
- Survey data via validated scales
 - Sense of belonging, confidence
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 - Student / staff views and understanding



Example - Dissertation retreats

Outcome	Data to be collected	Data source	Sample	Point of collection
Student sense of belonging	Individual scores on sense of belonging scale	TASO access and success questionnaire (ASQ)	Dissertation retreat participants	Pre- and post-intervention

Example - Accessible assessment principles

Outcome	Data to be collected	Data source	Sample	Point of collection
Module attainment	Individual-level end of module grades for reformed and comparator modules	Administrative data	Black and Asian students on reformed and comparator modules	Prior module grades pre-reform and modules grades post-reform

Example - Department data dashboards

Outcome	Data to be collected	Data source	Sample	Point of collection
Staff confidence	Staff reflections on intervention	Semi-structured interviews with staff	Staff in pilot department	Post-intervention

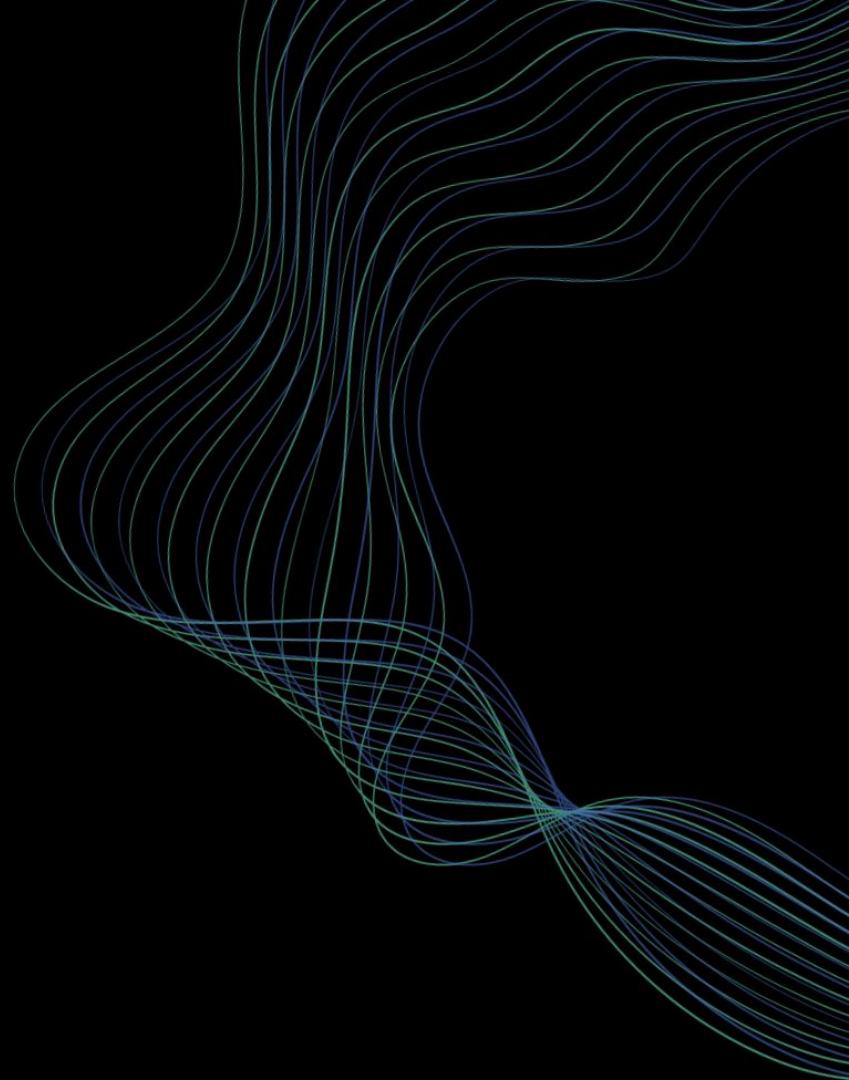
Outcomes and data collection - over to you

For the **outcomes** you identified earlier, complete:

- Data to be collected
- Data source
- Sample
- Point of collection

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Resources



Key resources available on TASO's website

- Core and enhanced theory of change templates
- Example theories of change
- Evaluation plan template
- Examples of evaluation plans
- Evaluation methods guidance



Key resources - coming soon

- Data infrastructure guide
- Post-entry mapping outcomes and activities tool (MOAT) - **look out for this tomorrow!**
- Post-entry intervention evaluations



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Q&A

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Thank you for joining us!

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Afternoon break - check-in for overnight guests available

3.30–4.00 pm

Next: New IPE guidance: What works for whom,
how and why?

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