

09.9.2025

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**Title**

Managing the sacred?: perspectives on teaching excellence and learning outcomes from an international postgraduate university / Tatiana Yarkova and Aleh Cherp

**Publication year**

2013

**Source/Footnote**

In: European journal of higher education. - 3 (2013) 1, S. 24 - 39

**Inventory number**

34594

**Keywords**

Lehre ; Studentenschaft : Studienverhalten

**Abstract**

The assessment of student learning driven by learning outcomes is often viewed as a tool to promote excellence in higher education. At the same time, many professors do not see a value in such approach, while nonetheless sincerely seeking to promote teaching and learning excellence. Is this a result of misunderstanding or is there an inherent conflict between a formalized assessment of learning outcomes and pursuit of excellence? This article examines this question through interviewing faculty members in an international postgraduate university which is deeply committed to excellence in teaching and learning and is currently on a journey to introduce a formal system of learning outcomes assessment. The article explores the tension between pursuit of excellence and the procedures to set and measure the achievement of formal learning outcomes. The article contains several recommendations on bridging this gap and ensuring stronger faculty's ownership of the assessment process. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)